

Second Paper Assignment

General Guidelines

1. Your paper is **due on Monday, April 23**. You may hand in your paper early. 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 1000 to 1800 words.
3. Do not right-justify your paper.
4. Observe basic rules of grammar and spelling. Proofread your paper. Asking a good writer to read and comment on your paper can be helpful.
5. You may use quotes from the reading(s) in Morton by merely noting the author and page number: "Thought must be related to what is thinkable, as sense is to what is sensible (Aristotle, 42)." You may quote from Churchland similarly, though he is generally silent on topics relevant to the first paper. You may quote class notes thus: "Blah blah blah (Marcus, class notes, 1/22/07)." I do not expect you to use other sources. In fact, I discourage 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, can and will lead to failing grades. I am interested in what you have to say, but I do not expect you to generate 1500 words of original scholarship. Your main task here is to be clear about what others have said, and to present it in your own way. Sometimes, for brief passages, some one else will just say it better than you can. Quote it. Cite any ideas that are not your own. (E.g. "Descartes argues that...")

How to Write Your Paper

1. Pick a topic from the list below.
2. Introduce your paper by briefly stating your thesis, the conclusion you will defend. 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.
3. Argue for your thesis. Each paragraph should relate directly to your specific thesis.
4. Consider possible objections. Argue your own thesis, but through the writings of the philosophers.
5. Conclude your essay by summarizing exactly what you intended to say in the paper.

Some Pedantic 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 milks 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 semicolons. 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 do not 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 you prefer reading Aristotle to reading Plato, then you and I feel differently.
8. Avoid biography. Descartes' 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 use either of these, make sure you understand the difference.

Paper Topics

1. Behaviorism and dualism. How does Ryle criticize Descartes' official doctrine? What advantages does behaviorism have over the Cartesian view of our mental states? What weakness does the behaviorist account have? Distinguish the behaviorism of Skinner and Hempel from Ryle's version. Does Ryle avoid the problems of the earlier behaviorists? Does behaviorism provide a satisfactory account of our mental states?
2. Identity theory and dualism. Describe Smart's defense of identity theory, including the role of theoretical identifications. Compare the identity theory to Hobbes' materialism. What advantage does identity theory have over dualism? (Consider both Smart and Armstrong.) What is the most serious challenge for the identity theorist? Does identity theory provide a satisfactory account of our mental states?
3. Identity theory and behaviorism. How are the motivations of behaviorists and identity theorists similar? What advantages does identity theory have over behaviorism? Describe Smart's defense of identity theory, including the role of theoretical identifications. What is the most serious challenge for the identity theorist? Does identity theory provide a satisfactory account of our mental states?
4. Functionalism and identity theory. How is identity theory chauvinistic? How does functionalism avoid the problems of multiple realizability? Discuss Putnam's defense of functionalism and the causal role definition of mental states. Is functionalism a physicalist theory? Distinguish token physicalism from type physicalism. Does functionalism provide a more satisfying account of our mental states than identity theory?
5. Functionalism and qualia. How does functionalism avoid the identity theorist's problems of multiple realizability? Describe Putnam's defense of functionalism, emphasizing the role of Turing machines and the software/hardware analogy. How is Searle's Chinese Room an objection to functionalism? What other problems does functionalism have with qualia? Are the problems with qualia sufficient to reject functionalism? What kind of theory might replace it?
6. Eliminative materialism and identity theory. On what do the eliminative materialist and identity theorist agree? How does the eliminative materialist criticize the identity theorist? Consider especially Rorty's concerns about mental states. Do his Antipodeans have minds? What would both answers show?
7. Eliminative materialism and functionalism. What is theory theory? How does the functionalist, anti-reductionist criticize theory theory? How does Churchland argue that folk psychology is a theory? Consider the distinction between causal connections and logical/propositional relations. If folk psychology is a theory, what are its weaknesses? What does Churchland predict about our mental states? Is she correct?
8. Consciousness. What is physicalism? How are Jackson's knowledge and modal arguments, and Nagel's concerns about the qualitative character of our experience, criticisms of physicalism? What lesson does Jackson take from these arguments? Describe Jackson's epiphenomenalism. How does Dennett resist Jackson's conclusion?

I encourage you to think about other topics, but they must be cleared with me *in advance*.