

PHIL 13N: First Paper

due by 11:59 P.M. on Sunday, October 11

One of the goals of this course is to help you learn how to think abstractly and generally about matters of art and taste. In this paper you will do just that. Your assignment is to write a **philosophical reflection** on the dislike you feel towards some particular musical artist, band, composer, or genre. This means *identifying the reasons* standing behind your dislike, and then *assessing the validity* of those reasons as general aesthetic principles.

Before you begin

The artist/band/composer/genre you choose to write on is up to you. You may choose to write on the same artist/genre you chose to write about in the first or second micro-assignment, but you need not do so. As in those micro-assignments, try to pick an artist/genre that you know at least some other people like, even though you don't. To get the most out of this paper, I would recommend choosing an artist/genre that you already have strong feelings about (an artist/genre that you've gotten into arguments about, perhaps, or that you often make fun of).

Paper guidelines

Your paper should be **approximately 750 words in length** (i.e., 3 double-spaced pages). Structurally, your paper need not be too rigid, but it should clearly do the following three things:

- **state** the reasons standing behind your dislike
- **assess** the validity of those reasons as general aesthetic principles
- **reflect** on the upshot of your above assessments

Importantly, you are *not* to evaluate whether the reasons you have for disliking your chosen artist/genre are in fact *accurate*. Assume for the sake of argument that the artist/genre is indeed bad in the way you claim it to be. Your task, rather, is to evaluate whether you are disliking the artist/genre *on fair grounds* (that is, whether the reasons you have for disliking the artist/genre are *legitimate* reasons to dislike an artist/genre).

To do so, you should be asking yourself the following sort of questions: Are the features you've highlighted as the reasons for your dislike features that *always* make for bad music? Are there (or could there be) examples of good music with these features? Do your reasons *generalize* to other examples of bad music, or are they genre-specific? Do your reasons presuppose a certain conception of what *good* music is? If so, must others *agree* with this conception?

Don't bother writing a hokey introduction or a grand conclusion to your paper; just jump right into the task at hand, and keep your focus there. You may, and will probably need to, use the first person ("I/my/mine") throughout.

Formatting

Please prepare your paper for blind grading: the only piece of identifying information on your paper should be your SUID number; please do not include your name. Other than that, you may format your paper however you wish, but please keep in mind that it is going to be read by another human. A legible font, ample margins, and appropriate line spacing will all be appreciated.

There's no reason to reference any secondary literature for this assignment, but if you do, please include a full bibliographical citation at the end of your paper. No specific citation style is required; just follow some standard style of your choosing.

Please save your paper in PDF format, with the file name "PHIL13N First Paper [YOUR SUID NUMBER].pdf" (e.g., "PHIL13N First Paper 05584623.pdf").

Turning it in

Please submit your paper via CourseWork (from the "Assignments" link on the sidebar) by 11:59 P.M. on Sunday, October 11.

Late papers will be docked 5% for each 24 hour period between the due date and when they are handed in (unless accompanied by valid medical documentation). Late papers may be submitted up to 7 days after the due date; any papers not received by this time will automatically receive a 0.

Grading

Your paper will be graded on the quality and clarity of its writing and analysis. The grading rubric I will be using will be made available on the course website.