

First paper assignment

PHIL 20229: Paradoxes

Due: Thursday, March 4 (the Thursday before spring break)

Below is a description of your first paper assignment. As an alternative to doing this assignment, you may come up with your own topic, though you must get the written approval of me or your TA by email first. If you do this, the question that I or your TA approves should be on the first page of your essay. The papers should be about 5 pages in length, double-spaced and with reasonable margins and font.

A late penalty of 3 points per day, including weekends, will be assessed for any papers which are handed in late.

Plagiarism is a serious and growing problem at Notre Dame and other universities. It is your responsibility to acquaint yourselves with the University's honor code, as well as with the philosophy department's guidelines regarding plagiarism. Both are linked from the course web site.

Many of the paradoxes we have discussed have no uncontroversial solution. Examples include: Zeno's paradoxes, McTaggart's proof of the unreality of time, Kant's antinomies, the problem of the statue and the clay, the puzzles of personal identity, the relationship between free will and determinism, and the rule-following paradox. Pick one of these paradoxes, and defend your own view about how the paradox should be resolved. The solution defended can be one of the views discussed in class, or one that you have come up with on your own.

A good paper will clearly explain the paradox and clearly explain why the solution defended is the best available solution. A very good paper will advance arguments which go beyond the arguments discussed explicitly in lectures.

There is no need to include anything more than a very brief introduction, and no need for a "summing up" paragraph at the end. The focus should be on a clear, concise defense of your view on the relevant topic.

There is no need to do any research for this paper. You are encouraged to spend time thinking about the problem for yourself, rather than reading what other people think about it. If you do use outside sources, any sources you read on the topic, whether or not you quote from them, must be cited at the end of the paper. Any citation style is fine so long as it is clear what you are citing.

