

Thematic Panel Presentation Assignment

During this semester, you will participate in one thematic panel presentation. Panels will be composed of three to five people. Presentations will last approximately twenty minutes in class. The content goal of the panel presentations is to review a single theme in the work of two or more philosophers. The pedagogical goal of the presentations is to allow each student a brief opportunity to lead the class.

The presentation should demonstrate your panel's attempts to assimilate one of the central themes found in the primary readings for class. You should also consider any assigned secondary readings on the theme by the selected philosophers. The tertiary readings will probably be useful. You need not be limited to discussing the work of the assigned philosophers; if work of other philosophers is relevant or useful, feel free to include it. A presentation should compare and contrast central theses and arguments. Some critical evaluation of any disagreement among the philosophers is desirable.

Your presentation may be as ambitious as you wish, as long as it is reasonably within the time guidelines. You may use presentation software like PowerPoint or Prezi.com. You may be creative about how to interact with the class. You may act out a dialogue or debate. Presentations should begin with an overview of the theme at hand and conclude with a brief summary.

Panels will be chosen during the second week of class. The themes, with their presentation dates, are listed below. You may gather peers to sign up together or you may sign up on your own. Most presentations will occur on April 17, April 19, or April 24, though there are two before the midterm exam and another one the week we return from spring break.

I expect that you will communicate with your co-panelists before the in-class discussion. I urge you to meet at least twice: once well in advance of the presentation date to discuss the distribution of work and once closer to the presentation date to rehearse your presentation. There is one required pre-presentation practice session for each panel, as noted on the reverse of this page. You should be prepared with a rough draft of your presentation before the required practice session. The hour-long sessions will be observed by our TA, Emir Ildiz, who will make suggestions for improvement.

Your presentation time is very short. Be efficient. Avoid irrelevant biographical or historical details. Focus on arguments and connections among various views.

Resources:

Many students find the Oral Communications Center, located in KJ 222, helpful. They have a wealth of resources readily available, and are eager to help. The staff at the lab can assist you both with the content of your presentation, and with determining how best to present your material. When you have prepared a draft of your presentation, they can record you while you practice giving the presentation. You can watch the recording with a tutor, or by yourself. You can sign up for an appointment with a tutor on the door of the lab, or you can email them at: oralcomm@hamilton.edu. Their website offers valuable resources.

Sign-ups

We will sign up for presentations, by email, after the second day of class. The dates and topics are listed below. Pre-presentation practice sessions are required and will all take place in our classroom, SC G041.

| Topic | Presentation Date | Required Pre-Presentation Practice Session |
|--|--------------------------|--|
| 1. Minds and Bodies I (Descartes, Hobbes, Spinoza) | Class 12: February 23 | Tuesday, February 21, 7pm |
| 2. Arguments for God's Existence (Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz) | Class 14: March 1 | Tuesday, February 28, 7pm |
| 3. Innate Ideas and the <i>Tabula Rasa</i> (Descartes, Locke) | Class 18: March 29 | Tuesday, March 27, 7pm |
| 4. The Primary-Secondary Distinction and the Resemblance Hypothesis (Descartes, Locke, Berkeley) | Class 23: April 17 | Sunday, April 15, 2pm |
| 5. Minds and Bodies II (Descartes, Locke, Berkeley) | Class 23: April 17 | Sunday, April 15, 3pm |
| 6. Abstract Ideas and Uses of Language (Locke and Berkeley) | Class 23: April 17 | Sunday, April 15, 4pm |
| 7. Two Brands of Idealism (Leibniz and Berkeley) | Class 24: April 19 | Tuesday, April 17, 7pm |
| 8. The Existence of the External World (Descartes, Berkeley, Hume) | Class 24: April 19 | Tuesday, April 17, 8pm |
| 9. Free Will and Determinism (Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz, Hume) | Class 24: April 19 | Monday, April 16, 7pm |
| 10. The Self (Descartes, Locke, Hume) | Class 25: April 24 | Sunday, April 22, 3pm |
| 11. Laws of Nature (Descartes, Spinoza, Berkeley, Hume) | Class 25: April 24 | Sunday, April 22, 4pm |