

Term Paper

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). Your topic should be one of personal interest to you, and one which allows you to grow both as a scholar and as a human.

Guidelines

Your term paper should be approximately 2500 words in length (i.e., no less than 2400 words and no more than 2600 words). It should be a focused interpretative essay, defending a specific and original thesis about the philosophical value or import of your chosen literary work, grounded in an analysis of that work. Your term paper must also engage with at least one piece of philosophical scholarship on your chosen topic. Beyond this, the structure of your term paper is up to you to determine.

Your term paper must defend a specific and original thesis about the philosophical value or import of your chosen literary work (i.e., about what the work tells us about your chosen philosophical topic). It may not be a mere summary of the work; you must analyze the work and synthesize your findings into a positive thesis.

Your thesis must be grounded in an analysis of your chosen literary work. What I mean by this is that I want you to motivate, illustrate, and/or support your thesis about the philosophical value of the literary work by means of specific and illuminating examples from the work. These examples may be individual passages, overarching themes, character analyses, or any number of other things. Your term paper should support its thesis by means of multiple examples, and each example should be accompanied by a detailed analysis that highlights the example's philosophical significance.

Your term paper must engage with at least one piece of philosophical scholarship on your chosen philosophical topic. By "engage with" I do not mean simply cite. You must analyze, critique, and be in conversation with the piece, and actively relate it to what you take your literary work to be saying about your topic.

Formatting

Include no identifying information whatsoever on your paper: not your name, not your UTORid, not even your student number. (Quercus will keep track of whose paper is whose.)

Include a word count at the end of your paper. You will lose credit if a word count is not included.

Please also give your term paper a title, which concisely prepares the reader for the paper to come.

Include a bibliography of all works cited at the end of your paper. Your bibliography, as well as your in-text citations, should be formatted in accordance with some standard citation style of your choosing (e.g., APA, MLA).

Beyond the above specifications, your term paper may be formatted however you wish, though 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.

Turning it in

Please submit your term paper, in PDF format, via Quercus by end of the night on **April 3**. (“The end of the night” means 8 a.m. the following morning.) Because this deadline is the last day of the semester, **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 the quality of its analysis, the cogency of its argument, the clarity of its writing, and the originality of its thesis. The grading rubric I will be using is posted on the Term Paper assignment page on the course website.