

**Philosophy 4330: Epistemology
Spring 2015, First Paper Assignment**

Instructions: Write a short, argumentative paper on the topic of the structure of epistemic justification. The paper should be approximately 500-1000 words. The paper must critically engage the assigned readings for the first two weeks of class (not necessarily all of them).

Due Date: You must submit your paper through Blackboard before the start of class on Wednesday, Jan 28th. Remember that these papers will be graded anonymously so do not write any identifying information (such as your name) in the paper.

Grading: There will be five short essay assignments throughout the semester. I will drop your lowest score. The remaining four essays will constitute 40% of your final grade.

References: All sources used in the writing of your paper must be properly referenced. This applies to material in the course readings, other published material, lecture notes from this class and other classes, material 'published' on the internet, and ideas contributed verbally by other students. Failure to follow these guidelines may result in a lowered grade or even an automatic F in the course; it may also lead to charges being brought before the university. If you have any questions about these issues, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Topics: You must write your papers using one of the prompts listed below. For each of the choices below, there are sub-choices. So there are effectively six different categories that your paper could fall under.

1. Smithies argues that Foundationalism is the best solution to the Regress Argument.

Start your essay by explaining what the Regress Argument is, what Foundationalism is, and why Smithies thinks that Foundationalism is the best view.

Now finish by arguing

- 1) Smithies' argument fails because ...
- 2) Smithies' version of Foundationalism is not the best version. Here is a better version... and here is why it is better...
- 3) Here is an objection that might seem like a good objection to Smithies' view (for example, here is what Elgin might say). But it is not decisive. Here is how Smithies could respond...

2) Elgin argues that Coherentism is correct.

Begin your essay by explaining what Elgin means by Coherentism and why she thinks it is correct.

Now finish by arguing

- 1) Elgin's argument fails because ...
- 2) Elgin's version of Coherentism is not the best version. Here is a better version... and here is why it is better ...
- 3) Here is an objection that might seem like a good objection to Elgin's view (for example, here is what Smithies might say). But it is not decisive. Here is how Elgin could respond...