

FINAL WRITING ASSIGNMENT | PHILO 101 ONLINE | FALL 2021

Choose **two** of the following questions and answer them with a concise essays, using what you've learned from the required readings for this course.

LENGTH: Each answer should be 500–750 words. Shorter is better, if you've adequately answered the questions. You will be penalized for including material that is not germane to your answer, so make sure that every word counts.

METHOD OF SUBMISSION: Submit your answers in a private message on slack. The answers should be in the body of your slack message, not in an attachment. Make sure to save a backup copy of your answers!

DUE DATE: Answers should be submitted to me by 11:59PM on Friday, Dec. 17th.

1. Some moral and political philosophers have argued that our most important value should be happiness, while other have argued that it should be freedom. Explain this debate. Make sure to describe the views and reasoning of at least one philosopher on either side, and to illustrate the disagreement by giving at least one example of a decision or public policy over which the two sides would disagree.
2. One theme of recent philosophy has been to reclassify certain negative social forces as “structural” problems rather than as negative personal character traits. Sexism is a case in point. What is it to say that sexism is a structural problem? Why does Frye's theory of sexism count it as a structural problem? What are some other social problems that we might similarly want to think of as structural problems in the same way, and what makes them structural?
3. What is it for one belief to be more fundamental than another one? Which of our beliefs are the most fundamental? Which philosopher would agree and which would disagree? Why?
4. Recently, we have seen huge advances in the application of artificial intelligence to solve technological problems. Do these advances give us good evidence that computers can, or will one day be able to think? Does the fact that a computer can carry on a written conversation give us a reason to think that it is an thinking being? Why or why not?
5. What is the best argument that Cartesian dualism is false and materialism (a.k.a. physicalism) is true? Explain why Descartes' theory of the self is the basis of his philosophical system. What are some reasons to think that this theory is false if materialism is true?