

Paper Topics

Here are three possible topics for the paper. Remember that this paper is a “position paper.” That means that a principal goal is for you to take AND DEFEND a position regarding the topic of the paper. This will require that you carefully analyze the them for the paper to explain exactly what it means. You may find a theme will could be interpreted in more than one way. Obviously the position you take regarding the theme will depend on how you interpret the theme.

I really do not care what position to take regarding the claims. I am interested in the precision and rigor with which you interpret the theme, argue for your own position and address at least obvious objections to your position. There is a two page limit on the paper with 11 point font, double spaced, and normal 1” margins. The page limit might seem brief but I want you to write a paper in which you focus on carefully crafting the arguments you are making and not develop lots of secondary material (aka, “BS”).

Think of writing a philosophy position paper like properly developing a case in a court of law. In this situation, the evidence must be clearly laid out and must be clearly relevant to the issue at hand. There is always the opposing attorney to object: no proper foundation laid' irrelevant material; vague evidence, etc. Learn to be your own best critic by learning how to read your work as others will read it. The more you can do this and anticipate the objections and problems which other will have with you work, the better the writer you will become. Remember successful performers are those who, while on the stage, have a good sense of how they appear to the audience. They listen to themselves from the perspective of the audience. So too, if you are to become a good writer, you must listed to yourself from the perspective of your audience -- in this case me. But DO NOT try to write a paper simply because you think I will agree with the position. Develop your own position in this paper, as critically and rigorously as you possibly can.

I expect the paper to free of grammatical and other errors. To the extent that such errors interfere with the clear communication of your position, they will have a bearing on the grade for the paper. The paper is worth 40 points.

If you have questions, email me and I will be happy to answer them. We can chat a bit about the paper on Monday.

- 1) People should be criminally punished so that they always get exactly what they deserve.
- 2) “The intention of the lawgivers should be to make citizens virtuous. But people cannot be virtuous unless they avoid all kinds of vice. Therefore human law should repress or ciminalize all vices.” You are at a conference on law and morality where this thesis is proposed for adoption. Argue for or against it, defending your own view with respect various conceptions on the criminal enforcement of morality that have been discussed in class.
- 3) Drawing on Friedman, course readings, and the videos shown throughout the course: write an essay discussing whether “life without possibility of parole” is a morally appropriate form of punishment Make certain to take into account the observation made in the one of the video we watched that “life without possibility of parole” condemns a person to life without hope and is, therefore, morally unacceptable.

