

Philosophy 12 Concluding Assignment

Personal Manifesto: What Do I Believe In?

This assignment requires you to “put it all together.” I really want you to think clearly and deeply, because this is an opportunity to examine with what defines you as a person.

I am looking for extended *explanations* of belief, not merely a string of statements of *what* you believe. The further you push your explanations, the closer you come to truly understanding what and who you are. In short, I’m seeking quality, not quantity. Be careful: your examples should not overwhelm the philosophical generalizations you are attempting to explain; moreover, you must take care – like any good philosopher – not to contradict yourself!! Finally, you are encouraged to use “I” and “my”.

This project must be written in the essay style, though you may prefer mini-paragraphs within each section. It should be double-spaced and be between 800 to 1500 words (3 to 6 pages). It should include a cover page, introduction, and a conclusion, as well as proper references to the arguments of others. You must use your own words; non-attributed wording will mean a mark no greater than 3/6.

It must address one or more of the elements in each of the five major categories:

1. Metaphysical Issues:

- Is our world one of flux or stasis?
- How was our universe created?
- Is there such thing as God?
- Do we have free will or are we determined?

2. Epistemological Issues:

- Is truth relative or objective? What are some clear examples?
- Does reason rule our passions, or is it the reverse?
- Do science and religion know the same things? How about science and philosophy?

3. Ethical Issues:

- Which theory (or theories) of ethics do you find the most persuasive? Why?
- What are the most important things you will teach your kids about the treatment of others? Explain!!
- What values shape your conduct? In your explanation, indicate whether it is a classical, utilitarian or Kantian rationale.

4. Political Issues:

- Which ideology comes closest to reflecting your political beliefs?
- What is your view of human nature? (This will determine a great number of your political beliefs.)
- What is your stance on issues like progress/tradition, individual/community, equality/difference, or perfectibility/human corruption?
- What political system would you like to see in the future?

4. Applied Philosophy:

- What is autonomy? Why is it important?
- Considering the issues we’ve discussed this semester in “Applied Philosophy”, what are the greatest challenges to our autonomy?
- What are the greatest challenges to *your* autonomy?

This assignment is worth 20% of Term Four. It is due Monday, June 26 at 9:00 am (or earlier).