

Final Term Project

Central Washington University
Philosophy 101.03
Winter Quarter, 2009

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Term Project due on Thursday, March 5, 2009

INSTRUCTIONS: (100 points)

Please answer the following question completely and creatively in an essay, dialogue or narrative format. Please type between 4 and 5 double-spaced, spell-checked pages. If you use quotes, credit the source and cite the page number in MLA format. You may also use an alternative format, such as a video/DVD, musical CD, or perhaps an artistic work to convey your ideas. If you choose an alternative format, you must submit a written explanation which describes your project and its philosophical content in 3-4 typed, double-spaced, and spell-checked pages.

For example, you could make up an imaginary conversation between the 3 philosophers and yourself, discussing the issues and representing their points of view through several interlocutors, or perhaps tell a story illustrating the ideas of each philosopher. Have some fun with the ideas! Include relevant details and provide examples where necessary. Try to put yourself in the philosopher's place and think creatively. How would you think and act towards this issue if you were Plato or Aristotle or another philosopher? What objections, assertions, and responses might you make? Try to be the philosopher and examine the issue from their point of view. For our purposes, please regard Plato and Socrates as having the same position, since Plato uses him as his interlocutor. You cannot use Socrates as your third philosopher.

1. Creatively consider a real-life issue of your choice from the point of view of how you think it might be seen by Plato, and compare to Aristotle. Include the views of at least one other philosopher of your choice whom we study in this course. Apply their philosophical positions to the issue and imagine how the philosophers would argue their points. Describe how your thinking and actions regarding this issue might be different or similar if you held each of these three positions. Include your own opinion on objections or agreements with each philosophical position, and explain why you object or agree. (You are encouraged to include your own suggestions on how you think best to handle this issue, but it is not required.)

Some suggested issues: legal, crime and punishment (capital punishment, prison policy and purpose of incarceration, victim and criminal rights, rehabilitation, etc.), medical (such as transplants, artificial life support of comatose or brain-dead patients, live-subject testing, doctor assisted suicide, cost of medical treatment & medicine, for-profit medical industry, insurance, cloning, stem-cell research, medical coverage for the poor, etc.), natural resource use and management (such as forest clear-cutting, oil-drilling, open-pit strip mining, environmental pollution, water quality, etc.), why you should do the right thing in a moral dilemma (and the consequences of your choice), political issues (such as election policy, public funding, etc.), physics, education, life before/after death, innate ideas vs. tabula rasa, or some other issue you feel strongly about that is of concern today, perhaps within your major field or an area of interest. Tip: Try to narrow down your topic to some specific aspect of a problem, or perhaps a subset of problems within an issue. If your topic is too broad, it may be more difficult to apply the philosophies to it. Also, if you choose philosophers who differ significantly, it may be easier to compare and contrast their ideas. I would be happy to discuss your intended topic with you.

Bonus Question: (3 extra credit pts)

Does knowledge require sense data, or can it be obtained through reasoning alone, in the absence of sensation? What do you think, and why? (*attach a written response to this optional bonus question*)