

Term Paper: Brainstorm

Overview

The major assignment for this course is a term paper. This is an opportunity for you to think about a particular literary work (of your choosing) and what it tells us about a particular philosophical topic (also of your choosing). The philosophical topic should be one of personal interest to you, and one that you will enjoy thinking about more deeply. This “brainstorm” assignment is designed to help get you started on the task of your term paper, by getting you to come up with some possible topic ideas and giving you some preliminary feedback on them.

Structure

To receive full credit, your brainstorm must present two potential topics for your term paper. Topic #1 should be the topic you’re most interested in writing about. Topic #2 should be a back-up, in case I recommend that you not write on Topic #1.

For each topic, you should list out the following two things:

- (1) **A description of the topic:** Begin by presenting a clear and concise description of the topic. Your description may be as short as one sentence, or it may be longer if you need more space to explain what you mean. Say however much you think you need to say to make your topic clear. Your topic may also be phrased in the form of a question.
- (2) **An explanation of your interest in the topic:** Next present a three- to four-sentence explanation of why you personally are interested in exploring this topic in your term paper. What draws you to this topic? What do you hope to gain from thinking about it further? And what insights into this topic do you think a literary work might possess?

Guidelines

Both topics must be philosophical topics!

Both topics must be sufficiently different from one another.

One – but only one – of your proposed topics may be the same as one of the topics we are covering in class. (Note: The literary and philosophical works that you eventually choose on this topic will have to be different from the works that we are reading on that topic in class.)

You will receive full credit for this assignment so long as you present two different philosophical topics fully; in particular, you will not be graded on the quality of your ideas.

Turning it in

Please submit your brainstorm via Quercus, in the textbox provided on the “Brainstorm” assignment.