Phil 5330 Fall 2026
Assignment 3
Final essay:

Write an essay defending a philosophically interesting claim that relates to at least one topic we have discussed in class so far. There is no definitive required length for the essay, but a good target is between 3000 and 4000 words (including footnotes excluding references). The essay should be uploaded into Canvas by Friday night, **Dec 11th**.

What this assignment is. This is a research paper in the sense a professional philosopher would mean it: something of the kind you could submit to a journal or present at a conference, with more polish. It is not a summary of what we read, and it is not a report on what various philosophers think. You are advancing a thesis of your own, giving reasons for it, and locating it in an existing body of work. I understand that you do not have enough time to properly do this, and an A paper does not mean it is actually journal-level quality. But that is the form of the goal you are aiming for.

I would like you to meet with me at some point before you submit your paper to talk about your initial idea. It would be best to meet after you have a thesis (or topic) in mind. That way we can brainstorm together a good way you might want to proceed and some sources you might want to look at. I think it would be best if you had already spent a little time yourself seeing what else might be out there.

Collaboration: Collaboration with other humans on this assignment is encouraged. Students are free to discuss the topics with one another, read each other's papers, and offer suggestions. The only restriction is that each student must do their own work and write their own paper containing their own ideas and words.

AI policy: The use of generative AI tools on this assignment is allowed, but only for very restricted purposes such as helping you to locate material that you might want to look at or for helping you to format references. Here, we will follow common professional guidelines - for example, guidelines for submitting a paper to the journal *Philosophy of Science*. Here are their author instructions:

https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/philosophy-of-science/information/author-instructions/preparing-your-materials

-- Note that you do not need to follow that journal's formatting conventions in this paper (though it is a decent idea) but you should follow the fairly minimal guidelines on AI use - namely, you cannot use AI generated text, images, etc. without attribution. Transparency is key here. If you are worried that after you are transparent, I will be upset with what you did, you should talk to me ahead of time. But for example, if you say "I only used it to generate an opening paragraph for me" then yes, I will be upset. You should not do that even for one sentence for this assignment. And obviously, you shouldn't lie about what you did do.