

Paper 2/3: Skepticism

Technical Requirements

Please submit your paper on Canvas. For fairness, I will grade your papers without knowing your identity. To “blind” your paper, please submit a *.pdf file*. Your paper ought to be double-spaced in 12pt, Times New Roman font. Include only your student number at the top of your paper. *Do not include your name*. As a rough guideline, most students need about 1,500 to 2,000 words to address the prompt below. Your paper should not exceed 2,500 words, however. Please include a complete bibliography with any other sources that you have consulted.

Topic

Reconstruct a skeptical argument and then critique it. Specifically, identify a premise of the skeptical argument that you believe to be false, and explain your reasons for rejecting it. If you have been assigned to respond to the second paper prompt, you should reconstruct and critique an argument for inductive skepticism. If you have been assigned to respond to the third paper prompt, you should reconstruct and critique an argument for either moral or mathematical skepticism.

No matter your task, remember that we have seen several different arguments for inductive, mathematical, and moral skepticism. The premises and conclusions of those skeptical arguments differ, and so you should carefully state the premises and the conclusions of the skeptical argument that you present.

For example, suppose you are reconstructing “Hume’s” skeptical argument. Make sure to explain why *type* of propositions that Hume claims that we cannot know. Does Hume’s skeptical argument challenge knowledge of the future only, or does it challenge knowledge of the past? Does it challenge only *causal* knowledge, or both causal and non-causal knowledge?

Similar remarks apply if you have been assigned to reconstruct an argument for mathematical or ethical skepticism. Does the conclusion of your skeptical argument challenge knowledge of *particular* ethical claims, like “Nixon’s lie was unethical”, or does it challenge knowledge of general ethical claims like, “Lying is unethical”?