

Phil 115: Introduction to Ethics
Prof. Rump
Spring 2015

Prompt for Comparison Paper (Paper #2)

2-3 pages, double-spaced, 11 to 12 point font, 1-inch margins

*Due as a word document (.doc or .docx) via SafeAssign on Blackboard
by 11:59 PM on Monday, 3/16 (note the extended deadline!)*

For your second paper of the semester, your task is to **compare the ethical theories of Kant** (deontological or duty-based ethics) **and Mill** (utilitarianism or, more generally, consequentialist ethics), **focusing on what you take to be the greatest strength of each theory** (each also has weaknesses, of course, but please focus on the strengths), **and then presenting your own reasons for preferring one over the other.** In doing so, you must draw on the primary texts from both authors, but you should also feel free to make use of the more programmatic statements of each position as found in first chapter of the Timmons reader (pp. 15-20 for Kant and pp. 6-11 for Mill). You should do your best to present each position in the best possible light, clearly explaining what you take to be its greatest strength *and why*, and then briefly explaining which position you prefer *by presenting a clear argument or justification for your preference.*

Expectations

As with your first paper, answering the prompt above in the space of 2-3 double-spaced pages will require the careful selection and presentation of relevant ideas and passages from each author, and will demand concise and precise analytical writing approached through multiple drafts. *You will not have the space to present an extensive summary of each theory; your presentation will need to be intentional and selective.* Your primary goal should be to show the reader what you take to be the greatest strength of each theory, but doing this well will also involve showing how that strength fits into the author's overall approach. Your presentation of each author's strength and of your own argument in favor of one of the theories should focus on careful analysis and close reasoning, in a well-crafted essay with a clear thesis (in this case, what you take to be the greatest strengths of each position and a preliminary indication of which you prefer and why). This thesis should be defended with evidence and reasoning in the body of the paper supported by references to the text. While these papers are very short, the final product should be a well-written and succinct formal essay. *Doing this well will require careful proofreading, attention to detail, and multiple drafts and revisions.*

Formatting, etc.

Information on how to format your paper, some tips to help you with writing a philosophy paper, and information on how the papers will be graded is available in the document entitled "Philosophy Papers: Instructions, Tips, and Grading Rubric," available on Blackboard. If you have questions about any aspect of writing your paper, you should check there first. Please also refer to the comments from your first papers for additional things to think about as you work on this paper.

As stated on the syllabus, I am happy to read drafts of thesis statements, or to discuss other questions related to your papers during office hours or by email, but in order to encourage you to get a head-start on your papers and to work through multiple drafts, *I will not respond to such requests initiated less than 48 hours before the paper is due.*