

Term Paper (PHIL 105W/205W)

due December 15

The major assignment for this course is a term paper. This is an opportunity for you to think about a specific example of shame in depth and explore what it tells us about the nature and moral significance of shame. Your topic should be one of personal interest to you, and one which allows you to grow as a scholar.

Your term paper should be a focused, argumentative essay, between 3000 and 4000 words in length, and defend a specific and original thesis about shame.

Guidelines

Your term paper should be between 3000 and 4000 words in length (i.e., 12 to 16 double-spaced pages). Your term paper should focus on a specific aspect of the nature and/or moral significance of shame, and be grounded in an analysis of a specific example of shame. Beyond that, the topic of your term paper, and the example you choose to focus on, are up to you.

Your term paper must defend a specific and original thesis about the nature and/or moral significance of shame. It may not be a mere summary of other material; you must analyze and/or synthesize the material you discuss as well. Your term paper must also go beyond what was covered in lecture (this is part of what I mean by an “original” thesis). This may be accomplished by going more in-depth into something discussed in lecture, or by bringing in readings not explicitly covered in class, or by situating your position in relation to others’ scholarship.

Your term paper must be grounded in an analysis of a specific example of shame. What I mean by this is that I want you to motivate, illustrate, and/or support your thesis about shame by means of a specific and illuminating example (rather than just discussing shame in the abstract). Your example of shame

may be factual or fictional, historical or contemporary, widely known or personal, something that's come up in class or something that hasn't. It should, however, be as specific as possible (focusing on a specific person, in a specific situation, in a specific culture). It should also serve to highlight the specific aspect of shame that you will be discussing. (You may find it helpful to think about your term paper in this way: "Here's a particularly perplexing or problematic example of shame – What does this example tell us about shame itself?")

Your term paper must engage with at least one piece of scholarship on shame. By "engage with" I do not mean simply cite. You must analyze, critique, and be in conversation with the piece. You should choose a piece of scholarship that is appropriate to the topic of your term paper.

Formatting

Your term paper may be formatted however you wish, but please remember that it is going to be read by another human (namely, me). A legible font, ample margins, and appropriate line spacing will all be appreciated. **Please also give your term paper a title**, which concisely prepares the reader for the paper to come.

Textual citations of Plato, Homer, or Sophocles should indicate the work title (in italics) and line number, as in "(*Phaedo* 100c)". Citations of secondary literature should follow some standard citation style of your choosing.

Turning it in

Please submit your term paper, in PDF format, via Canvas by end of day on December 15 (or, for all your night owls, by 8 A.M. the following morning).

Because the deadline is the end of the quarter, late papers will not be accepted. Any papers not received by the deadline will automatically receive a 0.

Grading

Your term paper will be graded on quality of analysis, clarity of writing, cogency of argument, and originality. The grading rubric I will be using will be made available on the course website.