

The first paper was essentially an exercise in writing a commentary on a primary source, like the ones by Huggett we've been reading in SZE. The second paper requires you to link together some collection of historical episodes, thinkers and theories. It is essential that you focus on the history of the concepts, not of the people.

In this class, we have been learning about the history of concepts of space, and it is the ideas that have been the focus—not the lives of the people who had them. Therefore, including a detailed biography will not help your grade. This is not to say that historical details are irrelevant—far from it—but what matters is the use to which they are put. Relevance is everything! Every sentence in your essay should contribute in some way to answering the question you have set yourself.

You will be graded on:

1. **Topic and Question.** The first part of this assignment was to find a suitable research topic and then narrow down your focus to a question that can be addressed in a short paper like this. This part of your grade will be determined by how well the essay answers the question and the suitability of the topic, and how well the essay motivates the question. If your paper is too short to properly address the question, that matters too.
2. **Research and Sources.** This is a research paper, and part of your grade will be determined by how well you went about the task of researching your question. Did you use an appropriate combination of primary and secondary sources? Is there evidence that you undertook independent research? Are any of your sources inappropriate for academic work or poorly referenced? You must include all the bibliographic details.
3. **Reasoning and Analysis.** You are required not just to tell the story of some historical episode but also relate this to our understanding of space (or, more broadly, motion and matter). When a concept (e.g. motion) changes over time, or comes under attack through philosophical arguments you need to explain how and why. This will not always require an explicit premise-conclusion presentation of an argument, but do consider first whether that would be appropriate, and, if not, what sort of reasoning is being used.
4. **Detail and Historical Situation.** While biography is to be avoided, historical details are important. We need to know what led to conceptual change, and why. This includes getting details of the theories and arguments right, as well as historical relationships between people and ideas.
5. **Style.** Again, some of your grade will depend on the clarity of your writing and adherence to basic standards of academic discourse. For the record,

these standards require good spelling, grammar and organization; giving quotations as needed and appropriate citations; and style (see below).

Academic style doesn't require getting rid of the first person (e.g. I will argue..., I will demonstrate... are perfectly OK), but it does require you to present the material as if you were speaking to a room full of strangers whose attention you need to keep, not telling a friend what you did on your Spring Break. (E.g. do not begin the paper by saying "I decided to write about Aristotle for this assignment". Instead, begin with some declarative sentences that introduce the specific topic of the essay and then state what you will show or argue.) Think of your audience as interested amateur philosophers (like your classmates). Don't assume they already know everything, but do assume they know the meaning of basic concepts like validity.

Some things to be avoided:

- **Hyperbole.** There is no need to overstate the importance of your essay or the claims you are making. If you do, you are probably going to end up saying something false. It is unlikely that a new discovery "overturned every scientific belief" or "was of incalculable significance." Which beliefs were overturned? What was significant about it?
- **Vague statements.** What is the content of the claim that an idea "had a major impact on society" or "was in clear conflict with divinity" or "strongly affected the scientific community"? If you don't explain what claims like these are supposed to mean, I won't be able to tell.
- **Unsupported claims.** When you say something of importance for your essay it needs to be supported by evidence, and explained in sufficient detail to be easily understood. If the statement was found in a book, cite that book. If this is an original claim, explain the reasoning that led you to make it.
- **Bad or missing citations.** Making use of a source without giving a citation is plagiarism. This is a very serious offence that can get you into real trouble! If you paraphrase something, it needs a citation. If I can't easily find the source of your claim by finding the appropriate passage it is a bad citation. Be sure to include page numbers, or (at least) section numbers.