

Preliminary Thoughts on Philosophy

DUE: Wed, Sept. 11, 2013

This assignment is designed to encourage you to reflect on your thoughts about philosophy at the beginning of the course. You will be asked to write a similar short essay at the end of the course, and to reflect on whether and how your views have changed at the end of the term.

Instructions

A. Write a response to the first only or both of the following questions. We're not looking for any particular number of words here, but your response should be somewhere between 200 and 500 words, approximately (there's a bit of leeway around those).

Questions: (answer either one, or both, but #2 is easier to answer if you also answer #1!)

1. At this point, what are your ideas about what philosophy is, and/or what philosophers do?
-- It's okay if you don't know—just say that, and say what you *think* might be the case. This is an introduction to philosophy course, so it's not surprising if you're not sure what philosophy is. There are no wrong answers here; it's just what you think. As we'll see, even philosophers themselves sometimes have a hard time saying or agreeing on what philosophy is!
2. What might be some benefits to doing philosophy, to reading it, talking about philosophical issues, even to having philosophers write on particular issues in public fora? Again, you may not have many ideas about this, because you may just be starting out, and that's fine! But whatever you *think* philosophy might be (question 1), what value might such activity have?

B. Submit this response to your course blog by midnight on Wed., Sept. 11. This way it will remain on the website so you can look back at it when you're asked to do a similar one at the end of the term and reflect on how your views have changed.

How to submit the essay to the course blog:

1. Go to your course blog site, which depends on your discussion section (this is so there aren't so many entries all in one place!)
-- Friday 9-10 (L05): <http://blogs.ubc.ca/phil102105/>
-- Friday 10-11 (L09): <http://blogs.ubc.ca/phil102109/>
-- Friday 11-12 (L07): <http://blogs.ubc.ca/phil102107/>
-- Friday 12-1 (L08) : <http://blogs.ubc.ca/phil102108/>

Note that L06 (Fri 9-10) is not listed! That's because we're going to have to cancel that section.

Everyone in the L06 Fri 9-10 section will now need to register for the L05 Fri 9-10 section and go there instead (BUCH D323). If the section is full, just let us know and we'll "force" add you in!

2. **[see note in bold, below!]** Go to the "meta" menu on the right column, near the bottom, and click "log in." Log in with your campus wide login username and password. You will probably have to go through a screen to set up a username for the blog. Your posts will come out with your username on them, so if you want to remain anonymous, come up with an anonymous username (and let Christina or your TA know what it is)! We'll give you a form to do so in class on Friday, Sept. 6, or you can

just email us with your username (see email addresses on the syllabus, on the course website: <http://blogs.ubc.ca/phil102>).

Note! You won't be registered for this blog until Thursday, Sept. 5, at the earliest. We're hoping that if some people are going to drop, they'll do it on Wednesday, so we'll register others on Thursday.

3. You're logged in, and ready to write a post on the blog! Go to "Posts" on the left menu, then "add new," and be sure to put this post put this post in the category called "1st Thoughts Phlphy."
-- We'll go over in class exactly how to do this, and Christina will make a screencast and post it on the course website: <http://blogs.ubc.ca/phil102> as soon as it's ready.
4. **Note about anonymity:** As stated above, your posts will come out with your username on them, so if you want to remain anonymous, you can do so by creating an anonymous username (but tell Christina or your TA what it is, on a form we'll hand out in class, or via email (see emails on syllabus on course website: <http://blogs.ubc.ca/phil102>)).
-- Another option is to password protect your posts so that only either (a) the class can see them, or (b) Christina and your TA can see them. We'll hand out a class password on Friday, Sept. 6, and if you password protect your posts with that password then only the class members can see them. If you want to set a password so your posts can only be seen by Christina and your TA, please email us and tell us, and give us the password you'd like to use.

Marking for this assignment

This essay, and the similar one you will be asked to write at the end of the term, count as part of your "participation" mark for the course (5% of the total 15% for attendance and participation). Instead of a letter or number grade, both of these essays will receive one of the following: (+) adequate, (-) inadequate, (0) not turned in at all. A (+) counts as full marks for each essay; a (-) counts for 50%, and a (0) means zero marks.

Each of these essays (at the beginning and the end of the term) will be considered (+) "adequate" if: they answer one or both of the questions, your answers are mostly clear, and within the rough word count limits. If your responses are quite superficial and seem to reflect very little effort, or if they are unclear, you may receive an (-) "inadequate" mark. If so, you may have a chance to re-submit the essay. Please talk to Christina to discuss this possibility.

Avoid plagiarism: It is the policy of the Instructor to prosecute plagiarism to the fullest extent allowed by UBC. Any use of another's words, including just a sentence or part of a sentence, without citation, constitutes plagiarism. Use of another's ideas without citation does as well. To avoid plagiarism, always give a citation whenever you have taken ideas or direct words from another source. Please ask Christina or your TA if you have any questions about this.

Late penalty

Late responses will automatically be considered (-) "inadequate" unless you have an acceptable excuse for turning in your essay late. You should contact Christina or the T.A. before turning in a late essay if you want to avoid this penalty, unless this is physically impossible; or at least, as soon as you can after it is late. Wednesday, Sept. 18 is the last day these responses will be accepted (unless you add the class shortly before that or after that), and you will receive a (0) "not turned in" if you do not turn in your response by this date (unless you have an acceptable excuse discussed with Christina or the T.A.).