

## Paper Assignment 2

**Topics:** As with the first paper, you have a lot of latitude in your choice of a topic. First, you can choose any one of the following topics:

1. Act consequentialism is controversial for many reasons. What is one important objection to act consequentialism (be specific and detailed), how might a proponent of act consequentialism best defend the theory against this objection, and how successful should the objection ultimately be regarded to be?
2. Hooker claims that rule consequentialism is more defensible than act consequentialism. What argument does he give for this claim, and does his argument provide adequate support for this claim?
3. Hooker and Kamm both follow the method of reflective equilibrium, and yet they affirm theories that are significantly different from one another. What is the best explanation of this divergence in their views despite their apparent near sameness of method?
4. Hill explains the Kantian approach to making moral judgments, including the Kantian perspective of willing maxims as universal laws. How is this perspective supposed to provide determinate moral judgments of actions that a person might perform, and how does this perspective purport to avoid the problem of overly specific maxims? Does this approach achieve the foregoing two objectives?
5. According to Kant, the several formulas, or formulations, of the Categorical Imperative all have the same meaning, despite their obvious differences in wording. What arguments can be given for and against this claim, and does the weight of the evidence support the claim or warrant its rejection?
6. Both consequentialists and contractarians think of morality as an enterprise that should make people better off. Yet consequentialism and contractarianism are significantly different from one another. What is the best explanation of this divergence in views despite the aforementioned similarity between their starting points?
7. Contractarianism is one of the positions criticized by Kamm in her exposition of nonconsequentialism. What is Kamm's criticism of this position, how might a proponent of some form of contractarianism best defend the theory against this criticism, and how successful should the criticism ultimately be regarded to be?
8. Steiner identifies the interest theory and the will theory as the two leading theories of moral rights. What arguments can be given in support of these theories, and which theory is more plausible?
9. Sumner argues for indirect consequentialism as the most plausible theoretical basis for rights. What are the merits and demerits of this approach to providing a theoretical basis for rights?
10. DePaul explains reflective equilibrium in considerable detail and defends it as a sound method of moral reasoning. What is a significant objection (or two) that can be offered against reflective equilibrium, what response could a proponent of reflective equilibrium offer, and would that response answer the objection adequately?

Second, you can choose any one of the following topics:

11. State and argue for one or two significant objections to Brink's view. (Limit yourself to one or two objections that you can pursue thoroughly, rather than stating too many objections and having to handle some or all of them too briefly.)

12. same as topic 11, but for Hooker
13. same as topic 11, but for Kamm
14. same as topic 11, but for Hill
15. same as topic 11, but for Sayre-McCord
16. same as topic 11, but for Steiner
17. same as topic 11, but for Sumner
18. same as topic 11, but for DePaul

Third, you can propose a topic to me, and if I approve it, you can use it. If you want to do this, send your proposed topic to me by e-mail, and I'll let you know whether it's acceptable.

**Length:** Your paper should not be more than 1,200 words long.

**A note on word counts:** How word counts are computed depends on the circumstances. For a journal concerned about the cost of materials (e.g., paper and ink), word counts might include every single word. In contrast, our purposes have to do with establishing a level playing field for everyone in the class to express his or her ideas within the same constraints as everyone else. So, word counts do not have to include identifying text you should put at the beginning of everything you write for this course, or any bibliography which you might have occasion to put at the end of a paper. But they must include every word directly contributing to the content of the paper—including, for example, a paper's title, section titles (if applicable), regular text (of course), and footnote text. You do not have to have a bibliography—you can put citations in footnotes if you want—but if you are pressed for space then you can move the details of citations to a bibliography and not be “charged” for the words that appear there.

**More on word counts:** Word-count limits will be strictly enforced. If the number of words in your paper is  $n$ , and  $n > 1,200$ , then your paper's score will be reduced by  $100 \times \frac{n-1,200}{1,200}$  percentage points, or (simplified)  $\frac{n}{12} - 100$  percentage points.

**Formatting your document:** At the beginning of your paper, on five single-spaced lines without any indentation from the left margin, include the following identifying information: your anonymity-preserving random number (the same one for all three versions), the date when you are turning your paper in, the number of the topic on which you are writing (a number between 1 and 18), your paper's version number (1, 2, or 3), and your paper's word count. Note that the date as well as the version number (and probably the word count) will need to be updated as you move from one version to the next. For example, the beginnings of your three versions of your paper might look like the following:

56	56	56
November 10, 2010	November 12, 2010	November 22, 2010
topic 5	topic 5	topic 5
version 1	version 2	version 3
1,000 words	1,100 words	1,150 words

After these five single-spaced lines, put one blank line, then the title of your paper, then another blank line before the start of the text of your paper, with the text of your document being double-spaced. To signify the start of a new paragraph, don't use any extra vertical space (other than the normal effects of double-spacing); just indent the first line of each paragraph by 0.5 inches. Set up your document with left and right margins of at least 1.25 inches.

**Stylistic expectations:** Every version of your paper should be a finished, polished piece of philosophical writing. Additionally, it should be written as if intended for the general philosophical reader, not just for me or the members of this class.

**Formatting your files:** If you turn in any version of your paper to me electronically, it should be in a file whose format is .doc—that is, the format associated with Microsoft Word’s versions 97 through 2003. If you use Word 2007 or 2010, please take care to use the .doc format rather than the .docx format (the format associated with Word 2007 and 2010) for work that you turn in. Note that merely changing a filename extension (from, e.g., .docx or .wpd) will not change the format of the file itself. Versions of Word capable of saving files in the .doc format are available on most, if not all, of the computers in KU’s computer labs, and many other word processors than Word are also capable of saving files in the .doc format.

**Tasks and deadlines:** Here is how the process will work.

Starting on Wednesday, November 3, I’ll bring to class a sign-up sheet on which you can sign up for an appointment with me during the week of November 15.

Version 1 of your paper will be due in class on Wednesday, November 10. You will bring four hard copies to class—one for each of as many as three of your classmates for peer reviewing, and one to turn in to me. (You can also turn it in to me by e-mailing it to me by 12 noon on that day.)

Version 2 of your paper will be due in class on Friday, November 12. (You can also turn it in by e-mailing it to me by 12 noon on that day.) You just need to bring one hard copy to class. But when you are preparing this hard copy, you should also prepare an identical one for yourself, since you will need it for when we meet.

During the week of November 15, you will meet with me to discuss version 2 of your paper. In anticipation of these meetings, I want to emphasize a few things about them.

1. You must bring to our meeting an exact duplicate of what you turned in on November 12. We’ll be going over the text of your paper closely, and it’ll be important for you to be able to see the text I’m talking about and to make notations on your own copy of it.
2. It’ll be important for you to be clear about the purpose of meeting with me. Some students treat their meetings with me as opportunities to offer further, oral, arguments in support of the claims they make in their papers. But in these meetings, I’m not interested in hearing you supplement, orally, whatever you attempted to accomplish in writing. Instead, I’m interested in helping you make the next (and final) version of your paper as good as possible. Remember, I am the person who’s going to be grading that next version of your paper. You should use your meeting with me as an opportunity to find out what changes you can make to make the final version of your paper get as good a grade as possible.
3. If you miss your originally scheduled meeting with me (whether for a good reason or a bad one), it is not necessarily the case that I will have time to schedule another one with you. If we do not have our meeting, the deadline stated below, for version 3, will still apply.

Version 3 of your paper will be due in class on Monday, November 22. (You can also turn it in by e-mailing it to me by 12 noon on that day.)

These deadlines will be strictly enforced: late papers’ scores will be reduced by 25 percentage points for each full or partial day of lateness (with each “day” starting at 12 noon).