## Final Paper

## Basic Requirements

- **1,600–2,000 words** in length (<u>excluding</u> bibliography), typed, double-spaced, with 1-inch margins all around, with page numbers in the header aligned to the right.
- Begin the document with a title, centered, followed by your UT EID (<u>not</u> full name) in parentheses, e.g., "Formulating Formalism (zab356)."
- Cite your sources and format your bibliography using either Chicago Author–Date or MLA style.[1] The final page of your paper should contain a bibliography.
- You are not required to reference any outside articles in your paper. However, if you paraphrase or quote from an article (whether we read it in class or not), you must cite it. If you read articles or encyclopedia entries in the process of writing your paper, there is a good chance that you (unconsciously) paraphrased from these sources and should cite them accordingly.
- Your paper should have a voice and make a contribution (no matter how modest) to the topic. Points will be deducted for simply summarizing an author's arguments for his or her position. You should also consider and respond to at least one objection at some point in your paper. Developing a sophisticated response to a difficult objection is one way of making an original contribution to a debate.
- **You should hold your rough draft to the standard of the rubric as much as possible.** The average rough draft will be graded within one letter grade of the rubric (e.g., if it would receive a B as a final draft, then it will receive an A as a rough draft).
- Save your document as a PDF and upload it to Canvas.

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[1] If you prefer to use some other citation style, please email your TA to get approval.

# Rubric

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| **CONTENT** | • Satisfies the word limit and formatting requirements<br>• Fully engages the prompt and puts forward an appropriate thesis<br>• Shows a complete grasp of the relevant philosophical concepts and develops ideas in detail<br>• Presents and analyzes the philosophical positions or issues accurately, charitably, and with nuance<br>• Gives original arguments, provides fresh examples, and/or joins more than one issue or argument together in a creative way | • Satisfies the word limit and formatting requirements<br>• Fully engages the prompt and puts forward an appropriate thesis<br>• Shows a decent grasp of the relevant philosophical concepts and develops ideas that are sometimes lacking in detail or specifics<br>• Presents and analyzes the philosophical positions or issues, but without much nuance and in a way that is occasionally inaccurate or minimally charitable<br>• Uses fresh examples, but provides arguments that are entirely lacking in originality | • Falls somewhat short of the word limit or neglects formatting requirements<br>• Only partially engages the prompt and/or puts forward a thesis that is too broad to be sufficiently supported<br>• Shows a poor grasp of the relevant philosophical concepts and develops ideas in very little detail<br>• Presents and analyzes the philosophical positions or issues inaccurately or uncharitably<br>• Approaches the prompt with almost no originality and merely summarizes preexisting sources | • Falls significantly short of the word limit and neglects formatting requirements<br>• Fails to engage the prompt and puts forward an inappropriate thesis<br>• Shows almost no grasp of the relevant philosophical concepts and puts forward ideas that are confusing and unclear<br>• Discusses the philosophical positions or issues with almost no accuracy<br>• Completely lacking in originality | • Ignores the word limit and formatting requirements<br>• Completely fails to engage the prompt<br>• Shows no grasp of the relevant philosophical concepts and fails to put forward any clear ideas<br>• Fails to discuss the philosophical positions or issues with any accuracy<br>• Shows signs of having been written at the very last minute |
| **ARGUMENT** | • Successfully breaks the task into relevant parts and clearly indicates the connections between those parts<br>• Sufficiently exposits the relevant issue or position; supports interpretations of sources with textual evidence; and explores unmentioned alternatives in order to charitably strengthen the issue or position<br>• Provides vivid and interesting examples or reasons that illustrate its points or support its conclusions<br>• Demonstrates an awareness of the kind of reasoning that it is employing or expositing and utilizes effective argumentative strategies, such as isolating necessary and/or sufficient conditions to propose counterexamples, arguing by analogy, inferring to the best explanation, etc.<br>• When appropriate, discusses the best objections to its claims and provides thoughtful replies to those objections | • Successfully breaks the task into relevant parts and somewhat clearly indicates the connections between those parts<br>• Exposits the relevant issue or position, but leaves certain aspects of that issue or position unclear; cites from sources, but falls short of showing how citations support a given interpretation; and/or shows only some concern for charitably strengthening the issue or position<br>• Provides examples or reasons to illustrate its points or support its conclusions, but not in a way that indicates awareness of the kind of support they provide<br>• Contains the occasional unsupported assertion<br>• Presents and replies to objections, but in a cheap or uncharitable way | • Fails to break the task into relevant parts or to clearly indicate the connections between those parts<br>• Fails to make the issue or position clear; leaves interpretative claims unsupported; and/or shows little concern for charitably understanding the issue or position<br>• Provides examples or reasons to illustrate or support its points, but that are largely unclear or irrelevant<br>• Contains a number of unsupported assertions<br>• Even when appropriate, fails to anticipate or refute objections | • Fails to break the task into relevant parts<br>• Obscures the issue or position<br>• Provides few if any examples or reasons to illustrate its points or support its conclusions and frequently relies on unsupported assertions that are not directly related to the topic<br>• Even when appropriate, fails to anticipate objections | • Attempts to persuade by means of rhetoric rather than argument<br>• Consists of almost nothing but unsupported assertions |

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| **CLARITY** | • Exceptionally well thought out, focused, and easy to follow<br>• Contains a clear thesis statement; indicates how that thesis will be supported; and ties everything together in the end<br>• Clearly distinguishes between main and subsidiary arguments, premises and conclusions, and so on<br>• Uses sign posts to indicate which claims have been established within a given stage of the dialectic and how those claims relate to past or future stages of the dialectic<br>• Frequently employs transition words and phrases to demarcate premises from conclusions and abet the flow from paragraph to paragraph<br>• Utilizes sentences that are fully explicated and logically connected<br>• Paragraphs are cohesive and fit into a coherent structure | • Mostly well thought out, focused, and easy to follow<br>• Contains a clear thesis statement, but fails to indicate how that thesis will be supported or to reach a clear conclusion by the end<br>• Only somewhat clearly distinguishes between main and subsidiary arguments, premises and conclusion, and so on<br>• Uses sign posts sparingly and requires undue effort from the reader to follow the arguments<br>• Occasionally employs transition words and phrases to demarcate premises from conclusions and abet the flow from paragraph to paragraph<br>• Typically utilizes sentences that are fully explicated and logically connected<br>• Paragraphs fit into a coherent structure but sometimes the connections between them are unclear | • Poorly thought out, unfocused, and difficult to follow<br>• Lacks a clear thesis statement<br>• Fails to distinguishes between main and subsidiary arguments and confuses certain premises for conclusions or misleadingly conflates distinct premises into one<br>• Sign posts are almost completely lacking<br>• Rarely employs transition words and phrases to increase clarity<br>• Utilizes sentences that are not fully explicated or logically connected<br>• Prone to irrelevant digressions<br>• Paragraphs are lacking in cohesion or do not fit into a coherent structure | • Unorganized, convoluted, and extremely difficult to follow<br>• Lacks a thesis statement altogether<br>• Fails to utilize transition words and phrases<br>• Relies on sentences that are obscure and unconnected | • Exhibits almost no structure<br>• Comes across as incoherent<br>• Relies on sentences that are almost incomprehensible |
| **STYLE** | • The writing style is clear and to the point<br>• Sentences are grammatical, varied (from the simple to the complex) in an aesthetically pleasing way, and properly punctuated<br>• Paragraph breaks are appropriate and serve a purpose within the overall structure of the paper<br>• The meanings of technical terms are made clear and in general words are used precisely and consistently<br>• Quotations are used only when absolutely necessary<br>• Sources are properly cited in Chicago Author–Date or MLA style | • The writing style is typically clear but occasionally prone to "purple prose" digressions<br>• Sentences are mostly grammatical and properly punctuated but occasionally monotonous or awkward<br>• Paragraph breaks are typically appropriate and purposeful but the occasional paragraph is too long, difficult to follow, and/or lacking in flow<br>• Quotations are occasionally used just to avoid paraphrasing the text and are only sometimes explained<br>• Sources are properly cited in Chicago Author–Date or MLA style | • The writing style is mostly wordy, unclear, and prone to "purple prose"<br>• A number of sentences are incomplete, awkward, and/or ungrammatical<br>• Typos are present<br>• Paragraphs tend to drag on or do not flow well together<br>• The meanings of technical terms are typically unclear and words are often used imprecisely and inconsistently<br>• Quotations are overused and rarely explained<br>• Sources are sometimes improperly cited | • The writing style is almost exclusively wordy, unclear, and prone to "purple prose"<br>• Awkward and ungrammatical sentences are widespread<br>• Typos are prominent<br>• Paragraph breaks are introduced with no clear intent<br>• Words are used with almost no precision<br>• Quotations are almost always used to avoid paraphrasing the text and are never explained<br>• Sources are almost always improperly cited | • The writing style is exclusively wordy, unclear, and prone to "purple prose"<br>• Typos and grammatical errors are widespread<br>• Sources are never referenced and the paper shows signs of plagiarism; this is a possible ground for reporting the student to the Office of the Dean of Students |