

Research Project: Paper

PHIL 29S

due Friday, August 18

This is what all your research project work this term has been leading up to: a chance for you to present the results of your research and thinking about your chosen technology, and to defend an original answer to your chosen philosophical question.

Guidelines

Your paper should read like a “**philosophical blog post**” – that is, it should be written as if for a popular audience, while still displaying philosophical sophistication in what it has to say. In other words, write in ordinary, straightforward, and engaging language, the sort of language that any of your friends (even those who don’t know the first thing about philosophy) would be able to understand. You may use philosophical terminology in your paper, but be sure to explain any such terminology to your reader, so they know exactly what you mean. The aim here is **clarity**, without any sacrifice in any intellectual or philosophical depth.

Your paper should be **approximately 1500 words in length** (i.e., 6 double-spaced pages). It should consist of the following five sections:

- Introduction to technology & philosophical question (200 to 300 words)
- Introduction & development of your thesis (500 to 750 words)
- Presentation & discussion of an objection to your thesis (250 to 350 words)
- Presentation & discussion of a response to the objection (250 to 350 words)
- Conclusion (100 to 200 words)

Begin by **introducing the technology** you're talking about and **the philosophical question** you're asking about it. You do **not** need to present a detailed, technical explanation of the technology. **Explain only as much as you need to** about the technology, in order to make the philosophical question you're asking about it seem understandable, motivated, and thought-provoking.

Next, **introduce and develop your thesis**: the specific answer to your question that you wish to defend in the paper. After explaining what your thesis is, provide reasons for believing it, arguments in its defense, clarifications of its meaning, and so on. This section of your paper can be much the same as what you wrote in your prospectus (though you may want to revise what you wrote in light of the feedback you've since received).

Following this, **present and discuss one specific objection to your thesis**. Be sure to clearly explain both what the objection is and why it is an objection (i.e., why it causes trouble for your thesis). The objection can take whatever form you wish, but it should be the strongest objection you can think of. (It's not philosophically impressive to raise and refute a weak objection, after all!)

After this, **present and discuss your response to the objection** you've just raised. Basically, what you want to do here is to raise an objection to the previous objection. Be sure to explain both what your response is and why it is a reasonable response (i.e., how it addresses the original concern(s) that were raised by the objection).

Lastly, **conclude your paper**, however you see fit. Summarize what you've said in the paper, be frank about the limits of your discussion, indicate topics for future consideration, and/or leave your reader with a final thought.

Formatting

Prepare your paper for blind grading: the only piece of identifying information on your submission should be **your student number**. Please do not include your name, email, or any other identifying information.

Your paper may be formatted however you wish, but please remember that it is going to be read by another human (namely, your grader). A legible font, ample margins, and appropriate line spacing will all be appreciated. **Please also give**

your paper a title which concisely prepares the reader for the paper to come.

You need not reference any other material in writing your paper – but if you do, you *must* include a full bibliographical citation of this material. No specific citation style is required; just follow some standard style of your choosing. Any and all quotations must also be appropriately cited.

Turning it in

Please submit your paper, in PDF format, via Canvas by end of day on Friday, August 18 (or, for all your night owls, by 6 A.M. the following morning).

Grading

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