

THIRD ANCIENT PAPER PROMPT

DEADLINE: DECEMBER 3

This paper is very similar to the previous one. It is also a comparative paper, so please take into account of what we have said about writing comparative papers well.

In the paper,

- Choose a topic on which two schools of philosophy that we discussed this semester disagree. One of these schools must be later than Aristotle (e.g.: stoics/epicureans; skeptics/Augustine; etc.).
- Compare the two approaches:
 - Present both claims, and the corresponding arguments.
 - Show where the disagreement lies.
 - Is this disagreement subsequent on some other, deeper disagreement? If yes, what, and how?
- Evaluate. Do you think either of them gets it right? Why? Why not?

For example (you might choose your topic from these, or on your own):

- Stoics and Epicureans on the good life.
- Skeptics and Augustine on what we can know.
- The soul in Plotinus and in Aristotle.
- Free will in Stoicism and in Augustine.
- Etc.

General notes, most of which were already noted last time:

- The narrower your topic is, the easier it will be to make the comparison.
- Try to delineate the *specific* disagreement in question. It is not always very easy.
- In a comparative paper, and in most philosophy papers in general, you might need to write “backwards” from the way you actually think. I.e.: start with the main claim; your intro should state very specifically what you are going to talk about. Then you can go back and elaborate on the claim, and then give reasons why someone would endorse it.
- Do not forget to give the *precise* reference for everything you quote, and keep in mind the rules of thumb about direct quotes vs. paraphrases that we discussed.
- I do not mind which citation style you use, but do try to be consistent. (In philosophy, we tend to use Chicago, but again, it’s up to you.)
- The best introductory book to Hellenistic philosophy is the one by A. A. Long; for Plotinus, see especially Lloyd Gerson, *Plotinus* (Routledge, 1994). For Augustine, there are a million resources, but you can check out, e.g., the *Cambridge Companion to Augustine*. As was said

many times, please try not to rely on online resources (with the exception of the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*); if you are unsure, it is always better to ask than to be sorry later.

- Expected length: however long it takes you to say what you want to say. Generally 3–5 pages, but it is flexible.

Please bring your paper in hard copy to class on the day of the due date. Late assignments will not be considered.

Do NOT write your name on your paper. Submit it with a number generated by your birthday (MMDDYY) and the last two digits of the zip code where you grew up (e.g., if you were born on May 15, 1990, and lived in 10470, you should write 05159070 on your paper).