CGSC 281/PHIL 181: Phil&Sci Human Nature   Gendler/Yale University, Spring 2011

Third Short Essay
Deadline: Monday, 25 April 2011, 11:59pm

IMPORTANT

➔ If you did not write both the First and Second Short Essays, you must write the Third Short Essay.

➔ The Third Short Essay is due by Monday, April 25th at 11:59pm. Lateness policies are described below.

➔ Please submit your essay in a form suitable for blind review (details below.)

➔ Please include a word count at the end of your essay.

➔ If you did write both the First and Second Short Essays, but would like to write the Third Short Essay in addition (for your own edification, rather than for a grade), please submit your Essay to hum.nat.2011@gmail.com with a brief note. It will be read after grades have been submitted, and you will receive comments very soon thereafter.

Instructions

- Your paper should be handed in on the V*2 server website under Assignments as an attachment.

- Please submit your paper in a format (e.g. Word) that will allow your TF to provide you sentence-level comments about the content of the paper.

- The paper should be roughly 1000 words in length. (That means nothing shorter than 800 words, and nothing longer than 1200 words.) PLEASE INCLUDE A WORD COUNT AT THE END OF YOUR ESSAY.

- Please include page numbers on your paper.

- On the cover sheet for your essay, please include the following affirmation. "By submitting this essay, I attest that it is my own work, completed in accordance with University regulations. – [Your name here]"

- At the end of your paper, please include a list of sources consulted (e.g. websites that you visited, reference works that you looked at, etc – this does not need to be in the form of a formal bibliography.) Quotations internal to the paper should be identified with quotation marks, followed by a simple (author/book, page) citation. (E.g. (Haidt, 27) or (*Nicomachean Ethics,* 1103a25.))

- Please submit your paper in a form suitable for **blind review** (that is: so that your TF can read your paper without knowing who wrote it.) Please put all identifying information (your name and honor pledge) on a cover sheet, and leave such information off of later pages.

Policies

- As you know from the syllabus, three short essay assignments will be provided, and you will need to hand in **two** of them. To remind you:
  - ➢ The stronger of your essays will determine 15% of your grade
  - ➢ The weaker of your essays will determine 10% of your grade

- Because this is a large lecture class, it is important to have explicit and uniform policies. Among those policies (as stated on the syllabus) is the following:
  - ➢ Essays will be marked down 1/3 of a grade for each 24 hours (rounded up) that they are late. (That is, an A will become an A-; a B+ will become a B; etc.)
  - ➢ The only acceptable grounds for extension of this deadline are a Dean's Excuse

- It goes without saying that academic integrity is of the utmost importance in completing this assignment. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion at: http://writing.yalecollege.yale.edu/using-sources.

Advice

- The Yale College Writing Center offers useful advice about writing in general at http://writing.yalecollege.yale.edu/what-good-writers-know

- A number of model Philosophy papers can be found at http://writing.yalecollege.yale.edu/model-papers-disciplines#7

- A collection of guides to writing philosophy papers can be found under "Resources/Paper Writing Models and Guides/Guides to Philosophical Writing" on our website. Not all of them are fully applicable to this paper assignment, but many of their suggestions are good ones, and I encourage those of you who are taking a philosophy course for the first time to look through at least some of those guides.

- Model papers from the first assignment can be found under "Resources/Paper Writing Models and Guides/Model Papers."

- As always, your TF is available for guidance and consultation.

Topics

- Your paper should address <u>one</u> of the following topics.

- Whichever topic you choose, your paper should make explicit reference to at least <u>two</u> of the authors we have read (e.g. Nagel & Lewis; Rawls & Hardin; Plato & Nozick; etc.)

- General advice about paper structure can be found on the next page.

(1) What is the problem of moral luck? Pick one of the theories of punishment discussed in the readings. Does the phenomenon of moral luck pose a problem for this theory? Why or why not? (You may also find the readings on the psychological basis for punishment useful in constructing your argument.)

You may organize your paper around a particular example – for instance, a driver talking on her cell phone who accidentally kills a pedestrian – or you may discuss the issue from a more general perspective.

(1) In the opening pages of *A Theory of Justice* (TJ 4; EOP 296), John Rawls writes:

> Although a society is a cooperative venture for mutual advantage, it is typically marked by a conflict as well as an identity of interests. There is an identity of interests since social cooperation makes possible a better life for all than any would have if each were to live solely by his own efforts. There is a conflict of interests since persons are not indifferent as to how the greater benefits of their collaboration are distributed…each prefers a larger to a lesser share.

Using as your jumping-off point one or more of these three sentences, argue for at least one practical implication as to how a just society should be structured. (For example: should social and economic inequalities be arranged so that they are to the greatest benefit of the least advantaged (as Rawls argues)? Should there be an absolute sovereign (as Hobbes suggests)? Does any state more extensive than the minimal state violate people's rights (as Nozick maintains)? Should utilitarian trade-offs of basic liberties be permitted? Etc. Your paper should address <u>one</u> of these issues – or another similar issue of your choice. (Do <u>not</u> try to address more than one.)

(2) In Book X of *The Republic*, Plato offers an argument in favor of state censorship, contending that imitative poetry has no place in the ideal society. In "Social Norms and Social Roles," Cass Sunstein offers an argument in favor of the government's role in what he calls "norm management."

Criticize or defend one of the two views, drawing on the work of another author that we read in the "Political Legitimacy" unit.

A successful answer to any one of these questions *might* look something like this. (You do not need to follow this outline as long as you answer the stated question.)

- Offer a short statement in your own words of the view that you will be defending or criticizing.
- Offer a defense or criticism of the view, perhaps drawing on one or more of the authors we have read, followed by your own assessment of this defense or criticism.
- Offer one or perhaps two (critical or supportive) response (s) to this defense or criticism, either one(s) that you yourself devise, or one (s) that draw(s) on one or more of the readings we have done. These may be theoretical responses, or they might be examples or counterexamples that you describe or construct whose connection to the argument you make clear and explicit.
- Evaluate this response.
- Present a retort on behalf to the response(s) that you have presented.
- Evaluate this retort.
- Evaluate the dialectic (though it's fine if your paper ends in *aporia*…) [you can look up what *aporia* means in the Blackburn *Dictionary of Philosophy*.]

[Posted 4/11/11]