

PHIL 250 Fall 2007 (W. M. Kallfelz)
Paper II Assignment

Due: Thursday, November 29th (in class)

- No emailed versions of final paper accepted.¹
- You may, however, email me a draft no later than one week before due date (i.e. no later than Thursday, November 22) for comments/feedback. However, keep in mind that:
 1. Anything you email to me after November 22 I cannot promise I'll provide comments/feedback on. If I'm able to, fine. If not, you've been informed/forewarned. Basically, due to my own schedule constraints, please don't bother to attempt to email me a draft for comments/review after Sunday, November 25. Just focus on polishing that draft and submit it as your final paper., or you can visit during office hours and/or make an appointment for November 27th or after² Note also I will be in Seattle, Washington, during the Thanksgiving recess (and won't arrive until late Monday, November 26th) so I cannot promise a quick turn-around time.
 2. Keep in mind that the comments/review is one-time. In other words, do not re-submit a draft for further review/comments. I will review or comment on your draft only once. Then, I will grade your final draft, which (as mentioned above) I expect will be handed in as a hard copy in class. If, for whatever reasons, you cannot make it to class to hand in your hard copy, you must submit a hard-copy of officially documented University of Maryland-approved excuse specifying the reason(s) you were unable to submit this hard copy at the date and time provided. Failure to do so will result in a subtraction of one letter grade even on the same due date. (In other words, failure to hand in a hard-copy of officially documented University of Maryland-approved excuse specifying the reason(s) you were unable to submit this hard copy at the date and time provided entails:
 - a) I will subtract one letter grade from the grade I think you deserve from your paper if I receive an emailed version or a hard copy after the class period November 29th until 11:59pm Friday November 30.
 - b) I will subtract two letter grades from the grade I think you deserve, if I receive a hard copy/emailed version 12:00am until 11:59 pm, Saturday December 1st.
 - c) I will subtract three letter grades from the grade I think you deserve, if I receive a hard copy/emailed version 12:00am until 11:59 pm, Sunday December 2nd.
 - d) I will subtract four letter grades from the grade I think you deserve, if I receive a hard copy/emailed version 12:00am until 11:59 pm, Monday December 3rd.
 - e) Papers submitted after Monday December 3rd will not be graded.

¹ Exceptions are tardy papers and/or extenuating circumstances preventing you from appearing in class, which should be University-approved. (I may deduct a letter grade if the excuse isn't University-approved.)

² For those new to the art & science of writing philosophy papers, please consult:

http://www.philosophy.umd.edu/deptwebsite/undergraduateprogram/resources/papers_and_exams.html

- f) **IMPORTANT: I may deduct one or more letter grade(s) from your tardy paper, even if you submit a hard-copy of officially documented University of Maryland-approved excuse specifying the reason(s) you were unable to submit this hard copy if you attempt to hand it in after Friday, November 30th.**
- g) Standards of academic honesty are taken with the utmost degree of seriousness and will be enforced to the utmost and maximal degree of penalty. **IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO KNOW WHAT THEY ARE.** For further information and clarification, please consult:
<http://www.studenthonorcouncil.umd.edu/whatis.html>
- h.) In this assignment in addition to all the University-wide standards of academic honesty as specified in contents of the URLs specified in g.) above, **you may not consult with your fellow peers, classmates, and/or other instructors regarding this assignment.** You may not refer to any other material except for the textbook, posted notes, and article(s) specified in page 3 of this document.³ You may ask questions during the Q&A sessions allowed during class (the first 15-20 minutes) and/or consult with me during office hours and/or appointments and/or via email. However, regarding emailing me, please note that:
- i.) Substantive questions/issues should **not** be addressed to me via email. My time is limited, and so is yours. I will answer **simple** clarification questions regarding your assignment via email. However, I will **not** respond to any email I consider will require a lengthy time period of writing. (And I decide what category such an emailed question may fit under.) Basically, aside from using your best judgment here, if you email me question(s) and I fail to respond to them, **it is your responsibility to make an appointment with me and/or see me during office hours.**
- j.) When you hand in your final paper, **you must also provide a hard copy of pages 1 and 2 of this document, signed and appropriately dated below. Failure to do will result in an an automatic 0% grade of your paper.**
- k.) **Feedback/comments:** The previous forms I emailed for paper 1 with detailed marginal comments were for the primary intention of assisting you in the practice of philosophical writing, which will hopefully show improvement in your second paper. Hence, though you can expect an emailed rubric showing the breakdown of your paper grade, I cannot promise emailed detailed comments, based on my own schedule constraints. You're always welcome to visit me by appointment or office hours if you have any questions about your score.⁴

I have read, understood and complied with all the requirements of this assignment as set forth in the contents of pages 1-2 of this document

Name (please print)

Signature

date

³ You may, however, cite from other sources (whether recommended here or otherwise) if you're supplying an example or counter-example to your claims.

⁴ I keep student work for at least 1 year, though and/or until my graduation date (tentatively June 2008) whichever comes first.

Directions: Please choose one of the following topics below (Topic 1: page 3, or topic 2: page 4):

1.) The Anthropic Principle:

The conditions necessary for intelligent life can only be met under the most unusual of circumstances. The universe we live in is clearly not representative of a purely random set of initial conditions, but rather the product of a unique set of circumstances favorable for the evolution of intelligent life. Our ability to observe and ask questions presupposes these circumstances, and thus explains their presence.⁵

In no less than 7 double-spaced pages and no more than 10 double-spaced pages (12 pt. font, Times New Roman and/or Palatino and/or Times) write an essay in which you:

- Explain, in simple and clear terms the Anthropic Principle and its various versions (Weak, Strong, Final⁶) Spend no more than 1-1½ pages on this section.
- Discuss in the light of your readings whether or not you think the Anthropic Principle can qualify as an *a priori* or *a posteriori* truth. Depending on how you argue, discuss whether or not the Anthropic Principle embodies a causal regularity or can qualify as a scientific law (or if you think there's a difference—explain why). Your discussion should be informed on what you understand the claims of Hempel, Ayer, Carroll and Cartwright are--and would be, viz. the Anthropic Principle, hence you should briefly summarize in at least one paragraph what you consider their 'takes' would be, in the light of your discussion (Spend no more than 3-4 pages on this section)
- Based on your above discussion, argue whether or not you consider the Anthropic Principle *explanatory*. Your argument should be informed on what you understand the claims of Hempel, Kitcher, Achenstein, Morrison are--and would be, viz. the Anthropic Principle, hence you should briefly summarize in at least one paragraph what you consider their 'takes' would be, in the light of your discussion (Spend no more than 3-4 pages on this section.) You may also, use Gillies or Salmon's points, if you wish to use indeterminism or Bayesianism as a means for arguing *against* the notion that the Anthropic Principle is explanatory. (Spend no more than 3-4 pages on this section)

⁵ E.D. Klemke, R. Hollander, D. W. Rudge, eds. *Introductory Readings in the Philosophy of Science*. (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 1998), p. 302.

⁶ Though I cite this source with trepidation, the Wikipedia article is as good as any, regarding giving a description of such categories http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anthropic_principle

2.) Anomalies

In no less than 5 double-spaced pages and no more than 11 double-spaced pages (12 pt font, Times New Roman and/or Palatino and/or Times) write an essay in which you:

- Pick an anomaly E described in Lightman & Gingrich (October 11 reading) or one on your own and describe it succinctly and explain *why* the example constitutes an anomaly and is not just a research puzzle/problem (recall Kuhn and classifications described on page 6 **Lecture VI** (Spend no more than 1-2 pages on this section)
- Discuss how you and why you think your anomaly E contributes to the role of conceptual change in science. Your argument should be informed on what you understand the claims of Kuhn, Laudan, Giere, and Nersessian are--and would be, viz. this anomaly, hence you should briefly summarize in at least one paragraph what you consider their 'takes' would be, in the light of your discussion. (Spend no more than 3-4 pages on this section)
- Then, à la Salmon, set up a comparative situation between two candidate theories T_1, T_2 appropriately adjoined by their individual plausible scenarios A_1, A_2 in an effort to cope with this anomaly E . Describe your scenarios in accurate enough detail to show *why* $P(E|T_1 \cap B) = P(E|T_2 \cap B) = 0$, but $P(E|T_1 \cap A_1 \cap B) \neq 0$, and $P(E|T_2 \cap A_2 \cap B) \neq 0$. Then, if you're arguing pro-Salmon, explain why you think it makes sense to compare the two theories adjoined by their plausible scenarios viz. their posterior probabilities. If possible, give some 'guestimates' for prior probabilities and likelihoods and derive their posterior probabilities. If you're arguing contra Salmon, explain why adjoining the two theories with their plausible scenarios won't be of use in selecting them, according to Glymour. In both cases, address why you think or don't think that adjoining the theories with their respective plausible scenarios constitutes an I-S (inductive-statistical) explanation, according to Hempel. (Spend no more than 4-5 pages on this section).

GOOD LUCK ☺