

| **“Tools of Philosophy” Packet** |

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The unexamined life is not worth living.
~Socrates

Living, naturally, is never easy.
~ Albert Camus

You are sheep among wolves; be wise as serpents and innocent as
doves.
~ Jesus of Nazareth

Work like a peasant and think like a philosopher.
~ Jean-Jacques Rousseau

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“Tools of Philosophy” Packet | How to Do Well in a Philosophy Course

The youth who has completed his school instruction has been accustomed *to learn*. He now thinks that he is going *to learn philosophy*. But that is impossible, for he has *to learn to philosophize*. ~ Immanuel Kant

On Reading Philosophy

- Here are a couple of tips for reading philosophy.
 - On first reading, read the essay or treatise quickly. Your goal should be to get an overall grasp of the argument. What is the issue at hand? What is the writer’s position on the issue?
 - Now read it again. This time slowly and carefully. Your aim this time around should be to understand how the writer goes from one argument to another in order to make her conclusion.
 - If you want to go above and beyond the rest of your classmates and improve your own understanding and reasoning, after we discuss the text in class, scan it one more time. This time revisit difficult passages and try to understand them in light of our discussion.
 - To help facilitate memory, make annotations in the margins that will help you either remember what the writer meant or track the argument. At the end of each chapter, write a few sentences that summarize what took place in the chapter. This will come in handy when preparing for exams or quizzes.

How to Participate in a Philosophy Course

- Do the assigned reading. See “On Reading Philosophy” above.
- Attend class. Being in class will help facilitate comprehension and remembrance. If you happen to miss a class, ask one of your peers what we discussed.
- Ask questions. If you don’t understand, ask. I have found this to be rewarding to all: it helps me better clarify and discern how to present the material; it helps you understand it; and it often helps others better understand it.
- Whatever you find interesting, pursue it. The more you engage yourself in the course, the more interesting you are likely to find it. Read articles; listen to podcasts; watch TV

programs or online videos that relate to issues we discuss.

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“Tools of Philosophy” Packet | How to Write in a Philosophy Course

If I started to write elaborately, or like someone introducing or presenting something, I found that I could cut that scrollwork or ornament out and throw it away and start with the first true simple declarative sentence I had written. ~ Ernest Hemingway

- Here are a couple of tricks for writing in this course.
 - Get yourself a copy of Strunk and White’s *The Elements of Style*. You can find it online here: <http://www.crockford.com/wrrld/style.html> [accessed May 2016].
 - Understand the assignment and your task. If it’s a *research* paper, make sure to incorporate texts not read or discussed in class. If it’s an *analysis* paper, make sure to study the texts carefully and offer your own reflections on the matter.
 - Draft an outline. About 80% of writing a good paper is ensuring that you have a solid foundation and consistent sequence of argumentation.
 - Keep your writing simple and understand. Don’t use big words. Don’t ramble. Write it as if you were talking to your mom or dad or baby brother.
 - Be precise. Make every sentence mean what you intend it to mean. Don’t say: “existentialism believes . . .” Because you know that only people believe, and existentialism is not a person. What you mean to say is “an existentialist like Jean-Paul Sartre believes . . .”
 - Ask for help.
 - Let a friend or peer read it and consider their comments and critiques.
 - Find a proofreader at the Writing Center.
- Here are the formatting requirements for papers in any of my courses.
 - Heading of the paper. At the very top of the first page, put your name to the left, the course number and section (e.g., PH 102-001) all the way to the right, and the name of the assignment centered (e.g., “Short Analysis Paper”).
 - Body of the paper. Margins should be one inch (1”) all around and no more. Use 12-point font and single-space the body of the paper. Use Times New Roman font. Staple pages. No footnotes or endnotes. Rather, insert parenthetical references in the body of the paper (e.g., (pg. 14)) for quotes or paraphrases.

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“Tools of Philosophy” Packet | Grading Rubric

Writing Deals with the structure and flow of the assignment, proper formatting, sentence structure, word choice, and mechanics: spelling, punctuation, typography	Understanding Deals with a clear and accurate presentation of material, ability to discuss it concisely, and your ability to discuss the material in your own words.	Analysis Deals with your classification of positions, critique of sources, and comparison of strengths and weakness in arguments	Evidence Deals with your ability to incorporate relevant support or evidence into one’s own argument
5: There are essentially no grammatical, syntactical, or structural errors. The prose is excellent and it is reader-friendly. Very polished and sophisticated, graceful even.	5: Very dense, accurate, and concise discussion of the material. You are able to summarize and describe what thinkers are doing with their arguments and why they are arguing in such a way.	5: This is an excellent, insightful analysis of individual positions. Moreover, you’ve creatively compared and/or synthesized the strong points of a variety of sources or ideas.	5: This demonstrates a creative and insightful use of a wide assortment of support or evidence.
4: It is without errors, but lacking in sophistication. Or it is reader-friendly but marred by more than a few errors. The flow may be awkward.	4: Dense and accurate report of the main ideas. You are able to describe another person’s views clearly.	4: This is a fine analysis of sources. You’ve also insightfully juxtaposed sources and reasonably assessed the strengths and weaknesses of each.	4: There is some creative and insightful use of evidence here. But it is not highly insightful.
3: Marked by flaws in structure, grammar, word choice, or mechanics. But otherwise, it is adequate.	3: This is a largely accurate account of the main sources and ideas being discussed. But you’ve relied too much on quoting the sources or paraphrasing them instead of discussing and explaining them.	3: This is a fair analysis and critique of the material. You’ve also put forward some insightful comparisons or syntheses.	3: This demonstrates an adequate degree of support or evidence, but not many and in a creative or insightful way.
2: Marked by serious errors in more than one category. This is serious enough to affect comprehension of the argument.	2: There are major inaccuracies here. You’re also missing some main points. Or you’ve quoted or paraphrased too much.	2: Some of your analyses or arguments are mistaken or some of your criticisms are misplaced. You’ve failed to see connections between sources.	2: This is a minimal evidence being used here.
1: This is unsatisfactory. There are major errors overall and it is nearly unintelligible.	1: There are major inaccuracies here. You’ve failed to grasp the main points and/or you’ve quoted or paraphrased too much	1: You’ve failed to see the insight in the arguments. Because of this, your associations among authors are mistaken and/or your criticisms are misplaced.	1: This is evidence of very little benefit from course material.

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“Tools of Philosophy” Packet | Important Terms We Will Use

Inanimate: lifeless (e.g., pencil, book, teddy bear)

Animate: alive, enlivened (e.g., a plant, raccoon, human being, angel, alien)

Necessary: that which is needed for something to be possible (e.g., a being who precedes me is necessary for my existence)

Contingent: that which is needed for some things to be possible (e.g.,

Relative: particular to something, qualified in comparison to it

Absolute: universal to all, not qualified in any way

Subjective: dependent on an individual and her feelings, tastes, or opinions
(L: *subjectus* = brought under, from *sub* = under + *jacere* = throw)

Objective: independent of individual and her feelings, tastes, or opinions
(L: *objectum* = thing presented to the mind, from *ob* = in the way of + *jacere* = to throw)

Rational: that having to do with reasoning, specifically knowledge through ideas (L: *ratio* = reckoning, reason)

Empirical: that having to do with experience, specifically knowledge based on and verified by observation and experience (G: *empeiria* = experience, from *empeiros* ‘skilled’ (based on *peira* = trial, experiment).

A priori: independent of experience

A posteriori: dependent on experience

Philosophy: the love of wisdom (G: *philos* = love + *sophia* = wisdom)

Philodoxy: the love of opinion (G: *doxa* = appearance, glory, from *dokein* = seem)

Exoteric: for the populace, all (G: *exō* = outside)

Esoteric: for a limited few, specials (G: *esō* = within)

Doctrine: beliefs or teaching (G: *docere* = teach)

Analytic: having to do with analysis or reasoning through ideas and concepts (G: *analuein* = unloose)

Synthetic: having to do with recourse to experience (G: *suntithenai* = place together)

Dialectic: the art of investigating and discussing a matter in order to arrive at the truth (G: *dialektikē* (*tekhnē*) = (art) of debate)

Concrete: that which is physical, specific, or definite

Abstract: that which is immaterial, general, or indeterminate

Theoretical: having to do with theory, the consideration of ideas (G: *theōria* = contemplation, speculation)

Practical: having to do with practice, the implementation of action (G: *praktikos* = concerned with action, from *prattein* = do, act)

Skepticism: a movement with respect to knowledge of the world that advises it is wise to reserve judgement on believing something even where there is the greatest appearance of truth (G: *skepsis* = inquiry, doubt)

Clear: easy to understand, obvious, distinct (L: *clarus* = clear)

Obscure: still could be defined, made evident, or clarified (L: *obscurus* = dark)

Idea: a thought or belief (G: *idea* = form, pattern)

Intuition: to understand something immediately, without reasoning (L: *intueri* = consider). One can have sensible intuitions, as when one is blindfolded and “makes out” that what he is holding is a basketball.

Concept: a mental picture of an identifiable object formed by combining all aspects (L: *conceptum* = something conceived, *com* = together + *capere* = take)

Intensive: having to do with the force, degree, or strength of something, particularly in a concentrated area (L: *intensus* = stretched tightly, strained)

Extensive: having to do with the size, expanse, or spread of something, particularly its breadth (L: *extens* = stretched out)

Intrinsic: having to do with what is natural to something, its essence (L: *intrinsicus* = inwardly, inwards)

Extrinsic: having to do with something that isn't natural and comes from the outside (L: *extrinsecus* = outwardly)

Pedantry: excessive concern with minor details and rules (G: *paidagōgos* = a slave who accompanied a child to school)

Dilettantism: cultivating an interest in an area of study without real commitment or knowledge, amateurish (L: *dilettare* = to delight)

Truth: agreement of knowledge with an object or subject

Falsity: a semblance or what appears to be the case in accordance with an object or subject but is incorrect (L: *fallere* = deceive). To be distinguished from wrongness, which has to do with mistakes of doing (i.e., wrongdoing).

Error: a mistake in judgment or conduct (L: *errare* = to stray, err)

Probable: likely to be the case because it can be demonstrated (L: *probare* = to test, demonstrate)

Doubtful: unlikely, could be hindered or objected, so one use caution in judging or believing (L: *dubitare* = hesitate)

Knowledge: justified true belief that can be proven or demonstrated by reason or experience or both.

Belief: a statement or claim accepted as true or real even though we cannot know anything about it or demonstrate probability that it is in fact the case. Could be assented to without any reference to the beliefs of others. It is provisional, and we could sway in one direction or another.

Opinion: a view or judgment not based on fact or knowledge. Typically assented to because it is the view or judgment of others. It is provisional, yet we cannot readily dispense with it. It holds weight for us. And it can have certain marks of the truth (L: *opinari* = think, believe)

Possibility: the state of being likely or having a chance to occur (L: *posse* = be able)

Actuality: the state of having occurred (L: *actus* = event, thing done)

Sensible: having to do with the five senses (sight, smell, hearing, taste, and touch) of the body and the stimulus felt in response to physical bodies.

Intelligible: having to do with the understanding of the mind and distinguishing between ideas or concepts and choosing which to believe as true and act upon as good.

- *Elements of truth claims.*
 - When making a truth claim or analyzing one, consider the following elements of an argument. First, there is the *conclusion* that is the claim or position you wish to establish, support, or defend. The conclusion, in order for it to be an argument, must be supported by facts and claims. These are called the *premises*. If it is possible that the premises are false or could be different but the conclusion is true, then it is a *valid argument*. If the premises are in fact true, and the conclusion is true, then it is a *sound argument*. A *tautology* is a statement that is internally redundant, circular, or trivially true. For example, bachelors are single men. A *contradiction* is a statement that is internally inconsistent and therefore false. For example, bachelors are married men. When breaking down the clauses of a truth claim, we sometimes refer to the antecedent and the consequent. The *antecedent* is the first statement or assertion. The *consequent* is what follows. The process of moving from the premises to the conclusion of an argument is called *inference*.
- *Movements in analyzing ideas.*
 - When analyzing ideas, let’s keep in mind the following ways that we can discuss these ideas. When we *exposit*, we are making plain the main features of the idea. To go further than this, we are explicating the idea. That is, we are “unfolding” the details of the idea (*explicare* = *ex* = *out* + *plicare* = to fold). We can focus on “spreading out” one feature of the idea and this would be to *expand* on it (*expandere* = to spread out). To clarify an idea or its features is to *elucidate*. When elucidating, we don’t give any new details, we merely make the details we’ve already given more clear and comprehensible. This may involve, though, *defining* terms or words we previously used. This isn’t to give new details but to describe meaning.
- *Sides to a theory.*
 - A *thesis* is a statement put forward to be believed or proved. An *antithesis* is the opposite or contrary position presented in a thesis. A *synthesis* is the combination of two theories—especially a thesis and antithesis—into one claim or theory. A paralogism is a piece of

fallacious reasoning (G: *paralogizesthai* = reason falsely). An *antimony* is a contradiction between two beliefs or conclusions that are in themselves reasonable. This is slightly different from a paradox, which is a statement or proposition that on the surface looks absurd or wrong, but when investigated, turns out to be true (*para* = distinct from + *doxa* = opinion).

- *Ways of thinking through an idea or concept.*
 - To bring something to mind is to *cognize* it. To ponder what it is and its worth or truthfulness is to *think* about it. When thinking through an idea or concept, there are three general ways to analyze it. You can think about it descriptively, that is, how it has been viewed and explained in the past. You describe the lay of the land, if you will. Or you can think about it normatively, that is, how it ought to be viewed or discussed. You normalize what ought to be the case. Finally, you can think about analytically, that is, what we mean by the word or idea. These ways of analyzing especially apply to moral discourse. When thinking morally, to describe is to state the good and how it has been viewed; to normalize is to claim what ought to be done or considered good; and to analyze is to reflect on what we mean by good.
- *Degrees of knowledge.*
 - When talking about what you know, you might consider Immanuel Kant's discussion of degrees of knowledge. He claims that there are six degrees of knowledge. The first is to have an idea of something [*sich etwas vorstellen*]. For example, God. Whether or not you know God exists or what God is, you have an idea of God. The second is to perceive (*percipere*) a thing, that is, to *consciously* bring it to mind. You can physically see something and/or mentally bring the image to mind again. The third is to know a thing (*noscere*), that is, to have an idea of it in comparison to other things by *identifying it* amid diversity. The fourth is to understand a thing (*intelligere*), that is, to cognize it *through concepts*. The fifth is to discern it by reason (*perspicere*). And, finally, the sixth is to comprehend it (*comprehendere*), that is, to cognize it through reason and understand it adequately.

- *Ways of presenting an idea.*
 - When presenting an argument, there are some important movements to consider. To *posit* an idea or argument is to present it for someone else's consideration. One may not believe what one is positing. To *opine* is to state one's belief. To *assert* is to claim and affirm (*asserere*) the truthfulness of what is being considered. One could assert one's opinion or one could assert and defend something contrary to one's opinion. To *argue* is to contend with another person about the truthfulness of a claim. Again, one could argue for one's opinion or defend another's. But in the end, one ought to be arguing for some truth that one believes.
- *Ways of arguing.*
 - When you are using examples to make clear a point of the argument, you are *illustrating*. If those examples are from a different category or unrelated to the topic at hand, then you are *analogizing*. For example, "arriving at the truth is like a batter at home plate: you only have a small window to connect with it." They can either be persuaded or convinced, and sometimes even convicted. To *persuade* is to recommend belief in a claim, and to do so with reasoning (L: *persuadere* = *per* = through, to completion + *suadere* = advise). But that doesn't imply that one will believe. To *convince* is to be "conquered" (L: *convincere* = con- with + *vincere* = conquer.). This implies that one recognizes and assents to the truth. To be *convicted* is to recognize one's wrong.
- *Ways of defending an argument.*
 - When defending an argument, there are a few strategies or goals. To *demonstrate* an idea or argument is to "point out" its reasonableness. This is different than *proving* something. The latter attempts to test and show that an idea or argument is not only reasonable, it ought to be approved (L: *probare*) and believed.
- *"Postures" toward an argument.*
 - To believe an argument is to accept it as true or real. One could be ignorant or *ignore* the argument in the sense of not being aware of it. This is different than *disregarding* the argument. In the latter, one is aware of the argument but chooses to not consider it or "watch" it in the way that one should (L: *regarder* = to watch) To *deny* it is to

refuse to accept it or admit the truth. It's contrary, to *approve*, is to pronounce or confirm the truth of something. To reject is to "throw back" the argument being presented. But rejection differs from denial in the sense that the rejector shows how the argument is unsatisfactory. Whereas the denier just chooses not to accept it for whatever reason.

- *Some shorthand for speaking and writing:*
 - *Ergo*: therefore
 - *Non sequitur*: it doesn't follow
 - *Sine qua non*: that without which
 - *Cf.*: Compare
 - *E.g.* (*exempli gratia*): for example
 - *Ibid* (*ibidem*): in the same place
 - *I.e.* (*id est*): that is to say
 - *sic*: in this way
 - *viz.*: namely

*There is no royal road to logic, and really valuable ideas can only
be had at the price of close attention.*

~ Charles Sanders Peirce

Propositions

- A *proposition* is a declarative sentence.
- A *declarative* sentence is one that can be true or false. For example: “Today is Tuesday.”
- Examples of non-declarative sentences:
 - A question: “Is today Tuesday?”
 - A command: “Do your homework.”
 - An exhortation: “Let’s just all get along!”
- A sentence can have more than one proposition.
 - For example: The sentence “I live in a red house by the lake” asserts the proposition that *I live in a red house by the lake*, but it also asserts the simpler propositions that *I live in a house*, that *the house is red*, and that *the house is by the lake*.
- Sentences that express more than one proposition do not always *assert* all the component propositions.
 - For example: “The reelection of the president depends on whether the economy will improve by November.” The proposition that *the economy will improve by November* is expressed in the sentence, but not asserted. (The sentence may be true even if the economy doesn’t improve by November.)

An Argument and its Parts: Premises and Conclusions

- An *argument* (or *inference*) aims to prove a proposition to be true. It is made up of one or more premises and a conclusion.
- *Premises* are propositions that are put forward as reasons for accepting the *conclusion*.
 - Indicators of a premise are typically words like “because, since, so.” But be careful: these words do not always indicate arguments; they may indicate explanations, instead.
- A *conclusion* is a proposition *inferred* from the premises.

- Indicators of a conclusion are typically words like “therefore, thus, hence, so, consequently, as a result, it follows that, this shows that, which implies that, ergo.”

Choosing Premises

As a rule of thumb, choose premises for your arguments that are:

- Widely accepted as facts or beliefs
- Supported by many accepted sources
- Testified to by credible witnesses

If your argument relies on a premise that is not likely to be accepted by your target audience, then your premise will be controversial and will need to be supported by its own argument. Likewise, if your sub-argument (for the controversial premise of the main argument) relies on premises that are not likely to be accepted by your audience, then you should support those premises with still further arguments, and so on, until your arguments ultimately rest on premises that are likely to be accepted by your audience.

The Difference Between Arguments and Explanations

- Arguments give reasons for believing *that* something is true.
 - An example of an argument: “He’ll be late for class because the trains are delayed.” (That the trains are delayed is put forward as a reason *for believing that* he’ll be late.)
- Explanations attempt to show *how* or *why* something is true.
 - An example of an explanation: “He’ll be late for class—the trains are delayed.” (The fact that he’s late is already taken for granted, and the fact that the trains are delayed is offered as the reason *why* he is late.)

Ask yourself if the author/writer is trying to convince you of something by offering a reason or reasons for believing it. That’s a good strategy for determining whether an argument or an explanation is being put forward.

Assessing the Strength of an Argument

- There are two ways in which arguments can be *objectively flawed*:
 1. One or more premises are false.
For example: “If the Mayan calendar is right that the world is about to end, you shouldn’t bother paying off your student loans. The Mayan calendar is correct. Therefore, you

shouldn't bother paying off your student loans.”

2. The premises, even if true, do not support the conclusion.
For example: “If the world comes to an end in the near future, you won't have to pay off your student loans. For all we know, the world will end in the near future. Therefore, you won't have to pay off your loans.”

- There are two ways in which arguments can be *subjectively unconvincing*, even if the premises are true and support the conclusion:

1. The premises are not believed by the audience.
For example: “The Bible says God exists, and the Bible is true. Therefore, God exists.”

2. The audience fails to see how the premises support the conclusion.

Note: These last two problems are especially important to avoid when formulating your own arguments. See “Choosing Premises” above.

Logic and Argumentation

- The discipline of *logic* is primarily concerned with evaluating whether (and to what degree) the premises support the conclusion.
- The *logical strength* of an argument is the degree of support that its premises give to its conclusion. It is the degree to which the premises, if true, make it likely (or give us a reason for believing) that the conclusion is true as well.
- There are two extremes of logical strength:
 1. Very strong
 - A **valid deductive argument** (or **deductively valid** argument) is one whose premises **deductively entail** the conclusion—that is, it is *impossible* for the conclusion to be false while all the premises are true.
 - For example: “I am doubting the existence of this chair in front of me. To doubt one must be alive. Therefore, I am alive.”
 2. Very weak
 - A **fallacy** (or **fallacious** inference) is an argument whose premises, even if true, do not support the conclusion at all.
 - For example: “I am doubting the existence of this chair in front of me. To doubt one must be alive. Therefore, the New York Mets are the best baseball team.”

- Many (perhaps most) arguments fall somewhere between the extremes of fallacious reasoning and deductively valid inference.
- For example: “Students who study hard usually do well on exams. You’ve studied hard for the exam, so you’ll do well.” The conclusion (“you’ll do well”) isn’t deductively entailed by the premises, but the premises still provide a reason for believing that it’s true.

Valid and Sound Arguments

- Valid and sound arguments are deductive arguments, and they assume the basic components of any argument: premise(s) and conclusion.
- An argument is **valid** when the premise supports the conclusion. A valid argument is one in which the conclusion *must* follow from the premise. But it doesn’t matter whether or not the premise is true or false. An argument could be valid, but the premise be false.
- Examples of valid arguments:

If I go outside, I’m going to get wet.
 I’m not wet.
 I didn’t go outside.

If I call your house, your mom’s going to pick up the phone.
 If she picks up the phone, she’s going to touch it.
 If I call your mom she’s going to touch the phone.

- An argument is **sound** when the premise supports the conclusion *and* the premise is true. Unlike a valid argument, an argument cannot be sound if the premise is false.
- Examples of sound arguments:

The Brooklyn Nets are a basketball team.
 Basketball is a sport.
 The Brooklyn Nets are a sports team.

I can swim.
 Swimmers wade through water.
 Water is a liquid.
 I can wade through a liquid.

- The goal should be a sound argument, not a valid argument. We want a true premise and a supported conclusion. Here are some basic examples of valid and sound arguments:

Necessary and Sufficient Conditions

- We cannot determine whether an argument is valid or sound without determining how well its statements cohere. So we make a distinction between **necessary** conditions and **sufficient** conditions.
- **Necessary** conditions describes the idea that one statement must be true for another to be true. *If A is true, B is true.*
 - For example, take the statement, “I am a father.” In order for me to be a father, I must (a) have children and (b) be a male. I cannot be a father without having children or being a male. Therefore, “a” and “b” are necessary for the statement “I am a father” to be true.
 - “If I am a father, I have children and I am a male.”
- **Sufficient** conditions describe the idea that one statement that is true is sufficient grounds for concluding that the other statement is true. *If A, then B.*
 - For example, take the statement, “I have children.” There is sufficient ground for concluding that if I have children, then I am a father. It is reasonable to conclude this. But is also possible that I am not the father, but a guardian.
 - “If I have children, then I am a father.”

Tautologies and Contradictions

- A **tautology** is a compound proposition that cannot possibly be false. It is necessarily true because it affirms what is being stated.
 - The following are some basic and complex tautologies.
 - “A bachelor is an unmarried person.”
 - “Before we met, I didn’t know you.”
 - “Men are non-females.”
 - “My brother is my sibling.”
 - “Saul of Tarsus knew Paul the Apostle.”
- A **contradiction** is a compound proposition that cannot possibly be true. It is necessarily false because it simultaneously affirms and denies what is being stated.
 - The following are some basic and complex contradictions.
 - “I hailed a cab. No, I never hailed a cab.”
 - “Men are not men.”
 - “She is a married bachelorette.”
 - “My brother is the only child my parents had.”
 - “The statement I am about to say isn’t false. What I just said was false.”
 - “Saul of Tarsus was a good man. Paul the Apostle was a good man.”

Common Informal Fallacies

- *ad hominem* (“to the man”) – attacking one’s opponent on a personal level, rather than challenging his/her claims.

“Former president George W. Bush couldn’t even pronounce the word ‘nuclear’ correctly, so his policy on nuclear energy certainly wasn’t much good.”

- *appeal to authority (ad verecundiam)* – inferring that a proposition is true from testimonial evidence when the conditions for credibility are not satisfied or the use of such evidence is inappropriate

“Alchemy isn’t unscientific. After all, Isaac Newton believed in it, and he was one of the greatest scientists of all time.”

- *appeal to ignorance (ad ignorantiam)*: arguing that a claim is true just because it has not been shown to be false, or arguing that a claim is false just because it has not been proven true

“No one has been able to disprove the existence of the Loch Ness Monster, so it’s probably real.”

- *appeal to the majority (ad populum)* – using the mere fact that many or most people believe something as sufficient evidence for its truth

“The defendant is obviously guilty, since almost all of the jurors agree with that verdict.”

- *begging the question (circular argument)* – using the conclusion as an implicit or explicit premise, or using premises that the audience would never accept if they did not already accept the conclusion

“You can count on WARP News for the facts, because they constantly say on the air that ‘we just give you the facts,’ so that must be a fact too!”

- *diversion (or “red herring”)* – introducing an irrelevant or secondary subject and thereby diverting attention from the main issue

“Bill Clinton should not have been charged with perjury, because he did such a good job with the economy.”

- *equivocation* – changing the meaning of a word partway through an argument

“Feathers are light. Light travels at 299,792,458 meters per second. Therefore, feathers travel at 299,792,458 meters per second.”

- *fallacy of composition* – inferring that a whole has a property merely because its parts have that property

“Chocolate Frosted Sugar Bombs cereal is high in fiber. Fiber is good for you, so this cereal is good for you.”

- *fallacy of division* – inferring that a part has a property merely because the whole has that property

“This is a Christian college. You’re a student here, so you must be a Christian.”

- *false alternative/false dilemma* – failure to consider all the relevant possibilities

“Since the universe couldn’t have created itself, it must have existed forever.”

- *hasty generalization* – inferring a general proposition from an inadequate sample of particular cases

“Everyone is bored in that class. I asked three of my friends, and they all agreed that it’s boring.”

- *post hoc ergo propter hoc (“after this, therefore because of it”)* – using the mere fact that one event preceded another as sufficient evidence of causality

“I walked under a ladder on my way to class, and then I flunked my logic test. See, walking under a ladder is bad luck.”

- *straw man* – misrepresenting an opponent’s position and refuting the caricatured view rather than addressing the view actually held by the opponent

“Political conservatives think that cutting taxes and reducing the size of government will solve all of our country’s problems. That’s obviously wrong, because our country faces some problems that have nothing to do with taxes or the size of government.”

Common Formal Fallacies

- *affirming the consequent* – an argument of the form:

If A then C.

C.

Therefore, A.

“You’ll be late for class only if there’s a fire on the subway. There is a fire on the subway. Therefore, you’ll be late for class.”

- *denying the antecedent* (easily confused with *modus tollens*) – an argument of the form:

If A then C.

Not A.

Therefore, not C.

“If there’s a fire on the subway, you’ll be late for class. There’s not a fire on the subway. Therefore, you won’t be late for class.”

Kyle David Bennett, Ph.D. | Assistant Professor of Philosophy | Caldwell University
“Tools of Philosophy” Packet | Philosophy Dictionary (Midterm Exam)

- *A posteriori* (epistemology): reasoning that proceeds from observation or experience rather than deduction.
- *A priori* (epistemology): reasoning that proceeds from deduction rather than observation or experience.
- Aesthetics: the study of beauty and human appreciation of it.
- Agnosticism (philosophy of religion): the view that god cannot be known and so people should suspend judgment on his existence.
- Atheism (philosophy of religion): the view that god does not exist.
- Axiology: the study of value, typically aesthetic value or moral value.
- Categorical imperative (ethics): the fundamental moral principle of Immanuel Kant. Kant states it in two ways: 1. Always act in such a way that I could also will that my maxim should become a universal law; 2. Always act as to treat humanity, whether in your own person or that of any other, in every case as an end in itself and never as a means only. Cp. Deontologism.
- Compatibilism (metaphysics): the view that free will and external causes are compatible, and that it is possible to believe in both without logical inconsistency.
- Consequentialism (ethics): a moral theory in which the rightness of actions depends solely on consequences or results.
- Cynicism (epistemology): one believes that everyone is motivated by self-interest and (as a result) one's truth claims are tainted by an agenda.
- Deduction (logic): reasoning from a general law or principle to particular instances. Contrast with Induction.
- Deism (philosophy of religion): god exists, but he doesn't intervene or meddle in the natural order of the universe.

- Dogmatism (epistemology): one holds a view as undeniably true without the consideration of counter-evidence or the arguments of others.
- Deontologism (ethics): a moral theory in which the rightness of an action is determined by its intrinsic nature and is done in adherence to rules, duties, or obligations and not consequences. Proponents: Immanuel Kant. Contrast with Utilitarianism and Virtue Ethics.
- Determinism (metaphysics): the view that all events, including human action, are ultimately determined by antecedent causes external to human agency. Contrast with Libertarianism and Compatibilism.
- Dualism (metaphysics): the view that the mind or soul and the body are disparate things and often in conflict when it comes to understanding, willing, and acting.
- Dualism ((philosophy of religion) (a variation on polytheism): the view that two god exists and are opposed to each other.
- Empiricism (epistemology): the view that our knowledge of the world comes solely from sense experience. Modern proponents: Thomas Hobbes, David Hume, John Locke.
- Epistemology: the philosophical study of knowledge.
- Ethics: the study of morality and moral theory.
- Fatalism (metaphysics): the view that human agents are powerless to do anything other than what they actually do. Contrast with Determinism.
- Fideism (philosophy of religion): The view that we need faith in order to initially understand god.
- Free will (metaphysics): the view that rational agents have the capacity to choose a course of action from among various alternatives.
- Gnosticism (philosophy of religion): god is known through inaccessible, secretive knowledge or practice.
- Hedonism (ethics): the view that pleasure is the ultimate good.
- Henotheism (philosophy of religion): the view that a plurality of personal gods exist, but one god is superior to the others or specific to a tribe or people group.
- Idealism (epistemology): the view that objects of knowledge are held to be dependent on the activity of the mind. Contrast with Realism and Nominalism.

- Immutable (philosophy of religion): god is absolutely unchangeable (because he is perfect) (although god is able to modify his responses and actions).
- Induction (logic): reasoning from particular instances or examples to a general law or principle. Contrast with Deduction.
- Logic: the study of correct reasoning.
- Materialism (metaphysics): the view that nothing exists except matter.
- Metaphysics: the study of reality and its structures.
- Monism (metaphysics): the view that there is no distinction between matter and mind, and that all is one.
- Monism (philosophy of religion) (a variation on pantheism or panentheism): god is an absolute unity manifested in this world of apparent plurality.
- Monotheism (also know as “theism”) (philosophy of religion): the view that only one god exists.
- Naturalism (metaphysics): the view that everything arises from natural properties and causes, including ethical values and supernatural or spiritual beliefs.
- Nihilism (ethics): the view that life is meaningless.
- Nominalism (metaphysics): the view that universal ideas or abstract concepts are merely names for particular objects without any corresponding reality.
- Objectivism (epistemology): the view that things, including moral truths, exist independently of human knowledge and perception.
- Omnipotent (philosophy of religion): god has all the power a being could have.
- Omnipresent (philosophy of religion): god is present everywhere by virtue of his activity and knowledge.
- Omniscient (philosophy of religion): god knows everything that is possible for a being to know.

- Pantheism (philosophy of religion): the view that god is not a personal being or being of any kind, but is identical with nature or the universe.
- Panentheism (philosophy of religion): the view that god is not identical with nature or the universe, but nature or the universe is in some sense part of God.
- Polytheism (philosophy of religion): the view that a plurality of personal gods exist.
- Rationalism (epistemology): the view that we come to truly know the world through unaided reason. Modern proponents: Rene Descartes, Baruch Spinoza. Contrast with Empiricism.
- Realism (metaphysics): the view that universal ideas or abstract concepts have an objective or absolute existence apart from a subject and independent of a perceiving agent. Contrast with Nominalism and Idealism.
- Relativism (epistemology): the view that the truth depends on one's culture and historical situation. Contrast with Perspectivalism.
- Skepticism (epistemology): one doubts the truth or our ability to know the truth.
- Subjectivism (epistemology): the view that knowledge is merely subjective and that there is no external or objective truth.
- Utilitarianism (ethics): A variation of consequentialism that argues that an action is right insofar as it promotes happiness, and that the greatest happiness of the greatest number should be the guiding principle of conduct. Proponents: Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill. Contrast with Deontology.

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“Tools of Philosophy” Packet | Extra Credit Papers for Classes

- * = Introduction to Philosophy
- ** = Thomistic Philosophy
- *** = Philosophy of God
- **** = Philosophy of Art
- ***** = Philosophy of Law and Society

If you have received a C+ or lower on by the time of midterm grades, you are eligible to write a paper to improve your final grade.

Analysis Paper. Pick one. (2,000 words; 6-8 pages) Ten bonus points.

- Read Albert Camus’ essay “The Myth of Sisyphus.” Explain why suicide is the only true “philosophical problem” for Camus. Then discuss in terms of “assisted suicide” or euthanasia. Proffer examples in which suicide might be morally permissible or acceptable. If you are able, incorporate Stoic discussions of suicide. *
- Read Jean-Paul Sartre’s essay “Existentialism is a Humanism.” Explain Sartre’s notions of anxiety, anguish, forlornness, and bad faith. Now compare and contrast Sartre’s view of freedom from the typical North American democratic notions of freedom (i.e., the right to “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.”). *
- Read Kyle David Bennett’s *Practices of Love*. Explain Bennett’s philosophy of human life and compare and contrast with another philosophy of life or religion (e.g., Buddhism, Hinduism, cynicism, nihilism, Epicurean hedonism). *
- When asked what a person needed in order to be happy and fulfilled, the psychologist Sigmund Freud, answered: “Love and work, work and love. What else is there?” Discuss with reference to Seneca’s notion of tranquility. *
- Read Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics* (Books 1, 6-10). Outline and discuss the objections would Aristotle have with drunkenness or recreational use of drugs. *
- Read Søren Kierkegaard’s *The Present Age*. Compare and contrast Kierkegaard’s discussion of society with Diogenes of Sinope and the Cynic’s criticism of society. Be sure to include their discussions of the individual. *

- Read Seneca's "Consolation to Helvia." Several Stoics were exiled and argued in their writings that exile was no great misfortune since happiness depends on one's character and values, not on one's location. They were "citizens of the world." Discuss the importance of "place" and "home" for happiness. Include reference to contemporary issues of immigration. *
- Read Plato's *Georgias*. Outline Plato's notion of pleasure with respect to virtue or moral action and discuss with reference to Thomas Aquinas. **
- Read Thomas Aquinas's *Summa Theologica* (Part 1.2, Questions 49-54 [xliv-lv]). Discuss his notion of habit. Explain how one habit is distinguished from another and how the seemingly automaticity of a moral habit (i.e., lack of *awareness* of doing something moral) runs counter to Immanuel Kant's notion of morality. **
- Read Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* (Books 1 and 10). Explain Aristotle's point that some external property is necessary for happiness. Now discuss in conversation with Thomas Aquinas and his notions of happiness and beatitude. **
- Read Seneca's essay "Tranquility of Mind." Compare and contrast Seneca's view of tranquility with Thomas Aquinas's notion of happiness. **
- Read Plato's *Theaetetus*. Explain Plato's epistemology in contradistinction to Thomas Aquinas's account of knowledge and reasoning. **
- Read David Hume's *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (Sections 1-8). Enumerate the main features of Hume's discussion of freedom and choice and contrast it with that of Thomas Aquinas. **
- Read Plato's *Euthyphro*. Explain how Socrates sees piety relating to morality and then discuss with reference to Thomas Aquinas's notion of four laws, particularly natural law. **
- Read Michel de Montaigne's "Apology for Raimond de Sebonde." Discuss Montaigne's view of reason in animals with that of Thomas Aquinas. **
- Read Thomas Hobbes's *Leviathan* (Part 1, Chapter 12; Part 2, Chapter 31; and Part 3). Outline how Hobbes's discussion of God differs from Thomas Aquinas's. ***
- Read Søren Kierkegaard's *Fear and Trembling*. Discuss the challenges this book presents to proofs or demonstrations of God's existence, such as Anselm's Ontological Argument or Thomas Aquinas' "Five Ways." ***
- Read Michel de Montaigne's three essays "That a Man Is Soberly to Judge of the Divine Ordinances," "Of Prayers," and "Of Liberty of Conscience." Explain how Montaigne's discussion of religion and prayer differs from Blaise Pascal's. ***

- Read John Locke’s *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (Book 4, Chapters 18-19). Discuss the differences between Locke’s account of reason and revelation with that of Blaise Pascal’s. ***
- Read David Hume’s *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (Sections 10-11). Explain Hume’s view of causality and how, *prima facie*, it seems to present problems for Thomas Aquinas’s account of the “Five Ways.” ***
- Read David Hume’s “Of the Standard of Taste.” Compare and contrast Hume’s view of aesthetics and beauty with that of Thomas Aquinas. ****
- Attend a standup comedy routine. Identify and discuss the main features of this craft in discussion with Aristotle’s reflections in the *Rhetoric*. ****
- Give consideration to Plato’s discussion of “unethical” art in the *Republic*. Weigh the value of his point and the lasting impression it can have on society. Offer a constructive response. ****
- Consider Cal Seerveld and Edith Schaeffer’s discussion of “everyday art.” Explain their argument that we all desire to beautify our world (e.g., ourselves through cosmetics, our homes with decorations, and our land with gardens or plants) and discuss whether we have a moral obligation to do so. ****
- Drawing on Plato’s theory of reality, the Forms, and “imitative art,” make a moral case against contemporary acts of “digital resurrection” in film or “photoshopping” in photos. ****
- Drawing on Aristotle’s discussion of the passions in the *Rhetoric*, make a case for watching horror films in today’s society *or* make a case against watching them. ****
- Read Samuel Pufendorf’s *On the Duty of Man and Citizen*. Outline and discuss the objections Pufendorf would put forward against gossip, rudeness, and snobbery. In response, indicate circumstances where such acts might be beneficial. *****
- Read Aristotle’s *Politics* (Books 1, 3, and 4). Outline and discuss Aristotle’s distinction between a good person and the virtue of a citizen. Explain why Aristotle concludes that one can be a good citizen without being a virtuous person. Indicate where this distinction might break down. If you have read it, refer to Samuel Pufendorf’s position in *On the Duty of Man and Citizen*. *****
- Read Niccolò Machiavelli’s *The Prince*. Compare and contrast Machiavelli’s view of a political leader with that of Plato, Aristotle, or Pufendorf. Indicate where Machiavelli fundamentally disagrees with Plato’s notion of a philosopher-king, agrees with Aristotle’s

distinction between a virtuous person and a good public official, and contrasts with Pufendorf's notion of duty. *****

- Read Thomas Hobbes's *Leviathan* (Introduction and Chapters 13-21). Enumerate and explain the nuances between Hobbes' account of natural law and that of Thomas Aquinas, particularly what motivates natural impulses or tendencies. *****
- Read Henry David Thoreau's *Walden*. Compare and contrast Thoreau's view of the individual and society with that of Jean-Jacques Rousseau's. Include a brief discussion of technology and social media, particularly as it pertains to Thoreau and Rousseau's shared concern for integrity. *****
- If you find yourself attending (not crashing!) a wedding this semester, read excerpts from Søren Kierkegaard's writings on marriage [to be provided], including "At a Wedding." Listen carefully to the vows exchanged. Write down key phrases that you find interesting, puzzling, endearing, or revealing. Discuss these phrases in conversation with Kierkegaard. *****