

SHORT WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

Your second, third, and fourth writing assignments will follow the same instructions. Each will be a 500–750 word mini-essay that could eventually be developed into a longer essay (namely, your term paper). You can write each of these three mini-papers on different topics, or you can use the later papers to further develop themes from the earlier essays. Either way, each paper should be a substantially new piece of writing (not merely a re-write), and each should engage with ideas from the required readings.

I will respond to each essay with feedback about the feasibility of developing the project into a longer essay, suggestions for how to do it, and suggestions for further research on the topic. In order to leave time for this feedback to be useful while you write the first draft of your term paper (which is due on November 24th), these mini-essays will be due no later than **October 23rd**, **October 30th**, and **November 6th**, respectively—three consecutive Fridays. But there's no need to wait until then. You can start handing in mini-essays as soon as you like.

These are the criteria that will make for a good mini-essay, and that I'll be thinking about when grading it.

- *Comprehension*: Show that you understand the ideas from the readings that you discuss.
- *Argumentation*: use the essay to argue for a philosophical thesis. Give good, rationally convincing reasons for this thesis.
- *Creativity*: Use your own interesting examples to make your point, or approach the issue from a fresh angle that is different from the one taken in the readings.
- *Potential*: a good mini-essay will be written with an eye to the possibility of expanding it into a term paper.
- *Clarity*: All of the above require that you write in easy-to-understand, grammatical English with a clear structure. Don't make me struggle to understand you!