

## PHIL 83104: First short paper

Due: Thursday, October 13

Your first paper should be, roughly, 5 pages in length. There are a few different sorts of things that you might do with this paper:

- The paper could be a short critical evaluation of some view espoused by one of the authors we discuss in the first half of the class. Your aim should be to clearly state the view in question, and state and defend a clear argument for the conclusion that that view is false. If you take this route, the argument should be substantially of your own making, rather than a simple rehashing of some argument discussed in class or in my handouts.
- You might pick some difficult-to-understand argument from one of the texts in the class, and give an interpretation of that argument, along with some brief evaluation of the argument's strengths and weaknesses. Your focus should be on clearly identifying the premises and structure of the argument; you might also consider several different interpretations of the argument, and evaluate their relative strengths and weaknesses. Examples of the sorts of arguments one might focus on are Russell's "Gray's elegy" argument in "On denoting", Frege's argument for the indefinability of truth, or Kripke's argument for property dualism in Lecture III of *Naming and Necessity*.

If you would like to do something which does not quite fit into either of these categories, I'm open to suggestions — just talk to me about it first.

In no case should your paper require much, if anything, in the way of research. I am much more interested in you spending time thinking through some delimited topic in detail than in you finding out what other philosophers have thought about this topic.

I am happy to read drafts of these papers, or to discuss them with you either in person or by email. Please hand the papers in by sending them to me as email attachments.