**Group Research Project**

**Worth:** 25% of overall grade

**Project Rationale:**

Two important skills-based objectives for this class are (1) to cultivate critical writing and communication skills, and (2) to learn how to formulate original arguments and foresee (and respond to) strong objections. Other skill-based objectives include practicing the skill of active listening, developing a philosophical curiosity, and improving reading comprehension and efficacy. This assignment helps you practice these skills in collaboration with your classmates.

**Description of Assignment:**

A scaffolded presentation on some philosophical topic or question we’ve touched on in class. As a group, you will formulate and present a compelling argument for a position on said topic and buttress your argument with the results from a collaborative literature review.

# Project timeline:

1. Organize a meeting with group. [Instructions here.](#_1)_Organizing_your) Email me time, date and Zoom/BB Collaborate info by **September 20th.** Worth 3 points. P/F.
   1. *Meet with group by* ***October 4th****. Among other things, this meeting is where you will decide on your research question.* [*Click here to see what you should do in this meeting.*](#_Instructions_for_first)
2. Complete a collaborative literature review, complete with small summaries. [Instructions here.](#_3._After_your) Upload summaries to your group folder by **October 18th**. Worth 5 points. P/F.
   1. *Meet with group between* ***October 18th and October 25th****. Here you will discuss the results of your collaborative literature review, decide what argument you will present to the rest of the class, and distribute group roles so that you each of have an equal share of the labor.* [*Click here to see what you should do in this meeting.*](#_Instructions_for_Second)
3. Write up a project proposal, relying on literature review. [Instructions here.](#_Project_Proposal_Instructions) Upload proposal by **November 1st**. Worth 5 points. P/F.
4. Receive feedback by **November 15th**.
   1. Meet with group between **November 15th and December 12th.** Hereyou will discuss my feedback and finalize the directions of your project. [Click here to see what you should do in this meeting.](#_Instructions_for_Third)
5. Create presentation based on research and feedback. **Present December 13th or 15th**. [Requirements here.](#_9._Presentation) Worth 12 points. Graded with a rubric. [Find rubric here.](#_Group_Project_Rubric)

To help you organize yourselves, I’ve created a checklist for you to complete as you go through the semester. [Click here to be directed to t](#_Group_Project_Checklist)he checklist.

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# 1) Organizing your group:

You must self-enroll as a group of ***five***people on Blackboard (BB). We will go over how to do this in more detail in class, but to see where to begin you navigate to “Groups” on the left-hand side of our class page on BB. Then you must organize a meeting with your group and email me the time, date, and Zoom/BB Collaborate info by **September 20t**h.

# 1a) Instructions for first group meeting:

1. Meet with group by **October 4th**.
2. Decide on a philosophical topic or question from class that sounds interesting. *This will be your research question.* Look at our course syllabus to find something that piques your interest. Make sure everyone in your group is invested in the topic! You can look ahead to topics/questions we haven’t dealt with yet.
3. Create a group chat/channel/WhatsApp chain so that you can share progress and information easily.
4. Create a group file-sharing resource (e.g., google drive folder).
5. Plan your next two group meetings. Your next meeting should be between **October 18th and October 25th** and the one following that should be between **November 15th and December 12th.** Make sure that you coordinate yourselves so everyone can make the next two meetings! They are important!

# 2) After your first group meeting: Collaborative Literature Review

1. Do the assigned reading associated with that topic or question (this may mean reading ahead of the class, if you’re doing something we haven’t touched on yet)!
   1. E.g., Week 7 through Week 10 we are thinking about the question: “What is morally important?” There are a few readings attached to this question. You should look at all of them and decide in the group chat which ones you want to focus your project around.
   2. Doing the assigned/suggested reading is the first part of any research project!
2. Begin your collaborative literature review! Each member of the group must research, read, and report on one a journal article or book chapter from outside of class that relates to your research question.
   1. Try beginning your research with the [Stanford Encyclopedia](https://plato.stanford.edu/), [PhilPapers](https://philpapers.org/), and [Google Scholar](https://scholar.google.com/). You can also try using [Brooklyn College’s library services](https://library.brooklyn.cuny.edu/resources/). Click on “Journals”, “Databases,” or “OneSearch” to start.
   2. To settle on a relevant article or book chapter, you might have to read a few abstracts. An abstract gives you the gist of what an article will argue or say, before you commit to reading the whole thing.
      1. *If you are having trouble finding an article to read, reach out to me! I will help you find something.*
   3. Once you have settled on an article that seems relevant to your research question, tell the rest of your groupmates what you have decided to read (so that you don’t end up reading the same thing)
   4. Read the article.
   5. Write up a short ~300 word summary of the article. Make sure to explain what the article’s *main argument* is, and *how it relates to your topic/research question.* Upload this into BB by **October 18th** so I can confirm that you completed this aspect of the assignment. To upload, **navigate to Hand In Assignments 🡪 Group Project 🡪 Literature Review Summary.**
3. Share your summary with the rest of the group in the shared google drive you created after your first meeting.
4. Once everyone has completed their summary, your group should have five summaries of five different articles related to your research question.

*Before your next group meeting, read all five summaries of the different articles. Make sure to think of questions or concerns you have for your peer about their summaries.*

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# 2a) Instructions for Second Group Meeting

1. Meet with your group between **October 18th and October 25th**.
2. Spend around thirty minutes discussing the literature reviews that you each did to prepare for the meeting. Clear up any confusions or questions you have.
3. Based on the collaborative literature review, what do you want to say about the topic/research question? As a group, decide on a position that you want to argue for in your presentation.
4. Think of an argument that backs up your position (I think *claim* because *reason(s)* backed up by *evidence*)
   1. Make sure to elicit several reasons for why your position is the right one.
   2. What extra research will you have to do to make sure the argument is airtight?
   3. What are some potential objections and responses?
5. Allocate roles. How will you proceed from here?
   1. Choose someone to be the project overseer (this person makes sure the project is on task and helps where needed)
   2. Choose two people to draft the project proposal.
   3. Choose two people to incorporate the feedback from the project proposal into the final presentation, and to present the project to the rest of the class.

# 3) Project Proposal Instructions

Two people in the group should write up a project proposal of minimum 500 words and maximum 1000 words. Think of this as a plan for your presentation. In the proposal you will:

1. Motivate the problem and argument (what is the philosophical problem at stake here? what is interesting about your question? why does this philosophical issue matter?)
2. Summarize the topic/problem/question, appealing to the literature that you read from the syllabus and to your collaborative literature review (what have *other* people said about this topic?)
3. Formulate your argument for a position on your topic/problem in general terms.
4. Brainstorm a couple of strong objections and responses.
5. If necessary, do extra research to back up your argument.
6. Ask the project overseer to look over the project proposal before you upload it on BB.
7. To upload to BB, **navigate to Hand In Assignments 🡪 Group Project 🡪 Project Proposal.**

4) After you submit your project proposals, I will give you feedback by **November 15th.**

# 4a) Instructions for Third Group Meeting:

Meet with group between **November 15th and December 12th.**

Two members of your group will craft your final project based on this feedback. They will present this project on **December 13th** or **15th**. At this meeting, you should:

1. Discuss the feedback that the professor gave you. (Is there anything you are still confused about? Who will email the professor to ask her follow up questions?)
2. Discuss whether you should make any changes to your argument in light of the feedback?
3. Discuss whether anyone has any ideas about how to improve the motivations/summary/argument/objections sections?

# 5) Presentation Requirements

Two people from the group, with the go-ahead of the rest of the group, should incorporate the feedback from the professor into a final project which showcases a unique argument for a philosophical issue, complete with at least one objection and response. The presentation will:

1. Motivate the problem and argument (what is the philosophical problem at stake here? what is interesting about your question? why does this philosophical issue matter?)
2. Summarize the topic/problem/question, appealing to the literature that you read from the syllabus and to your collaborative literature review (what have *other* people said about this topic?)
3. Present your unique argument to the rest of the class (remember to give strong reasons for why we should be convinced for your view!)
4. Present at least one strong objection and one response.
5. If necessary, present extra research to back up your argument.
6. Ask the project overseer to look it over before you present it to the rest of the class.
7. After you present, don’t forget to upload your presentation to BB. To upload your presentation to BB, **navigate to Hand In Assignments 🡪 Group Project 🡪 Presentation.**

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# Group Project Rubric

Your group project is worth 25% of your overall grade.

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

Failure to properly cite sources is plagiarism and will receive a zero. This means that you must include a bibliography slide. Cite your sources!

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Description of Excellent Work** | **Outstanding** | **Good** | **Pass** | **Fail** | **Description of Poor Work** |
| **Motivates the Argument** | You motivate the argument, explaining what the philosophical problem at stake is, and why it matters. | 3 | 2.5 | 1 | 0 | You do not motivate the argument. It is not clear why your contribution is important. |
| **Summary of Literature Review** | You include a summary of other positions. It is clear that your group did background research | 3 | 2.5 | 1 | 0 | You do not mention any other positions on this topic. There is no evidence of outside research. |
| **Argument** | Thesis statement is present. What you’re arguing for is clear.  You provide excellent reasons, and they connect in the appropriate way to your thesis. | 3 | 2.5 | 1 | 0 | No thesis.  Alternatively: You include a thesis but have no reasons to support it. It’s not clear why you think what you think. Your contribution is unclear. |
| **Objection and Response** | You present a strong objection and response. You explain why it is a good objection and also why your response adequately tackles it. | 3 | 2.5 | 1 | 0 | You do not include an objection or a response at all. |

**Score: \_\_\_/12 points.**

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| Group Project Checklist (You may want to print this out for your convenience) |
| **TASK** |
| * Organize a meeting with group (instructions here). Email me time, date and Zoom/BB Collaborate info by Sep 20th. |
| * First Meeting: Decide on research area and question as a group (instructions here) |
| * First meeting: Create a group chat/channel/WhatsApp chain so that you can share progress and information easily. |
| * First meeting: Create group file-sharing resource. |
| * First meeting: Plan next two meetings. |
| * Complete individual literature review work (research and writing summary) |
| * Read other group members’ summaries. |
| * Second meeting: discuss results from collaborative literature review. |
| * Second meeting: come up with position as a group, and then formulate an argument and some potential objections/responses. |
| * Second meeting: allocate roles for the rest of the project. |
| * Two group members: Complete Project Proposal and upload to BB |
| * Everyone: read feedback from prof on project proposal. |
| * Third meeting: discuss feedback from prof and decide whether/what to incorporate into final project. |
| * Two group members: Prepare presentation |
| * Two group members: Practice presentation (get project overseer involved) |
| * Complete presentation |