**Philosophy Journal Topics Group 1**

See Course Description for Journal Requirements – Each student must complete at least 5 journal entries every five weeks. Blend content, analysis, and reflection.

**Reminder:** You are trying to demonstrate what you “know” – and provide analysis and opinion. Therefore BE SPECIFC – Describe *Plato’s Allegory of the Cave* before you analyze it – use the vocabulary – and always explain clearly. Always have Group 1, Journal 2, and a Title on top of the page. Entries should be at least one page to receive some credit. Always bring the journal back to something specific we discussed in class.

1. Bertrand Russell’s Commandments of Philosophy – Choose three commandments and explain which three you believe are the most important.

1a.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pb7NHERV-Eo>

Who were some of the more notable philosophy majors mentioned? How does this help us understand what “philosophy” is and why it is valuable? Extra Credit - Who was not mentioned? or - find out if they really did major in philosophy? Where – when?

1b.

Read “Teaching Philosophy to plumbers” – Summarize the major points and do you agree with the author? <http://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2014/04/plato-to-plumbers/361373/>

2. Socrates – The Apology – Reflect on The apology. Who is he apologizing to? What are his major arguments? <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RbW_pdvxR84>

Other option: Assume the role of and Athenian citizen who has the power to decide if Socrates lives or dies. Respond to his “Apology”. Decide whether he lives or dies and make sure to reference specific aspects of his Apology.

3. After watching one of the two videos on Socrates reflect on how each video gave you a greater understanding of Socrates importance. How did it add to your knowledge of the historical context regarding the execution of and trial of Socrates?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sk0oSfivOyc>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r0T78tNS9u8>

4. Reflect on Plato’s Allegory of the Cave

4a. Reflect on the “Ring of Gyges” from Plato’s Republic

5. What is the “theory of the forms”? How is this theory central to understanding Plato’s philosophy? Compare the “Allegory of the Cave” to Plato’s Theory of the forms?

6. Evaluate the positive and negative aspects of Plato’s Utopia. Why does Plato believe that this form of government will achieve “justice”? To what extent does US Society represent Plato’s Utopia?

7. Watch Stanford Professor Ken Taylor’s 10 min TEDx Talk on “Democracy an Plato’s Utopia”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j2xyE5ijWL4>

Reflect on Taylor’s ideas and how they are relevant to our in-class discussion on Plato’s Utopia.

**Philosophy Journal Topics Group 2**

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1. To what extent does the Matrix demonstrate some of the key philosophical questions pondered in the early study of this course?

2. How does the Aristotle reading help clarify, and expand upon, what you already learned about Aristotle in class?

2a. Compare and contrast the comic book reading on Aristotle to the more traditional article? Which was more helpful and why?

3. Joshua Bell – What is Rhetoric? Purpose? Describe how Bell’s situation can be explained by his failure to follow Aristotle’s rhetorical devices? What does Aristotle reveal about his own society by crafting rhetorical strategies? What does it say about our current society that rhetorical strategies continue to have public value? Is this positive or negative? Explain.

4. What are Aristotle’s Four Causes and why are they important to the study of philosophy? In what ways might they be relevant to our current society?

5. How are Plato and Aristotle different? Who is more relevant in the 21st Century and which philosopher’s ideas do you identify the most?

6. Briefly compare your version of a “Good Life” to Aristotle’s. Evaluate Aristotle’s – Nicomachean Ethics. Explain what it is and how it works. What do you find valuable or interesting about his ethics? What aspects of his ethical philosophy do not hold value?

**Philosophy Journal Topics Group 3**

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1. Reflect on Stoicism and Epicureanism. What are they? What value (and flaws) do you find in the two ways of thinking? How are they similar/different?

2. Some students have argued that St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas should be removed from the curriculum. Argue in favor or against the above claim. Make sure to acknowledge both sides within your analysis. Make sure to acknowledge the specific contributions to the study of western philosophy regardless of your argument.

3. Of all the “In Between” philosopher’s (NOT MACHIAVELLI) – who did you find most intriguing and why? How can their ideas apply to you and your life?

3a. In Between: Choose 2 Philosophers

1. Which concepts or ideas did you find most intriguing?
2. Who is the most relevant to modern America?
3. Why is your philosopher important to study?
4. Which philosopher is the most important to the study of philosophy?
5. Who should be left off the list? Who would you vote off the island?

4. Machiavelli

Why is he still relevant?

Did Machiavelli get “it” right?

8 bit philosophy

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CMagDqJDcLc>

5. Descartes

- The Process

- Reflect on the Cogito

- Do we exist?

- Are the mind and the body separate?

5a. Listen to Colin McGinn on Philosophy Bites

How did this podcast help you better understand the importance of Descartes? Refer to specific ideas in the podcast. Do you agree?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RoqrXukejP8>

6. Reflect on one of the following videos –

- 3 - Criticisms of Descartes

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lLufNgQDTOI>

- Collin McGinn – “Descartes and Innate Ideas”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RoqrXukejP8>

**Possible Journal Topics – Group 4**

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**Reflect on the film *I AM.***

What was the major premise of the film? Is it valid? What was valuable about the film? What aspects of the film had little value? How does the film connect to our course/specific philosophers we have touched upon?

**Hume**

How does David Hume change “everything” in terms of epistemology? How is he not Descartes and how does he take Locke to the extreme? What is inductive logic? What do you find valuable about Hume’s philosophy? How can Hume be criticized?

Hume’s belief

**Kant**

Explain Kant’s ideas about “a priori” knowledge and “a posteriori” knowledge. How does he compare Hume and Descartes? Explain Kant’s ethics – Deontology – Honor – Is his moral code valid in 21st Century America?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nsgAsw4XGvU>

**Sartre**

What is Existentialism?

“capitalism caused people to fear change in their life and thus denied them freedom . . . and that . . . most people lived in ‘bad faith’ because they lived lives of unfulfilled potential and desired ignorance and security rather than the daunting idea of making real choices”

Explain and reflect on the preceding statement.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3bQsZxDQgzU>

**Nietzsche**

God is Dead? Respond

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wHWbZmg2hzU>

What is the “superman”?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bxiKqA-u8y4>

What is beauty?

Who have we left out? Who MUST be included in next semesters philosophy course?

Marx

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fSQgCy_iIcc>

Kierkegaard

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D9JCwkx558o>

Hegel

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H5JGE3lhuNo>

Schopenhauer

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q0zmfNx7OM4>

Foucault

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BBJTeNTZtGU>

Wittgenstein

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pQ33gAyhg2c>

(NOT MACHIAVELLI)