

“It is the destiny of every human person to decide.”<sup>1</sup> The necessity of choice is an unalterable fact of our existence over which we have no choice. Yet the reality of choice raises the question philosophically as to whether there are principles or standards of reason that can guide us in our choices. Are there objective criteria grounded in the essential structure of human personhood that can provide a compass for us in our life journey?

### Focus

We are now in the process of reading and exploring together selected portions of classic texts that represent basic theories of normative ethics. Your task in the third response paper will be to articulate your perspective on the philosophical grounding of the fundamental principles of moral action, through reasoned argumentation in dialogue with the theories outlined in class and in the assigned readings.<sup>2</sup> You may carry out this task in a variety of ways. You may choose to develop your position in dialogue with *one set of texts*, or through a comparison and contrast between *two different texts*, or by means of a unified, thematic analysis of *all three sets of texts* from the three major classifications of normative ethical theories discussed in class. For example, you may want to develop a conception of the “good” in dialogue with Aristotle, or through a comparison and contrast between both Aristotle’s and Kant’s understanding of the “good,” or you may explore the ways in which the insights of Aristotle and Kant are further developed and explicated within the context of normative ethical theism.

### Objectives

Careful textual analysis will be an important part of your work in this paper, but the heart of your project is for you to develop your own perspective on philosophical moral theory. Embrace the task as an opportunity to think through the substance and the grounding of what you consider to be the fundamental principles of moral action. How do these principles form for you a consistent worldview with the highest level of explanatory capacity, and what is the meaning and significance of this worldview for your daily life?

### Format

Your paper should be a minimum of six pages in length, double-spaced, in twelve-point type, with one-inch margins. Use correct bibliographic citations as outlined in Turabian, *A Manual for Writers* (Part II: “Source Citation,” 133–215). Include a cover page for the draft and the final version, with your name, the submission date, the professor, and a substantive title that provides a window for the reader into the heart of your paper. Submit your draft electronically and the final version in hard-copy format, along with a printed copy of your evaluated draft.

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<sup>1</sup> Stuart C. Hackett, *The Rediscovery of the Highest Good: A Philosophical and Critical Ethic* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2009), 1.

<sup>2</sup> A critical exploration of other texts is also possible, but the focus and textual grounding of your paper needs to be approved in advance.

**ECE/Philosophy 316, Spring Semester 2012**  
**Normative Ethical Theories**  
**Response Paper 3**  
**24 Points Total**

**[1]**  
**Thesis and Structure**

*Thesis Statement and Outline*

- 3: Clear thesis statement, with a well-crafted outline for the reader to follow.
- 2: Thesis stated, with a basic outline to guide the reader.
- 1: Inadequate statement of thesis and outline.

*Clarity and Organization*

- 3: Overall organization is clear with appropriate transitions. Paragraph structure is integrally related to the thesis statement and outline. Paragraphs are coherent and ideas are clear.
- 2: Most paragraphs have a clear purpose. Topic sentences sometimes misplaced.
- 1: Lack of organizational structure interferes with the clarity of the paper.

**[2]**  
**Dialogue, Analysis,**  
**and Worldview Development**

*Dialogue with Normative Ethical Theories*

- 3: Engaging, critical, and sympathetic dialogue with normative ethical theories discussed in class and developed in the assigned readings or related texts
- 2: Some dialogue with normative ethical theories
- 1: Inadequate understanding of moral theories

*Moral analysis*

- 3: Clear explication of fundamental moral principles
- 2: Statement and outline of guiding principles
- 1: Inadequate analysis of moral principles

*Worldview Development*

- 3: Substantive development and application of worldview perspective
- 2: Basic, rudimentary formulation of worldview principles
- 1: Inadequate grasp of worldview construction

[3]  
**Grammar and Composition**

*Sentence Structure and Writing Style*

- 3: Graceful sentences with appropriate variety of structures. Words are chosen precisely. Writing is vigorous and engaging.
- 2: Occasionally awkward or vague. Active verbs are used, with few superfluous or poorly chosen words. Some pronouns without clear referents.
- 1: Several cumbersome and unclear sentences. Wordy, excessive nominalizations, weak verbs.

*Mechanics and Grammar*

- 3: No significant errors of spelling, grammar, punctuation, or usage.
- 2: Minor errors of mechanics and grammar.
- 1: Numerous errors in grammar and substandard usage.

*Format:*

- 3: Double-spaced, in 12 point type, with one-inch margins. Six pages minimum in length, required for both the draft and final version. Appropriate bibliographic references, using *Chicago Manual of Style* — Notes-Bibliography citation format — as outlined in Turabian, *A Manual for Writers* (133–215). Title page with your name, the submission date, and the professor. Complete draft submitted electronically. Printed copy of evaluated draft included with the final version.
- 2: Failure to meet one of the format criteria indicated above.
- 1: Failure to meet two or more of the format criteria.