

## Essay Guidelines

You will be graded on:

1. How well you situate your figure in the history of the philosophy of space. Biographical details are mostly irrelevant: you need to try to explain why they are important for the history of concepts of space, although you might want to mention what else they are known for.
2. Your overall understanding of the primary source you have chosen. You need to explain both what its purpose was and why it is important to us. How did it go about trying to achieve its goals? Try to demonstrate that you learned something by reading the primary source rather than just secondary sources.
3. Your logical analysis of the argument you chose to look at. You need to display a good awareness of how logical arguments work, including identifying particular argument forms at use. You will also be graded on whether or not you chose an appropriate argument to analyze.
4. How well you situate the argument and critique it. I need to know why it was important, for whom it was important, and why and how people disagreed with it. You should also give your own evaluation of the argument and hopefully an opinion on the debate. For a top grade, you need to use the concepts of validity, soundness, counterexamples, inconsistency etc. in the appropriate manner.
5. Finally, 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 to reputable sources; 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.

As I said, a well-written essay may not need a conclusion, as such. BUT only if the introduction does the job of saying precisely what the essay will contain.

## Further Requirements/Advice (11/9/14)

- A. You will be graded according to the five criteria on the previous page. The first four tell you what content you must supply to get a good grade. Make sure your essay includes that content!
- B. When providing your argument analysis make sure you do the following three things:
  - a. Give the quotation from your primary source that gives the argument.
  - b. Your analysis of the argument must appear in premise-conclusion form
  - c. Give the argument form of your argument in your analysis of whether it is valid etc.
- C. Your paper must read like a coherent essay, not a disjointed series of unrelated paragraphs. Tell the reader what you're going to do and make it clear where they are in the essay (called 'signposting').
- D. You must give valid references to your sources. It does not matter which citation style you use, but be consistent. I advise you to give a list of references at the end (titled 'References') ordered by author, and when you need to cite that source in the text give the name of the author followed by the page number(s). For example, an in text citation (Bloggs, p.34) could correspond with a reference to a book:

Bloggs, F. (1966). *Big Book of Space*. A Publisher.

Similarly, a citation (Mann, pp. 344-346) to an article would correspond to a reference like:

Mann, A. (1999). 'The Concept of Space in Modern Science.' *Studies in the History of Science*. Vol. 5 No. 3: 330-351.

If you have to cite a website (i) give the author (this rules out Wikipedia) (ii) give the full URL. For example,

Palmer, J. (2012) 'Zeno of Elea' in Zalta, E. (Ed.) Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy <<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2012/entries/zeno-elea/>>

- E. Your paper is to be submitted in digital form to Blackboard before class on Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup>. Go to 'Essay #1' in the left-hand menu. I will consider extensions until the following week but you must ask me, supplying a reason why (email is OK).