

In this Introduction to Philosophy, Professor Scholz begins by teaching logic. The students do three papers, building in sequence on each other, so that the skills gained in each paper can be used in the next.

Assignment I

Introduction to Philosophy

Scholz

PART I (40 pts): Analyze the following argument for validity. Please identify the 7 propositional arguments in the text below. There are 6 standard propositional argument forms plus one repeated form. Represent all in notational format and please label all variables. [HINT: Use the paragraph breaks to guide you but don't forget that you can use the conclusion of one argument as a premise in another.] There is also an inductive argument included. Can you find it? How would you characterize it? Explain and evaluate it.

If it can be proven that animals have moral rights, then it may be claimed that animals may make claims on those rights. If animals may make claims on those rights, then humans will have to rethink the status of animals in a democratic society. So, if it can be proven that animals do have moral rights, then humans will have to rethink the status of animals in a democratic society.

Those who argue about moral rights for animals claim that moral rights are either based on the ability to feel pain or on the ability to exercise free choice. If moral rights are based on the ability to feel pain, then moral standing should extend beyond humans to all animals. But if, on the other hand, moral rights are based on the ability to exercise free choice, then only humans could have moral standing. So, either moral standing extends beyond humans to include all animals, or only humans have moral standing.

But clearly it isn't the case that only humans have moral standing. (It is, after all, a widely held belief that it is immoral to kick a dog or brutalize a cat. That evidence alone seems sufficient to show that violence against all animals is considered immoral.) So, moral standing extends beyond humans to include all animals.

From the above we saw that if animals have moral rights, then humans will have to rethink the status of animals in a democratic society. Clearly, we have shown that animals have moral rights. Thus, it follows that humans must reconsider the status of animals in our democratic society.

If animals have the status of citizens in a democratic society, then they would have to actively participate in decision-making. Animals cannot actively participate in decision-making. Thus, animals do not have the status of citizens in a democratic society.

So what sort of status do animals have? If they have moral rights, then they ought to be able to make claims on those rights. If they cannot make claims on those rights, then they don't really have moral rights.

Animals cannot make claims on moral rights. Thus we can conclude that animals really do not have moral rights at all.

PART II (20 pts): Write a ½ page evaluation of the argument above. Is it sound? Remember that such a judgment would involve evaluating the sub-arguments as well as the argument as a whole.

PART III (40 pts): Write a short (½ - 1 page and no more than a page) essay in which you employ at least 4 of the standard valid propositional argument forms. Your essay may be on any topic but should be an argument, i.e., convince your reader of something. Please also try to make it both valid and sound. Use the propositional arguments to build your case. After writing your short essay, please identify all of your arguments by representing them in standard notation with labeled variables.

Some suggested topics (you can pick anything philosophical but here are some things to get you thinking):

Are humans essentially compassionate?

Is war ever just?

Is social and economic equality desirable?

Are humans free?

Does God exist?

What is God's nature?

How do you know that you know?

What are the criteria for truth claims?

Are you the same person you were 18 years ago?

Using two fictional characters, write a dialogue or series of letters in which you debate the existence of God. Your paper should, therefore, have two complete arguments: one for the existence of God and one for the non-existence of God. You may also wish to indicate, through the dialogue or letters, which argument is most convincing (i.e., who wins the debate?). It might help to give some serious thought and discussion to the metaphysical attributes of God.

As you formulate your answer, you might consider the following: what kind of logic might best apply to each argument? For the argument supporting the existence of God, is it more compelling to argue from the concept of God (an ontological argument) or from the nature of the world/universe (a cosmological argument) or from design (teleological)? What can we know about God from a proof of God's existence? For the argument against the existence of God, are there positive reasons to doubt God's existence? What are the most effective refutations of the arguments for God's existence? Are there reasons for not believing? (These questions are meant to spark your thinking about the topic. They are not meant to be a set of guidelines that must be answered for the paper. Notice too that they cover both reason and faith.)

Papers should be 3-4 pages long, typed, double-spaced, one-inch margins. Your paper should demonstrate critical understanding of at least one of the thinkers we have studied in this unit (Paley, Anselm, Aquinas, Pascal). You may quote from the thinker; please use proper citation of all material, including ideas (if in doubt, play it safe and cite the source). Please use gender inclusive language – refer to God as “God” not “He”.

Please DO NOT use Wikipedia to obtain information for this paper. If you desire some secondary reading, please visit the library or seek out resources from the TA or Professor.

Select one of the following for your paper:

1. How do we *know* that material objects exist? Choose Descartes, Locke, or Berkeley to answer this question. Present the thinker's argument in detail and critically evaluate it. Please note that this is an epistemological question so your presentation and analysis of the philosopher's position should focus on what we can *know*. Critically evaluate.
2. What is Descartes' goal or purpose in the *Meditations*? What is his method? Is it effective? Does Descartes reach an indubitable foundation for certain knowledge? Critically evaluate.
3. How would Locke answer the following question: "If a tree falls in the forest and no one is there to hear it, does it make a sound?" Your answer should explain Locke's epistemology including the following concepts and their place in his theory of knowledge: innate ideas, tabula rasa, simple and complex ideas, primary qualities, secondary qualities, tertiary. Critically evaluate.
4. If, as Berkeley argues, all that which we perceive is immaterial or "ideas", then how can multiple people have the same ideas or the same sense perceptions without intending to? What keeps Berkeley from radical skepticism? How do I know things continue to exist when I am not perceiving them? Explain Berkeley's epistemology as found in the *Dialogues*. Critically evaluate.

PLEASE FOLLOW THE FOLLOWING DIRECTIONS

- Use the text to support your presentation of the arguments.
- Cite all sources using author's last name and page number; include a Works Cited list at the end (need not be on a separate page)
- 3-4 page paper should be typed
- double-spaced
- include page numbers
- one-inch margins all around
- title on the first page (no title page)
- 12 point font
- Times New Roman font type
- **DO NOT PUT YOUR NAME ON THE PAPER – PUT ONLY YOUR STUDENT ID NUMBER AND TA IN THE UPPER RIGHT HAND CORNER**