

## I. Paper Mechanics

|                      | 0-1 Points   | 2 Points   | 3 Points   | 4 points  | 5 Points  |
|----------------------|--|--|--|---|---|
| Spelling and Grammar | The student needs to consult writing tutors for help with writing mechanics. | The paper contains at least two grammatical and/or spelling errors that prevent a reader from understanding the author's thesis. | The paper contains grammatical and/or spelling errors that make reading at least one paragraph difficult. One or two sentences may be ambiguous in ways that compromise clarity. | The paper contains more than two small spelling and/or grammatical mistakes. However, such mistakes do not detract from ability of the paper to be understood and/or read without difficulty. | The paper is largely free of spelling and/or grammatical errors. No more than two small mistakes are present. |

|                          | 0 Points                            | 1-2 Points  | 3 Points   | 4 points  | 5 Points   |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|--|---|--|
| Citations and Quotations | No citations or quotations present. | -The paper contains three or more errors with respect to the criteria outlined in the "5 point" column. | -The paper contains at least two errors with respect to the criteria outlined in the "5 point" column. | -The paper contains at least one error with respect to the criteria outlined in the "5 point" column. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- All controversial interpretative claims are supported by quotations.</li> <li>-All quotations contain citations to appropriate page numbers within the text.</li> <li>-Paraphrased sections of the text are cited (you may cite the page numbers at the end of a paragraph).</li> <li>-A reference section is present that indicates all secondary literature that was consulted (if any).</li> <li>-Quotations are not used to bolster uncontroversial interpretative claims.</li> </ul> |

|                   | 0-3 Points  | 4-5 Points   | 6 Points   | 7-8 points   | 9-10 points  |
|-------------------|---|--|--|--|--|
| Opening Paragraph | The opening paragraph could be deleted without compromising the quality of the paper. | -The outline of the paper is missing.<br>-There is no relevant background information that helps one understand the argument of the paper. | The outline of the paper is missing and the background is vague, but appropriate. The opening paragraph may also contain other unnecessary elements. | One of the following:<br>-The outline is unclear, or<br>-Background provided is either vague/overly- general, or insufficient to provide context for the thesis.<br>-The opening paragraph contains information other than an outline of the paper and a brief explanation of the intellectual background. | -Clearly outlines of contents of the reminder of the paper.<br>-Briefly explains necessary background to understand the paper.<br>-Nothing other than an outline of the paper and a brief explanation of the intellectual background is present. |

| S |       | 0-1 Points   | 2-4 Points   | 5-6 Points  | 7-8 points  | 9-10 Points   |
|---|-------|--|--|---|---|---|
|   | Style | The paper is very difficult to read in virtue of excessively long sentences, inappropriate word choice, and unnecessary abstraction. | Exactly four sentences fail to satisfy the criteria in the “10 points” column. | Exactly three sentences fail to satisfy the criteria in the “10 points” column. | Exactly two sentences fail to satisfy the criteria in the “10 points” column. | - Sentences are concise.<br>- Sentence structure is varied.<br>- No unnecessary adverbs or adjectives are present.<br>-Abstract concepts are explained using concrete examples. |

|                                | 0-2 Points   | 3-4 Points  | 5-6 Points  | 7-8 Points  | 9-10 points  |
|--------------------------------|--|---|---|---|--|
| Defining terms and word choice | <p>Both of the following obtains:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Two or more central philosophical terms are undefined or unexplained.</li> <li>- Two or more errors concerning non-philosophical word choice.</li> </ul> | <p>At least one of the following obtains:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Two or more central philosophical terms are undefined or unexplained.</li> <li>-Two or more errors concerning non-philosophical word choice.</li> </ul> | <p>Both of the following obtain:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-One central philosophical term is undefined.</li> <li>-Exactly two errors concerning non-philosophical word choice.</li> </ul> | <p>Exactly one of the following obtains:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-One central philosophical term is undefined or is defined incorrectly.</li> <li>-Exactly two errors concerning non-philosophical word choice.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-All technical philosophical terminology is correctly defined or explained in everyday English.</li> <li>-Examples are used to illustrate philosophical concepts.</li> <li>-Non-philosophical terms are used correctly and precisely throughout the paper.</li> <li>-The same word is used to denote the same concept throughout the paper (i.e., writer does not use a thesaurus needlessly).</li> </ul> |

## II. Paper Substance

|                         | 0-11 Points  | 12-13 Points   | 14-15 Points  | 16-17 Points  | 18-20 Points  |
|-------------------------|--|--|---|---|---|
| Argument Reconstruction | Several errors of the types enumerated in the column to the right. | <p>All of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-One of the author's premises and/or conclusions are not clearly identified or stated.</li> <li>-The paper fails to identify obvious implicit premises necessary to render the argument valid or inductively strong.</li> <li>-The paper fails to explain how various claims in the argument follow from one another.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-The author's conclusion is stated clearly.</li> <li>-One or more of the author's premises is not identified or stated clearly.</li> </ul> <p><b>AND</b></p> <p><u>Any of the following:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-The paper fails to identify obvious implicit premises necessary to render the argument valid or strong.</li> <li>-The paper fails to explain how various claims in the argument follow from one another.</li> <li>-The paper contains at least one paragraph irrelevant to the prompt.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-The author's premises are stated clearly, with perhaps one small error.</li> <li>-The author's conclusion is stated clearly.</li> <li>-The paper does not contain any paragraphs irrelevant to the prompt.</li> </ul> <p><u>Any of the following errors:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-The paper fails to identify obvious implicit premises necessary to render the argument valid or inductively strong.</li> <li>-The paper distinguishes implicit from explicit premises,</li> <li>-The paper explains how various claims in the argument follow from one another.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-The author's premises are identified and stated clearly.</li> <li>-The author's conclusion is stated clearly.</li> <li>-The paper identifies implicit premises necessary to render argument valid or at least inductively strong.</li> <li>-The paper distinguishes implicit from explicit premises.</li> <li>-The paper explains how various claims in the argument follow from one another, thereby terminating in the conclusion.</li> <li>-The author's argument is not criticized or defended before it is reconstructed.</li> <li>-The student distinguishes his or her own ideas and theses from those of the author.</li> </ul> |

|            | 0-11 Points                                | 12-13 Points   | 14-15 Points  | 16-17 Points  | 18-20 Points  |
|------------|--|--|---|---|---|
| Objections | The objection is incoherent or irrelevant. | <p><i>Both</i> of the following:</p> <p>-The paper does not state whether the objection questions the validity of an inference or the truth of one of the premises.</p> <p>AND</p> <p>-Several errors with respect to the remaining criteria in the rightmost column</p> | <p><i>Both</i> of the following:</p> <p>-The paper does not state whether the objection questions the validity of an inference or the truth of one of the premises.</p> <p>AND</p> <p>-No more than one error with respect to the remaining criteria in the rightmost column.</p> | <p><i>At least one</i> of the following errors:</p> <p>-The paper does not state whether the objection questions the validity of an inference or the truth of one of the premises.</p> <p>-At least one error with respect to the remaining criteria in the rightmost column.</p> | <p>-The paper explains whether the objection questions the validity of an inference or the truth of one of the premises.</p> <p>-Premises of objections are identified and stated clearly.</p> <p>-The conclusion of the objection is stated clearly.</p> <p>-The objection is valid or at least inductively strong. The student does not produce a weak objection merely for the sake or refuting it.</p> <p>-The paper explains how various claims in the objection follow from one another, thereby terminating in the conclusion.</p> |

|                         | 0-11 Points | 12-13 Points | 14-15 Points | 16-17 Points | 18-20 Points                |
|-------------------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|-----------------------------|
| Responses to Objections |             |              |              |              | Same Criteria as Objections |

### III. Additional Criteria:

A. Students also have the chance to earn points not specified in the above rubric. There are several ways a student may do so.

1. Novelty (up to 10pts) – The paper contains any of the following: (i) novel argument, (ii) a novel example illustrating some thesis or term, or (iii) a novel analogy between two theories, arguments, or concepts.
2. Substantial additional research (up to 5pts) – The paper successfully uses theories, arguments, and/or concepts introduced in academic articles other than those discussed in class. Students should typically consult me before employing additional research, as additional research **ought not replace** a thorough discussion of the assigned readings.

B. Papers may be penalized even if they meet the above criteria. Again, there are at least two common sources of penalties:

1. Digressions - Papers that contain irrelevant material (i.e., digressions) or that fail to address aspects of the prompt can expect large deductions. Depending upon how far a student digresses from the assigned prompt, I may fail a paper regardless of whether its content is otherwise very good. For example, if the prompt asks you to discuss Hume's argument that *p* and the majority of your paper discusses the historical background to Hume's writing of the *Treatise on Human Nature*, you ought to expect large deductions. If your paper only tangentially discusses Hume, then your paper may receive a failing grade, regardless of how brilliant it is otherwise.
2. Overly-aggressive, arrogant, and/or otherwise unprofessional tone – Do not call authors “stupid”; do not call their arguments “incoherent” or “utterly incomprehensible.” Use terms that are precise and less aggressive. You may say an argument is “invalid”, “unsound”, or “fallacious”; you may say two premises “contradict” or “are in tension.” These phrases convey there is a problem with an argument without insulting an author.