

## Topics for the Third Assignment

Write a **1000 word** paper on one, and **only one**, of the topics below. **Make sure you follow the instructions also provided below (and elsewhere).** This third assignment is due on **February 12<sup>th</sup>**.

**This third assignment requires critical analysis on your part.** Remember the **ARG** conditions for good argument (**the premises must be Acceptable, Relevant** and they must (adequately) **Ground** (or support) the conclusion). **Andrew's Rule of Thumb:** For any given claim that you are tempted to make, if you do not know the answer to the question 'How can I *adequately* defend this claim?', then don't make it. **Don't forget to adequately defend your interpretative claims or judgments!**

1. Does *rebirth* require that a soul is reborn? Alternatively, *must* a plausible, or reasonable, theory of rebirth assume the existence of transmigrating souls? Defend your answer. (Be sure to adequately discuss the Buddhist denial of the Self, or soul, in your answer.)
2. Does *moral responsibility* require an underlying, and either permanent or semi-permanent, self or soul? Alternatively, *must* a plausible, or reasonable, theory of *moral responsibility* require an underlying, and either permanent or semi-permanent, self or soul? Defend your answer. (Be sure to adequately discuss the Buddhist denial of the Self, or soul, in your answer. Also include a brief discussion of the nature of moral responsibility.)
3. Is the Mahayana ideal of the *Bodhisattva* consistent with the 'Hinayana' ideal of the *Arahant*? Alternatively, is the Mahayana ideal of the *Bodhisattva* a *departure from* the 'Hinayana' ideal of the *Arahant*? Defend your answer.
4. What is *Shunyata*? Discuss the consequences of this teaching for Buddhist metaphysics, practice *or* soteriology (or theory of 'salvation').
6. Is the practice of *selective* meat eating (i.e. eating the flesh of (certain) nonhuman but not human animals) consistent with Buddhism (e.g. the first moral precept of not harming any living being)? Defend your answer.
7. Can one *sensibly* identify oneself as *both* Buddhist and, say, Christian or Jewish? Defend your answer. (Be sure to consider whether the minimal 'requirements' for qualifying as a Buddhist, or as a practitioner of *Buddhadharma*, are compatible with the minimal 'requirements' for qualifying as a Christian or Jew.)

### *Instructions*

1. As with your first and second assignments, this is an exercise in *brevity and precision*. Do not waste space on flowery introductions or digressions (e.g. facts about the philosopher's biography). **All I need to see in an introduction is a 'map' of the paper.**
2. Take care in your choice of words. **Do not unfairly portray the position of the philosopher or texts on whom or which you are focusing.** *Do not say anything false* about the philosopher's point of view, or the position advocated by the text.
3. *Do not make claims you do not (adequately) defend (even when they are claims of interpretation!)* Provide arguments for your conclusions (or statements/claims). Your arguments should show the reasonableness of the relevant conclusions (or statements/claims). Remember the **ARG** criteria for argument evaluation: Are your reasons or premises **Acceptable** (true or probably true [if in doubt defend them!]), **Relevant** (pertain to the truth or falsity of your conclusion [or statement/claim]), and do they (adequately) **Ground** (or support) your conclusion (or statement/claim)?
4. Your paper should demonstrate *your* knowledge of the relevant topic. Take care to avoid using direct quotes (**you should not use more than ONE direct quote**). When using sources for your ideas other than yourself, *put them into your own words (remember, however, to properly footnote them)*.
5. Keep your discussion focused. **Stick to your chosen topic.** Do not try to cover too much material in your discussion. *Only move on to another point when you have adequately discussed the previous one.*
6. **Avoid clearly fallacious reasoning.** I.e. in defending your position: **Do not appeal to questionable** (or controversial) **authorities; Avoid mere appeals to the popularity of a belief; Avoid circular arguments; Avoid ad hominem** (or mere character attacks/assassinations); **Avoid Red Herrings** (or irrelevancies); **Do not equivocate; Do not make hasty generalizations** (or unfounded broad-sweeping generalizations); **Avoid non sequiturs** (concluding something that does not follow from what you have provided as evidence); **Don't contradict yourself.**
7. In grading your assignment I am limited to what you clearly communicate in the course of your discussion. **Make sure you provide clear statements and defending arguments.**
8. Make sure to include footnotes *and* a bibliography. You can follow whatever manual of style you wish, **but you must be consistent and include all the relevant information** in your citations and bibliography. **Be forewarned, you will not get a good grade for an assignment that does not contain adequate citations.**
9. **Take care to avoid spelling mistakes and grammatical errors.** I will deduct marks for such errors if they interfere with the clarity or accuracy of your assignment. Properly proof read your assignment before submitting it.

Writing a good philosophy paper is an acquired skill. If you need help in writing your assignments I do recommend utilizing the Effective Writing Program at the Student Development Centre (UCC 210).