

Fall 2017
PHIL 1101, Section 01
First Paper Assignment
Prof. Douglas Ficek

Write a paper, at least six pages in length, on one of the following topics – preferably the one that you find the most interesting. Revise your work carefully, and remember to cite your sources correctly using APA, MLA, or Chicago guidelines. Your typed and stapled essay is due at the beginning of class on Monday, October 16th.

1. In the *Euthyphro*, Socrates discusses the nature of holiness, piety, and morality with Euthyphro, who advocates (what we now call) the divine command theory. How does this discussion go, and who makes the strongest argument? Do right and wrong depend on divine approval?
2. In the *Apology*, Socrates defends himself against the charges of Meletus, among others. How does his defense go, and do you think that he deserves to be found guilty? What does this infamous trial tell us about the nature of philosophy and the nature of justice?
3. In the *Crito*, Socrates is given an opportunity to escape his (capital) punishment, but he chooses not to flee. Why does he decide to stay, and what is his argument concerning justice and legal obligation? Is there any room for civil disobedience in his worldview?
4. In the *Phaedo*, Socrates presents four arguments for the immortality of the soul. What are these arguments, and how do they work? Are any of them successful? Are any of them especially flawed? Do you think that Socrates has made a case for human immortality?
5. In the *Phaedo*, Socrates briefly discusses “misology,” which is literally the hatred of argumentation, reason, and philosophy itself. What exactly does he say about this phenomenon, and how does it originate? Do you think that misology exists today in our society?
6. In the *Meditations on First Philosophy*, Descartes doubts everything that he can and concludes (in the Second Meditation) that there is something that he cannot doubt: namely, his own existence. How does this thought experiment proceed, and what do you make of it?
7. In the *Meditations on First Philosophy*, Descartes doubts the existence of God (for methodological reasons) and then argues for the existence of God (in the Third Meditation). What is his argument for God's existence, and is it a good argument in your view?