

### Paper Assignment

#### General Guidelines

1. Your paper is **due on Friday, May 11**. Late papers will be penalized.
2. All papers must be typed or computer-printed, double spaced, **four to six pages** in a reasonable font (12 point Times, for example). This means approximately 1200 to 1800 words.
3. Do not right-justify your paper.
4. I expect you to observe basic rules of grammar and spelling. Proofread your paper. Asking a good writer to read and comment on your paper can be helpful. See below for a few specifics.
5. You may use quotes from the reading(s) in our book by merely noting the author and page number. For example: “*Good*, and *evil*, are names that signify our appetites.... (Hobbes 69)” You may quote your class notes. Cite them: “Blah blah blah (Marcus, class notes, 2/2/07).” **I strongly discourage you from using other sources.** If you do use another source, you must include a proper bibliographical reference, including author, title, and publishing information, or current URL. I must be able to trace the source.
6. Violations of academic integrity, like plagiarism, will lead to failing grades. Use quotations to present the exact words of another writer. Cite any ideas that are not your own (e.g. “Mill asserts that...”).

#### How to Write Your Paper

1. Pick a paper theme from the list provided.
2. Read *Conspiracy of Fools*, focusing on the topic or topics on the Enron Reading Guide that are relevant to your paper theme. Relevant pages of the book are specified at the beginning of each topic on the Reading Guide. But, your paper need not be restricted by the pages or questions listed in the topics covered by your paper theme.
3. Choose a thesis for your paper, the conclusion you will defend. Introduce your paper by briefly stating your thesis. Be specific. Your paper should be an extended argument in support of this thesis. Often, it is easiest to write the introduction after you have finished writing the body of the paper.
4. Present an overview of the ethical theory or theories required by your paper theme.
5. Apply the ethical theory to the questions in your paper theme. Choose specific, relevant examples to support your thesis. The challenge of the paper is to present the ethical theory clearly and use it to evaluate a specific case accurately.

#### Some Comments on Spelling and Grammar

1. Do not rely on spell-checking or grammar-checking programs, alone.
2. *Its* is a possessive pronoun, as in “The cat cleaned its paws.” *It’s* is a contraction meaning ‘it is’. Normally, we use apostrophes to indicate possession, but not in this case.
3. *There* indicates location; *their* indicates possession; *they’re* means ‘they are’. (E.g. They’re crying because Bobby spilled their milk on the table over there.)
4. Use one space after a comma, and two spaces after a period. Use one after a semicolon; better yet, avoid semi-colons. Using semicolons is like tinkering with the insides of the TV. Don’t do it unless you know what you’re doing.
5. When quoting a source for more than five lines, indent the quotation, single-space it, and don’t use quotation marks. Be sure to cite any quote, of course.
6. Spell out numbers less than and including one hundred.
7. *Then* indicates a conclusion or a change in time. *Than* indicates a comparison. If the Giants finish with a better record than the Jets, then I will eat my hat.
8. Avoid biography. Mill’s birthplace is unlikely to be relevant to your thesis.
9. Omit needless words. (See: Strunk and White. *Elements of Style*. §13. <http://www.bartleby.com/141/>)
10. *E.g.* means ‘for example’. *I.e.* means ‘that is’. If you want to use either of these, make sure you understand the difference.

## Paper Themes

- 1. Aristotle's ethics and Enron.** Choose among Ken Lay, Jeff Skilling, Andy Fastow, and Sherron Watkins (topics A, B, C, or R). Present Aristotle's theory, considering especially the nature of happiness, and the role of virtues and vices. Using specific examples, evaluate the character of the person you choose in light of Aristotle's ethical theory. Is the person you chose a good person? Why, or why not?
- 2. Utilitarianism and Enron's businesses.** Consider Enron's core business, the gas bank (topic D), and choose one or two other ventures from among retail energy, Enron International, California, broadband, and water (topics F, G, H, I, and J). Present Mill's utilitarianism, considering especially the greatest happiness principle and the importance of balancing long-term and short-term considerations. Using specific examples, evaluate the ventures you choose in light of the greatest happiness principle. Were these good businesses, or not? Explain.
- 3. Kant, Mill, and Corporate Culture.** Evaluate Enron's corporate culture (topic E) in light of both Kantian deontology and Mill's utilitarianism. Present Kant's theory. Using specific examples, demonstrate how Enron's work environment either upheld or violated Kantian principles. Similarly, present Mill's utilitarianism, and show, using specific examples, how Enron's internal environment was consistent or inconsistent with utilitarian principles. You need not present every detail of each ethical theory, but you should discuss the central tenets of the theories, and the elements required for evaluating Enron's corporate culture.
- 4. Kant or Mill and Enron's Accounting.** Use either Kant's moral theory or Mill's utilitarianism to evaluate Enron's accounting (topics L and O). Present either Kant's theory or Mill's theory, in detail. Using specific examples, show how Enron violated either Kantian or utilitarian principles. Consider how Enron recorded profits, how they manipulated earnings reports, and how they handled their external auditors.
- 5. Utilitarianism and Special Purpose Entities.** How and why did Enron misuse special purpose entities? Present Mill's utilitarianism, considering especially the greatest happiness principle and the importance of balancing long-term and short-term considerations. Consider the use of special purpose entities generally, and specifically in the cases of Chewco and JEDI, or RADR (topic M and either topic N or topic O). How did Enron's use of SPEs violate utilitarian principles?
- 6. Utilitarianism and LJM2.** How and why did Enron misuse LJM2? Present Mill's utilitarianism, considering especially the greatest happiness principle and the importance of balancing long-term and short-term considerations. Consider the establishment, management, and various uses of LJM2 (topic P). Using specific examples, show how Enron's uses of LJM2 violated utilitarian principles.
- 7. Kant and Arthur Andersen.** How did Andersen facilitate the collapse of Enron? Present Kant's moral theory, focusing especially on the categorical imperative and our ethical duties. Consider the role of Arthur Andersen as Enron's external auditor (topics Q and T). Using specific examples, show how auditors at Andersen and Enron violated Kantian principles.
- 8. Kant and Internal Investigations.** How did the internal investigators of Enron facilitate the collapse of the company? Present Kant's moral theory, focusing especially on the categorical imperative and our ethical duties. Consider the role of both Sherron Watkins, and the internal review teams (topics R and T). Was there a conflict between the ethical duties of the investigators and their loyalties to Enron?
- 9. Utilitarianism and External Investigations.** Was Enron unfairly attacked by external investigators? Present Mill's utilitarianism, considering especially the greatest happiness principle and the importance of balancing long-term and short-term considerations. Is Skilling justified in claiming that Enron has been wrongly maligned? Consider both the journalists and the government investigators (topics S and U).
- 10. Utilitarianism and the Collapse of Enron.** Was Enron's collapse preventable? Present Mill's utilitarianism, considering especially the greatest happiness principle and the importance of balancing long-term and short-term considerations. Consider the role of external investigations, and the final days of Enron (topics U and V).

Any topics other than the ones listed here must be cleared with me *in advance*.