Final Paper Assignment

Philosophy 364

Purpose: The purpose of the final paper assignment is to demonstrate your understanding of the material, your writing ability, and your philosophical thinking.

Topic: Your assignment is to write an essay in which you discuss three different views on the good life. The first two views should be views from early Greek philosophy that we covered in class (hedonism, epicureanism, stoicism, aristotelianism, skepticism, intellectualism). In discussing each of these views, you should do three things: (i) present and explain the view as clearly as possible (ideally using quotes from the text, and citing the relevant philosopher or philosophers who held the view); (ii) present, explain, and evaluate at least one argument for that view; (iii) discuss at least one objection to that view. So, for example, you might explain the Cyrenaic philosophers’ version of hedonism, then present, explain, and evaluate their “proof” of hedonism, and then discuss the objections to hedonism from class. After that, you would do the same thing for another view from class.

The third view about the good life that you discuss should be a view that we did not cover in class, and that you yourself find plausible. There are a lot of options here. You could discuss an updated version of a view we talked about in class, like Mill’s version of hedonism. You could talk about an ancient Greek view that we didn’t get to in class, like the Neoplatonist view that was developed at the end of the Hellenistic period. You could discuss a non-Western view, like the Buddhist view of the good life. Or you could talk about a contemporary view, like the desire-satisfaction theory. You can also just talk about your own view on the good life but, if you do, you must do some research in order to situate your view in the literature (e.g., by identifying other people who have said similar things, and talking about how your view differs). In discussing this third view, you should do two things. First, state the view as clearly as possible, being sure to cite people who’ve discussed the view before. Second, say why you find the view plausible (at a minimum, you should talk about how this view avoids the objections facing other views, especially the views that you discussed in the first two parts of your paper).

The third part of the paper will require research, so be sure to cite your sources!

Details:

• Papers are due by 10 am on Thursday, June 14th.
• Hard copies should be placed my mailbox or under my office door in Bond 302.
• Late papers will be penalized 10%, plus an additional 10% for each day late.
• Late papers must be e-mailed to Ryan.Wasserman@wwu.edu.
• Papers must be at least 2,000 words in length.
• Your title should appear on the first page.
• Your name and word count should appear on a separate page at the end of the paper (so as to allow for anonymous grading).
• Papers are worth 35 points, which is 35\% of your course grade.
• Papers will be graded on both content and presentation.
• Papers should conform to the advice in the checklist on the course website.

**Resources:** On the website, you can find various items to help in the writing of your paper. You can also visit during office hours or come to the review day on Thursday, June 7th.