

Exegesis Assignment

1. The topic for your exegesis should be an original exegesis (critical analysis) of some portion of a single philosophical reading on the syllabus from Classes 3-6:

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. Where the précis focused on a single argument, the exegesis should take a broader view of the assigned reading. Present the overarching conclusion of the piece and the various arguments that support it.

2. Your exegesis is due at the beginning of class on September 18.
3. The exegesis 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. Late papers will be penalized.
4. 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.
5. Feel free to consult others about how to improve your exegesis prior to submitting it. Links to excellent advice for writing philosophy papers are available on the course website. The Writing Center has excellent peer tutoring; make an appointment in advance. Acknowledge any assistance you have had on your paper.
6. 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.
7. 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 the in-line citations. Internet sources must include a live URL. I must be able to trace any source.
8. You may re-write the exegesis, for a possible improved grade. All rewrites must be completed by November 20.
9. Violations of academic integrity, like plagiarism, will lead to failing grades.

The Hamilton College Honor Code will be enforced.