

“It is the destiny of every human person to decide.” The necessity of choice — whether our choices are momentous or relatively inconsequential — is an unalterable fact of our existence over which we have no choice. Yet the reality of choice raises the question philosophically as to whether there are principles or standards of reason that can guide us in our choices. Are there any objective criteria grounded in the essential structure of human personhood that can provide a compass for us in our life journey?

Focus

Over the next weeks, we will be reading selected portions of classic texts and exploring together various theories of normative ethics. Your task in the third response paper will be to articulate your perspective on the philosophical grounding of the fundamental principles of moral action, through reasoned argumentation in dialogue with the theories outlined in class and in the assigned readings. You may carry out this task in a variety of ways. You may choose to develop your position in dialogue with *one set of texts*, or through a comparison and contrast between *two different texts*, or by means of a unified, thematic analysis of *all three sets of texts* from the three major classifications of normative ethical theories discussed in class. For example, you may want to develop a conception of the “good” in dialogue with Aristotle, or through a comparison and contrast between both Aristotle’s and Kant’s understanding of the “good,” or you may explore the ways in which the insights of Aristotle and Kant are further developed and explicated within the context of normative ethical theism.

Objectives

Careful textual analysis will be an important part of your work in this paper, but the heart of your project is for you to develop your own perspective on philosophical moral theory. Embrace the task as an opportunity to think through the substance and the grounding of what you consider to be the fundamental principles of moral action.

Format

Your paper should be a minimum of five pages in length, double-spaced, in twelve-point type, with one-inch margins. Use a full cover page for both the draft and the final version, with your name, the submission date, and a substantive title that provides a window for the reader into the heart of your paper. Remember to include your draft along with the final version.

**Response Paper 3 Grading Criteria
27 Points Total**

**[1]
Thesis and Structure**

Thesis Statement and Outline

- 3: Clear thesis statement, with a well-crafted “road-map” or outline for the reader to follow.
- 2: Thesis stated, with a basic outline to guide the reader.
- 1: Inadequate statement of thesis and outline.

Clarity and Organization

- 3: Overall organization is clear with appropriate transitions. Paragraph structure is integrally related to the thesis statement and outline. Paragraphs are coherent and ideas are clear.
- 2: Most paragraphs have a clear purpose. Topic sentences sometimes misplaced.
- 1: Lack of organizational structure interferes with the clarity of the paper.

**[2]
Analysis
and Worldview Development**

Moral analysis

- 3: Clear explication of fundamental moral principles
- 2: Statement and outline of guiding principles
- 1: Inadequate analysis of moral principles

Dialogue with Normative Ethical Theories

- 3: Engaging, critical, and sympathetic dialogue with normative ethical theories discussed in class and developed in the assigned readings
- 2: Some dialogue with normative ethical theories
- 1: Inadequate understanding of moral theories

Worldview Development

- 3: Substantive development of worldview perspective
- 2: Basic, rudimentary formulation of worldview principles
- 1: Inadequate grasp of worldview construction

Application

- 3: Specific application of moral principles and worldview analysis
- 2: Beginning application of moral principles and worldview perspective
- 1: Inadequate application

[3]
Grammar and Composition

Sentences and Diction

- 3: Graceful sentences with appropriate variety of structures. Words are chosen precisely. Writing is vigorous and engaging.
- 2: Occasionally awkward or vague. Active verbs are used, with few superfluous or poorly chosen words. Some pronouns without clear referents.
- 1: Several cumbersome and unclear sentences. Wordy, excessive nominalizations, weak verbs.

Mechanics and Grammar

- 3: No significant errors of spelling, grammar, punctuation, or usage.
- 2: Minor errors of mechanics and grammar.
- 1: Numerous errors in grammar and substandard usage.

Format:

- 3: Double-spaced, in 12 point type, with one-inch margins. Five pages minimum in length, required for both the draft and final version. Appropriate use of bibliographic citations. Title page with name and submission date. Complete draft submitted on time. Draft included with final version.
- 2: Failure to meet one of the format criteria indicated above.
- 1: Failure to meet two or more of the format criteria.