**Overview:**

Below I provide a menu of options from which you should choose **one** to complete as your “Philosophical Skill Assignment” (PSA). In allowing you to tailor your work to your interests, I hope you can play to your strengths and turn in something you had fun creating. Indeed, two of the PSA options call for partner work, should that be something you’re interested in. To help you decide which PSA option to go with, I outline which skills and learning objectives each option meets. For information about grading, see the [**rubric on page 9 of this document**](#PSA_Grading_Rubric). To help you get a good grade in this assignment I have included [**a task checklist**](#PSA_Checklist) on page 10.

You are only required to do **one** PSA, but I accept PSAs at four times in the semester. This gives you the choice to complete yours at a time in the semester that is best for you. If you don’t like your grade, you may hand in another one to try and get a better grade, **but you must hand in a different PSA option.** I will incorporate your highest grade into your overall grade. I accept PSAs on **September 15th**, **October 17th**, **November 3rd, December 8th**.

PSA Options (click on one to jump to its description and requirements, or scroll through the document):

1. [Philosophical Opinion](#Philosophical_Opinion)
2. [Respond to a Philosophical Opinion](#Respond_to_Philosophical_Opinion)
3. [Agree w/ Conclusion, Disagree w/Argument](#_3._Agree_w/)
4. [What’s Missing (Partner Work)](#_4._What’s_Missing?)
5. [Philosophy in Movies](#Philosophy_in_Movies)
6. [Reconstruction, Objection, and Response](#_6._Reconstruction,_Objection,)
7. [Making Connections (Partner Work)](#_7._Making_Connections)

**1****. Philosophical Opinion**

**This assignment meets these learning objectives:**

* Critically examine arguments (test consistency among claims, test limits, or test capacity to address a relevant issue or problem)
* Cultivate critical writing and communication skills
* Formulate original arguments and foresee strong objections
* Develop appreciation for and sensitivity to philosophical questions

**Format:** Discussion Board Post

**Description:**

Give the class your “hot take” about an issue studied in class. Your contribution may be what philosophers call a “negative” or a “critical” contribution. For instance, you may think that we’ve talked about an idea that puts forward ***inconsistent*** claims or is otherwise ***illogical***. Or, you may take issue with some theory’s ***capacity to address*** a relevant issue or problem. Alternatively, your contribution may be what philosophers call a “positive” contribution: you may offer a solution to some philosophical problem we’ve tackled in class, or note a connection between ideas we’ve covered in class and relevant topics we haven’t yet covered. At the end of your “hot take”, consider a potential ***objection*** someone might offer, and provide a response.

**Your work must:**

* Provide an argument for your opinion
  + (I think *claim* because *reason* backed up by *evidence*)
* Summarize any texts you mention or use
* Explain WHY you think what you think
* Be at least 400 words long
* Quote at least one text read in class

**Hand-in instructions:**

To complete this assignment, you may navigate to the Discussion Board Forum entitled “Philosophical Opinions”. Think of an exciting title for your hot take and create a new thread. Someone may respond to your hot take as part of their own PSA!

**2. Respond to a Philosophical Opinion**

**This assignment meets these learning objectives:**

* Identify arguments, specifying premises and conclusions
* Critically examine arguments (test consistency among claims, test limits, or test capacity to address a relevant issue or problem
* Practice active listening, including the skill of charitable interpretation
* Formulate original arguments and foresee strong objections
* Cultivate critical writing and communication skills

* Interrogate the weaknesses of one’s own view and the strengths of alternative views

**Format:** Discussion Board Post

**Description:**

Respond to a fellow student’s “hot take” about an issue studied in class. Here, the key is to critically investigate that student’s opinions, assumptions, and reasoning: giving them feedback about what you think about their “hot take”. Tell that student (and me!) what you found convincing about their argument, and what left room for improvement. You may choose to rearticulate their argument in your own words, identify premises, hidden assumptions, or offer a different objection than the one they offered (or a different response). At the end of your response to their “hot take”, consider a potential retort they might offer to your intervention (i.e., put yourself in their shoes and imagine how they might respond to you).

**Your work must:**

* Provide an argument for your opinion
  + (I think *claim* because *reason* backed up by *evidence*)
* Display *the principle of charity* in reckoning with your peer’s words
* Summarize any texts you mention or use
* Explain WHY you think what you think
* Be at least 400 words long
* Quote at least one text read in class

**Hand-in instructions:**

To complete this assignment, you may navigate to the Discussion Board Forum entitled “Philosophical Opinions”. Click on someone else’s thread and post a reply.

## **3. Agree w/ Conclusion, Disagree w/ Argument**

**This assignment meets these learning objectives:**

* Identify arguments, specifying premises and conclusions
* Identify and explain how philosophical concepts inform discussions of real-world issues
* Develop a philosophical curiosity that will serve you outside of the classroom
* Cultivate critical writing and communication skills
* Critically examine arguments (test consistency among claims, test limits, or test capacity to address a relevant issue or problem)
* Practice active listening, including the skill of charitable interpretation

**Format:** Essay in Word Document, Prezi Presentation (w/transcript), or PPT w/ voiceover & transcript

**Description:**

One lesson I want you to learn about logical reasoning is that there are **bad arguments for true conclusions**. This means even if we agree with an argument’s conclusion, we must still scrutinize the argument to see if it uses sound reasoning. For this assignment, you will talk with likeminded people (friends, peers, family) about a belief you share (it can be any old belief, it doesn’t have to have anything to do with issues we’ve talked about in class!). You will ask these people why they think this belief is true. Once you hear an argument you ***disagree*** with, you’ll explain that belief and its argument in writing and **explain why you think their argument is flawed,** using philosophical concepts we’ve covered in class, (e.g., “argument”, “premise”, “assumption”, “objection”, “validity”, “soundness”, etc.), **even though you think the conclusion is true.**

**Your work must:**

* Summarize and quote from the content you are analyzing
* Provide an argument about why the argument is flawed even though the conclusion is true
  + (I think *claim* because *reason* backed up by *evidence*)
* Engage with, quote, and cite, our class’s collaborative philosophical encyclopedia with many of the philosophical concepts we’ve studied so far (find it [here](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1EIebxNRUmiUUgIGuu4Uy6lT5TOg2JArZzH3yWpEBJYg/edit?usp=sharing))
* Be at least 400 words long

**Hand-in instructions:**

To complete this assignment, you must upload your assignment into Blackboard by navigating in the course menu to *Hand In Assignments* --> *PSA Hand-In* and then by clicking the upload button. Its title should be “Agree w Conclusion, Disagree w Argument, Last Name”.

## 4**. What’s Missing? (Partner work)**

**This assignment meets these learning objectives:**

* Improve reading comprehension and efficiency
* Identify arguments, specifying premises and conclusions
* Cultivate critical writing and communication skills
* Develop a philosophical curiosity that will serve you outside of the classroom
* Identify and explain how philosophical concepts inform discussions of real-world issues
* Critically examine arguments (test consistency among claims, test limits, or test capacity to address a relevant issue or problem)

**Format:** Essay in Word Document, Prezi Presentation (w/transcript), or PPT w/ voiceover & transcript

**Description:**

There’s usually another side to the story, a missing piece of evidence, or another consideration that makes a difference to the truth. **For this assignment, I’d like you to pair up with someone else in the class.** Together, find something in the media, in class, in the course readings, that you both think **misses something.** For this assignment, summarize the content you have chosen, and describe what’s missing (evidence, reasons, extra considerations, extra research) from their argument and why it makes a difference using **philosophical concepts we’ve covered in class, (e.g., “argument”, “premise”, “assumption”, “objection”, “validity”, “soundness”, etc.).**

**Your work must:**

* Summarize and quote from the content you are analyzing
* Provide an argument for why something is missing from the content you are analyzing
  + (I think *claim* because *reason* backed up by *evidence*)
* Engage with, quote, and cite, our class’s collaborative philosophical encyclopedia with many of the philosophical concepts we’ve studied so far (find it [here](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1EIebxNRUmiUUgIGuu4Uy6lT5TOg2JArZzH3yWpEBJYg/edit?usp=sharing))
* Be at least 800 words long

**Hand-in instructions:**

To complete this assignment, you must upload your assignment into Blackboard by navigating in the course menu to *Hand In Assignments* --> *PSA Hand-In* and then by clicking the upload button. Its title should be “What’s Missing, Last Name1, Last Name2”.

**5.** **Philosophy in Movies**

**This assignment meets these learning objectives:**

* Critically examine arguments (test consistency among claims, test limits, or test capacity to address a relevant issue or problem).
* Cultivate critical writing and communication skills.
* Formulate original arguments and foresee strong objections.
* Develop appreciation for and sensitivity to philosophical questions.
* Identify and explain how philosophical concepts inform discussions of real-world issues.

**Format:** Essay in Word Document, Prezi Presentation (w/transcript), or PPT w/ voiceover & transcript

**Description:**

Find a movie (or TV show episode) that illustrates some issue we discuss in this course**.** [**You may look at (or even add to!) this list for some ideas of where to start**](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1LeoaL6fyR7PK0LkQpfb11vBYwX077AEk41XfmqxCLWw/edit?usp=sharing). For this assignment, provide a summary of the movie/episode, and explain how it relates to the course. Then, tell me your opinion on the philosophical issue the movie/episode brings up. Finally, provide an objection and a response to your opinion.

**Your work must:**

* Provide an argument that connects the movie/episode to class content
  + (I think *claim* because *reason* backed up by *evidence*).
* Provide an argument for your opinion for the philosophical issue the movie/episode brings up.
  + I think *claim* because *reason* backed up by *evidence*).
* Summarize any texts you mention or use
* Explain WHY you think what you think
* Be at least 400 words long
* Quote at least one text read in class

**Hand-in instructions:**

To complete this assignment, you must upload your assignment into Blackboard by navigating in the course menu to *Hand In Assignments* --> *PSA Hand-In* and then by clicking the upload button. Its title should be “Business Ethics in Movies, Last Name”.

## **6. Reconstruction, Objection, and Response**

**This assignment meets these learning objectives:**

* Critically examine arguments (test consistency among claims, test limits, or test capacity to address a relevant issue or problem).
* Cultivate critical writing and communication skills.
* Develop appreciation for and sensitivity to philosophical questions.
* Practice active listening, including the skill of charitable interpretation.
* Foresee (and respond to) strong objections

**Format:** Essay in Word Document, Prezi Presentation (w/transcript), or PPT w/ voiceover & transcript

**Description:**

For this assignment you must reconstruct an argument offered in one of the texts we’ve studied, offer an objection, and then a reasoned response. Reconstructing an argument means **stating it in clear and logical form in your own words; telling me what the author’s argument is in easy-to-understand language.** You must then offer one ***objection*** to the author’s argument. An objection **is a reason to discount the argument, as it is.** Among other things, it can point out that a premise is false, that there is a missing premise, that the conclusion doesn’t logically follow, that there is some hidden assumption that is problematic in some way, or that the argument entails unsavory implications.

**Your work must:**

* Provide a reconstruction of an argument
  + (**Author** thinks *claim* because *reason(s)* backed up by *evidence*)
* Summarize any texts you mention or use
* Explain WHY your objection is a good objection
* Explain WHY your response is a good response
* Be at least 400 words long
* Quote at least one text read in class.

**Hand-in instructions:**

To complete this assignment, you must upload your assignment into Blackboard by navigating in the course menu to *Hand In Assignments* --> *PSA Hand-In* and then by clicking the upload button. Its title should be “Reconstruction and Objection, Last Name”.

## **7. Making Connections (Partner Work)**

**This assignment meets these learning objectives:**

* Improve reading comprehension and efficiency
* Cultivate critical writing and communication skills
* Develop a philosophical curiosity that will serve you outside of the classroom

**Format:** Essay in Word Document, Prezi Presentation (w/transcript), or PPT w/ voiceover & transcript

**Description:**

**For this assignment, I’d like you to pair up with someone else in the class.** Together, make connections between something you’ve learned about in other classes and what you’ve learned or thought about in this course. What are the connections? Do these connections shed more light on the topic at hand? If so, explain in what ways the connections are fruitful. Alternatively, perhaps information you’ve learned in another class conflicts with what you’ve learned about here. If this is the case, explain how you will think about this issue from now on, given conflicting pieces of information or theories. Lastly, reflect on further research these connections inspire you to do.

**Your work must:**

* Summarize the content that you’re connecting to the class material (at least one connection from each partner)
* Provide an argument for what you see as the connections
  + (I think *claim* because *reason* backed up by *evidence*).
* Summarize any texts you mention or use
* Explain WHY you think what you think
* Be at least 800 words long
* Quote at least one text read in class

**Hand-in instructions:**

To complete this assignment, you must upload your assignment into Blackboard by navigating in the course menu to *Hand In Assignments* --> *PSA Hand-In* and then by clicking the upload button. Its title should be “Making Connections, Last Name1, Last Name2”.

PSA Grading Rubric

There are four possible grades you can get:

**Fail**, **Pass**, **Good**, **Outstanding**

If you receive an **outstanding** mark for your PSA, you receive the full 10/10.

If you receive a **good** mark for your PSA, you receive 8.5/10.

If you receive a **pass** mark for your PSA, you receive 7/10.

If you **fail** your PSA, you receive a 0/10.

The PSA is worth 20% of your overall grade.

The following rubric is the one I will use to assess your PSA. I will consider your PSA as a totality, considering its strengths and weaknesses in each area before I settle on a final mark.

To have your work graded, you must complete all the required elements of the PSA, including a bibliography.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Rating Criteria** | **Fail** | **Pass** | **Good** | **Outstanding** |
| Communicates a main idea **(topic sentence**). It is clear (a) how it relates to the chosen PSA, and (b) how it relates to a text or topic we studied in class. | Not done. | Done with no, little, or poor clarity. | Done with some clarity & errors do not suggest confusion. | Done with extreme clarity. |
| Demonstrates **understanding** of relevant philosophical ideas, arguments, or concepts. | Not done. | Done inconsistently, evidences some misunderstanding. | Done consistently  and without  error. | Done consistently  and with new  insight or appreciation  of complexity. |
| Offers  **reasons** that connect to position, view, main idea. This can look like  providing examples, and drawing distinctions. | Not done or offers irrelevant reasons or examples. | Offers at least one reason with little or no connection to position, view, main idea. | Done &  error free. | Done &  considers objections, contextual factors &/or other points of view. |
| Uses topic-relevant language**, terms and** concepts discussed in class. | Not done. | Done inconsistently or with some error | Done consistently &  error free. | Done without error & some discussion of the terms, or concepts. |

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| PSA Checklist  (You may want to print this out for your convenience) |
| **TASK** |
| * Choose PSA option from Menu |
| * Review relevant materials |
| * Write first draft of PSA |
| * Include a title that makes the PSA option clear (e.g., What’s Missing, Hot Take, etc.) |
| * Review rubric on page 4 of assignment sheet |
| * Write second draft of PSA |
| * Include bibliography (see referencing requirement tip sheet on BB) |
| * Include name (or ***names if partner work***) in assignment |