

Phil 100, Spring 2014
Dr. Shields
Paper Prompt 1

Write a 4–5 page paper on one of the following topics. The paper should be typed, double-spaced, 12 point Times New Roman, with 1.25" margins. Content is most important, but structure, style, grammar, and punctuation are all important as well. The paper should have an introductory paragraph, with your thesis statement in it. The paper must include reasons to establish your thesis. There should be a concluding paragraph. Be sure to engage with the text(s), which will involve quoting from it (them).

The best way to think about what it would mean to give reasons to establish your thesis is this: if somebody disagreed with you, what would you say to convince him that you are right? You should present at least one counter-argument to your thesis and answer it in your paper. If you disagree with one of the authors, that author can provide the counter-view, but you must make sure either to provide a counter-*argument* from the author's text or to invent one of your own. In the latter case, make sure it is a plausible counter-argument, i.e., one that people might actually try to use against you, and not a straw-man.

The paper is due in class on Friday, February 21st. Please submit hard copies in class. *In cases of hardship only*, you may email me a Microsoft Word document containing your paper prior to the start of class on 2/21. My email is shieldsd@xavier.edu. You must also submit your papers to turnitin.com. You will do this through Blackboard. Make sure you do everything listed on the paper checklist, check each box, and sign and date your paper checklist and attach it to your paper. **Failure to**

do so will result in a reduction of 2 points from your total paper grade. Plan ahead, so that you have enough time to go over the checklist and make any necessary changes to your paper. If there is a hardship and you must turn in your paper via e-mail, you can bring your checklist to me at a later date.

Topics:

1. *Is it ever just for a human being to hurt or cause pain or discomfort to another human being (physically, emotionally, or in any other way) as punishment for an unjust or otherwise immoral action?* Present Socrates' view in the *Republic* (see especially book I, p. 11–12; bk. II, p. 59–61; & bk. III, p. 92–93), but give your own point of view and give reasons to support it. The question is about *humans punishing humans*. Different considerations would be involved if the question was about God punishing human beings (because He knows for certain whether humans will ever change their ways, He has higher authority, etc.) You might want to distinguish between punishing in a public capacity (e.g., as a judge) and punishing in a private capacity (i.e., without any special authority), but you do not have to. If you find it helpful, you can bring in Mill (see *Utilitarianism*, p. 55–59), but make sure you leave yourself enough room to present your own view, argument, counter-argument, and response.

2. *Is moral obligation based purely on subjective feelings or are some things objectively right or wrong regardless of how a person feels about them?* Present Mill's view (see

reference tab
footnote

especially *Utilitarianism* ch. 3), but say what *you* think and why. In working out your thesis, consider whether a person would be obligated to refrain from injuring other people if he had no feelings of remorse at all, and could do so with being caught or punished (you might also consider whether this is even possible).

PHILOSOPHY DEPARTMENT GRADING STANDARDS

According to the Xavier University 2000-02 Catalog, the undergraduate grades of A, B, C, D, F signify the following:

- A = Exceptional
- B = Good
- C = Satisfactory
- D = Minimum Passing
- F = Failure

On exams or work in which numerical grading is used the Philosophy Department agrees that these grades are equivalent to the following:

- A = 90-100
- B = 80-89
- C = 70-79
- D = 60-69
- F = 59 and below

The Philosophy Department further agrees that these letter grades signify the following level of accomplishment by students when given for discursive, written work:

A = work that not merely fully and accurately reproduces class discussion, the main thread in an argument or the main philosophical significance of a text under discussion, but which, having considered arguments and counter-arguments, goes beyond these and indicates a contribution of the student herself or himself, giving evidence of an individual and hence deeper understanding of the material in question.

B = work that shows a more or less complete and exact understanding of the issues, texts, and/or arguments as explained in class, clearly and logically formulated without going beyond such explanations.

C = work that shows basic understanding of the material but with errors, omissions and confusions of either a formal or material nature.

D = work that shows a minimal acquaintance with the material or serious logical and conceptual flaws in formulating responses to the question raised, the argument at issue, or to the philosophical text under discussion.

F = work that shows inadequate acquaintance with texts, issues, or ideas with little or no valid logical argumentation; or, the work is a plagiarism. Cases of plagiarism, which involve the use of published or others' written work without giving credit, must be given F.

The department does not mandate grade distributions or curves. The final goal of all of our grading must be fairness to all students and the encouragement of the highest level of achievement possible in each student.

Approved by Philosophy Department
April 15, 2002

Revised by Philosophy Department
January 12, 2005

Abbreviations I may use when grading your paper¹:

AC = Avoid contractions in a formal paper, except when quoting.

BQ = block quotation, *single-spaced, 5 lines or more*

CU = Connection unclear: does not seem to fit in, either here or not at all

E = incorrect use of ellipsis in citation

F = Footnote incorrect acc. to the Turabian/CMS footnotes method

G = grammar

I = should be in italics, such as all titles of books, and foreign words

IA = indefinite antecedent (usually when a "this" or an "it" does not clearly refer to its antecedent)

IUP = Inconsistent use of personal pronouns (e.g. "one" then "you")

IVT = Inconsistent verb tenses

MU = Meaning unclear

NFD = needs further development

NP = noun-pronoun agreement in number (e.g. a person does *his* [or his or her] work; avoid *he/she*)

P = punctuation. All punctuation, such as periods and commas, go *inside* the quotation marks.

PA = Phrasing awkward

RBL = Remove blank line between paragraphs

RS = run-on sentence, usually missing a conjunction to link two or more phrases

S = Subsequent citation does not need all the bibliographic details given in first citation

SF = Sentence fragment. No subject and main verb

SP = Spelling (your word processor's spell checker will not catch everything)

WC = word choice: wrong or awkward

¹ This list of abbreviations and the paper checklist that follows are based on similar ones composed by Dr. Dwyer of Xavier's Philosophy Department.

WC = word choice: wrong or awkward
 SP = spelling (your word processor's spell checker will not catch everything)
 SF = sentence fragment. No subject and main verb
 S = Subsequent citation does not need all the bibliographic details given in first citation
 RS = run-on sentence, usually missing a conjunction to link two or more phrases
 RBL = Remove blank line between paragraphs
 PA = Phrasing awkward
 marks.
 P = punctuation. All punctuation, such as periods and commas, go inside the quotation
 avoid he/she)
 NP = noun-pronoun agreement in number (e.g., a person does his [or his or her] work;

Paper Checklist
Dr. Shields

Does the Paper have . . .

- 1. black ink?
- 2. double-spaced lines? (NOT 2.5 or triple spaced lines)
- 3. Times New Roman font 12 point ONLY
- 4. italics for the title of any book or journal?
- 5. page numbers?
- 6. margins of 1.25"?
- 7. on the title page, or page one of the paper, include title, name, class, and date.
- 8. *a staple?* No staple = no go. Attach stapler to your jeans on way to class.
- 8.5 *Have you attached this checklist to the back of your paper, signed, dated, and with everything checked off?*

Have You . . .

- 9. put in the **introductory paragraph** a clear **thesis statement**? You need to state the subject, scope, and conclusion of your paper.
- 10. **made the paragraphs flow well**? Each paragraph should be about one main idea. Avoid repetitiveness in an essay, that is, arguing the same point in two different paragraphs.
- 11. used some **quotations, to show you're engaging with the text**? Set off quotations 5 lines or longer in a block quotation, *single-spaced, without* quotation marks?
- 12. included **footnotes**, where necessary, *even when paraphrasing* an argument you are explaining in the text? Not endnotes. **Bibliography required. Chicago Manual of Style format only.**
- 13. written good **concluding paragraphs**? Good concluding paragraphs involve a brief summary of your entire topic and your own critical commentary.
- 14. **proofread** the paper? A computer cannot proofread as well as the human mind. Pay particular attention to:
 - spelling errors (for example, "one's self" is wrong; it should be "oneself")
 - grammatical errors (especially noun and pronoun agreement, run-on sentences, sentence fragments; "a person has *his [or his or her, or her]* own way of being, **not their** way of being, not *his/her* way of being")
 - awkward phrases and colloquialisms
 - punctuation (period, comma, colon, semi-colon, double quotes, single quotes, parentheses, brackets. Beware the distinction between its and it's, and keep all punctuation within quotations except for colon and semi-colon).
 - Remember: The standard of clarity in academic writing is higher than that in ordinary conversation or email. *Don't rely solely on your grammar/spell-checker.*
 - *Have you laid aside the paper for a period of time and come back to it for a better proofread?*

