Philosophy 5

Writing Original Arguments

The syllabus lists December 11, as the date for turning the paper in. I want to change it to December 13, so that I can return papers on the day of the final December 19. **The 13th is a Friday, and the deadline is 11:59 am.** This has been our usual practice. All papers must be submitted to the turnitin site.

This guide, when followed carefully, will help you write the final assignment for this class. This assignment is to write a persuasive essay. A description follows:

In the persuasive essay, you must defend and support your thesis. You are no longer merely showing, you are attempting to convince your readers to believe a claim expressed by the thesis. The essay must choose a side, make a case for it, consider and refute counter arguments, and prove to the undecided reader that the opinion it presents is the best one. You must be aware of other sides and be fair to them; dismissing them completely will weaken your own argument. It should contain explanations, clarifications and definitions of key terms. Clarification can occur through examples, references and conceptual explanations. The main purpose is to convince the reader of the truth of your thesis.

This is perhaps the most important assignment this semester since in brings together all the skills and techniques we have called, “critical thinking.” You need to formulate the structure of an argument—reasons in support of a thesis. You need to employ all the tools we have defined in this process, e.g., thesis that answers an issue, assurance, counter argument, etc. You need to formulate a strong argument; one that can pass the four tests, acceptable reasons, relevant to the issue you have selected, and reasons that are relevant and adequate to the thesis. You need to be familiar with the arguments pro and con on the selected issue and show research on the relevant information pertaining to the issue. Finally you need to put this all in an essay that meets the standards for English composition, e.g., correct word usage, complete sentences, etc.

# Here is a checklist of things to look for when you are writing this assignment

* Have I explained, illustrated, or made clear key words or concepts in my argument?
* Have a clearly and fairly presented the counter argument to my position?
* Have a made a serious and careful attempt to refute the counter argument?
* Can the reader clearly identify my main thesis?
* Can the reader clearly separate the reasons from the thesis they support?
* Does my argument pass the four evaluative criteria?
* Is there evidence of research and can the reader clearly locate the source of my research?
* Does my finished work show evidence of an acceptable essay format, (Introduction, Body and Summary)?
* Have I uploaded my argument to Turnitin.com?
* Does the uploaded paper itself not contain my name, only my JC Id?

To get you started, here are steps you can follow in the writing process:

* Conduct research. Use sources, references, and authorities for your reasons.
* Prepare outline, especially for the body of the argument.
* Write a draft
* Be your own critic. Consider the counter argument to see if your original thesis stands
* Rewrite argument in light of the above.
* Edit for grammar, word usage and compliance to structure.

Now to the specifics of this assignment:

On November 7, those who attended class voted 2 of the 5 issues listed. They are:

Should the Equal Rights Amendment be ratified and add to the Constitution?

Should the Electoral College be abolished in favor a direct election?

The choice is one of the two. In both examples, the paper should include some history. For example, what was the thinking behind the Electoral College? In the ERA, where is it in the process of ratification? Whatever thesis you are arguing for, your paper must include a review of the opposing view. For the ERA paper, there is a good editorial in the Press Democrat for November 15. For the Electoral College paper there are pro-con side- by-side arguments in the Press Democrat for August 29. All of these have authors for which you can discuss the Rhetoric categories in the paragraph below.

Remember the requirement for research. There must be some citation of the source for your research in endnotes or footnotes. Consult the library for assistance in this requirement. I will also post a revised end of the semester schedule.

Notice above that one of the bullet is to include the counter argument. To adequately consider the counter argument review the lecture of 11/14, Lectures on Rhetoric. In your assessment of the counter argument include, from this lecture, the ideas of ethos, pathos, and logos. The chart at the end of the lecture should help. For example, is there anything to be known about the character of arguer for the counter argument? Anything relevant about to whom it is directed? Finally what about the logos of his argument?