

Phil. 270/570: 4/8/20: Optional Replacement for the Course Paper for Yale College Students

Updated 4/9, with added option 3c (addition highlighted in yellow)

Three options now for satisfying our class's Course Paper requirement. (1) You can do the paper as specified on the course syllabus, and it will be given a letter grade and the usual kind of feedback for a course paper. (2) You can write two additional short essays, of the same kind as the essays which replaced the Final Exam, and so graded on the ✓ system. (3) You can write one longer additional essay, on the ✓ system.

Recall from our Final Exam replacement sheet that to replace the final, you were already to write 600-800 word essays (see the sheet for the Final Exam replacement for how these should break down in terms of expository and critical parts) on three of below:

- Essay A: Reading 11 from the syllabus
- Essay B: Readings 12 and 13 from the syllabus
- Essay C: Readings 14 and 15 from the syllabus
- Essay D: Any two of readings 16, 17, and 18
- Essay E: Any two of readings 19, 20, and 21

You can also write essays on those topics to replace the Course Paper. So the simplest way to replace the course paper is to take option (2), above, and do all five of the above essays, three to replace to replace the Final, and two to replace the paper. (You may not use essays on the same topic in replacing both the Final and the Paper.)

Or you can take option (3) and replace the Course Paper with one longer essay (leaving one of the topics above unaddressed). Longer essays should be a total of 1200-1600 words. If you do a longer essays on one of the above topics ((A)-(E)), we can call this option (3a), and at least 500 of the 1200-1600 words should be expository and at least 300 of them should be critical. (That leaves you 400-800 words to "spend" as you think best.)

Since the essays replacing the final, together with the written work you did earlier in the course, already require to write/have written about a wide swath of the material comprising our course, it seems we could have a paper replacement that has you addressing related topics in epistemology that may touch on more personal issues. Thus, you can choose what can we call option (3b), and replace the Course Paper with one longer (1200-1600 word) essay (with no required breakdown into expository vs. critical portions), in connection with the public Facebook note I have posted at <https://www.facebook.com/notes/keith-derose/confessions-of-a-semi-agnostic-my-spiritual-walk-such-as-it-is-and-what-i-mean-b/10151259450689991/> (If you have trouble accessing the note, email me, and I will send you its contents) on one or both of these topics:

- How should we best understand “agnosticism”/“agnostic”? (Here you may be suggesting an understanding different from those I suggest in the below note.) Under what circumstances is agnosticism appropriate or desirable?
- What’s the best way to draw and understand a distinction between acceptance and belief? Where are each of these appropriate and desirable in philosophy and in religion?

I may add another possible topic for option (3b), but that’s only if I happen to come across something that expresses a more personal issue that directly involves some topics straightforwardly in epistemology, and if I do so soon. So I guess I wouldn’t count on it.

Added 4/9: Or you can take what we can call option (3c), and replace your Course Paper with one 1200-1600 word essay, graded on the ✓ system, on the topic you proposed for your Course Paper, if that topic was approved. (This is especially for those who started work on their Course Paper, but don’t want to write a full Course Paper for a letter grade.)

These essays (on options (2), (3a), (3b), or (3c)), or the original paper (if you choose option (1)), are due on April 27, by 5:00 pm (New Haven time), but can be in any time between now and that due time.