

Short Paper #2

Due: Monday after Spring Break in class in hard copy, March 16. (Emailed by 9 a.m. if absent.)

Mechanics: Paper should be 2-3 pages (minimum of two full pages). Double-spaced, 12 pt. Times New Roman font, one-inch margins, with title. Citation style should be MLA, with in-text parenthetical citations that look like this (§67). Include Works Cited at end of your paper.

Author's Note: On a separate piece of paper, write a short, one paragraph "Author's Note" that discusses the writing of the paper and the paper's strengths and weaknesses. What went well? What didn't? What challenged you about the writing process? (E.g., writing a thesis, sticking close to the text, editing...) What could be improved for next time? (E.g., organization, coherency and connection of ideas, etc.) Be specific.

Purpose: These short papers are meant to be a chance for sustained, direct engagement with our class texts. They should critically engage ideas found in the texts and include both exegesis and textually-supported positions on questions found in or inspired by the text. The short length provides an opportunity for practicing focused, succinct writing: these papers should be tight, and should not include extraneous summary or flowery/"fluffy" introductions or conclusions.

Prompts:

This will be a difficult paper because of the nature of our texts from the last few weeks. Focus on writing a very focused expository paper. You may make comparisons between philosophers from this unit and our last (e.g. Kant and Plato) or between philosophers included in this unit (e.g. Kant and Hegel), but you *must* engage at least one of the following: Locke, Kant, or Hegel.

1. Explain Locke's thesis about the persistence of personal identity over time. What other accounts is he rejecting and why? Where does he locate personal identity? What does he mean by consciousness? (Look to the readings from Locke—reading rest of the chapter may be a good idea—and to the Della Rocca lecture I showed a clip of, which is a three part series on youtube.)
2. Explain Kant's claim about the distinction between phenomena and noumena. What is he fundamentally saying about what we can know? How does this compare with Plato or Aristotle's theory of knowledge (the Forms, the various "kinds" of knowledge represented by the intellectual virtues)?
3. Discuss the way knowledge and identity are intertwined in Hegel's "Sense-Certainty," "Lordship and Bondage," or both. Does our knowledge depend on the "I"? Does our identity depend on the knowledge others have of us?
4. Choose your own! Look to your reading responses and blog posts for ideas. You may not copy your writing from a blog post, but you may explore an idea from a post in your paper if you are including new details and textual support. The focus should be on the ideas of the text rather than your own opinions—you can express your assessment of the text's ideas, but avoid expounding your own theories as to what the true nature of personal identity is, for example.