

First Paper Assignment

1. Your first paper is due at the beginning of class on February 7. It should be double spaced, approximately 600 - 800 words, in a reasonable font, such as 11 point Times, with reasonable (e.g. one-inch) margins. Paginate your paper. Do not right justify (i.e. fully justify) it.
2. The topic for your first paper should be an original exegesis (critical analysis) of some portion of a single philosophical reading on the syllabus from Classes 3-6:

Plato, from *Republic*
Descartes, from *Meditations on First Philosophy*
Descartes, "The Story of the Wax" and "The Story of the Sun"
Locke, "On the Primary/Secondary Distinction"
Berkeley, from the *Principles*
Moore, "Proof of an External World"
Wittgenstein, from *On Certainty*

This is not a rhetorical, argumentative paper. It is an exercise in careful interpretation and clear exposition.

3. Do not be misled by the brevity of the assignment. Expect to revise your paper several times before submitting it. Revisions ordinarily involve tightening and clarifying your writing.
4. In the future, I will recommend consulting others about how to improve your papers prior to submitting them. For this assignment, please work exclusively by yourself.
5. Standards for academic writing vary by discipline. Philosophical writing should be attentive to every detail. Write simply, and clearly. Minimize use of jargon. Observe standard rules of grammar and spelling. Avoid history and biography. Focus on the arguments. Avoid these common infelicities: Conclusions are based *on* evidence, not *off of* evidence. 'Reference' should not be used as a verb. Do not use 'critique' where 'criticism' will do.
6. Your work for this paper should mainly consist of you and your chosen reading. Other sources you consult while writing, including any websites you visit and any persons with whom you talk, must be noted. References to our assigned readings may be indicated in line: "Some truths there are so near and obvious to the mind, that a man need only open his eyes to see them" (Berkeley, §6). Other sources require a list of references at the end of the paper, along with in-line citations. Internet sources must include a live URL. I must be able to trace any source.
7. Late papers will be penalized.
8. You may re-write the first paper, for a possible improved grade. All rewrites must be completed by April 17
9. Violations of academic integrity, like plagiarism, will lead to failing grades. Acknowledge any assistance you have had on your paper.

The Hamilton College Honor Code will be enforced.