

Paper 1: Abstract Ideas

DUE DATE

This paper is due by midnight on Friday, February 17th, 2017. Please submit your paper on the Canvas website in .doc or .docx format if possible. Other acceptable formats include .pdf and .odt.

WRITING A PHILOSOPHY PAPER

All philosophers begin by expanding upon or critiquing the theories of past great thinkers. In order to respond to the work of another philosopher, one must follow three principal steps: (1) reconstruct his or her argument with charity, (2) raise objections to the argument, either about its validity or the truth of its premises, and (3) consider potential objections to one's own position. During class discussions, you undertook the first of these three steps when you reconstructed one of Hume's criticisms of Locke's theory of abstract ideas. In this paper, you will complete all three steps.

TOPIC

In this paper, you should first explain Locke's definition of ``abstract ideas'' (also called ``general ideas'', and how such ideas can be formed. You should then reconstruct **one** of Hume or Frege's arguments that (Lockean) abstract ideas do not exist, or in other words, that we (humans) cannot form abstract ideas of the type Locke describes. You then have two options. Your first option is to defend Locke from the criticism you have reconstructed. To do so, you explain why Hume or Frege's argument is invalid or contains a false premise. Alternatively, you may defend Hume or Frege's argument from potential objections.

TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

Please include only your student number at the top of your paper. *Do not include your name.* I will grade your papers without knowing your identity. Your paper should be as long as is necessary to reconstruct the argument charitably. As a rough guideline, most students need about 1,200 to 1,500 words to accomplish this task. Your paper should not exceed 1,500 words, however. Please include a complete bibliography with any other sources that you have consulted.