

UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE  
 Department of Philosophy

Philosophy Papers & Presentations

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Remember the 4 essential skills

- Exegesis
- Thesis
- Argument
- Style



Don't forget

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Grades and (roughly) what they mean

A+	A philosophically interesting, original and well-focused thesis is supported by consistently good exegesis, analysis and a strong, clearly presented argument
A	There is good, clear argument for the student's own thesis. The work shows a good deal of independent thought and a clear understanding of the relevant issues
B	There is accurate, relevant exegesis and some critical evaluation
C	The expressed understanding of the issues is irregular and/or the essay consists purely of narrative description without any analysis
D	D grades are usually pure charity
F	Oh well

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**Developing your work:**  
If your head doesn't hurt, you aren't doing it right

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Take notes</li> <li>- Record sources</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Think</li> <li>• Talk</li> <li>• Focus</li> <li>• Plan / abstract           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Thesis statement</li> <li>- Argument outline</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Write</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• And then...           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Review</li> <li>- Get feedback</li> <li>- Re-think</li> <li>- Re-focus</li> <li>- Re-write</li> <li>- Check               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thesis statement</li> <li>• Argument outline</li> </ul> </li> <li>- ...</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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**What's your point?**

- Abstract
  - Thesis statement
    - What is the one thing of which you most want to convince your audience?
  - Argument outline
    - State main assumptions
    - State overall strategy
- When to do this
  - Planning: before you start
  - Checking: after each draft

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**The dreaded thesis:**  
Do one thing & do it well

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Audience</li> <li>- Word limits, etc.</li> <li>- Understanding of other views</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aims           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Precise &amp; focused</li> <li>- Original</li> <li>- Interesting</li> <li>- Challenging...</li> <li>- ...but doable</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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**The all-purpose paper generator**

- Reply to a paper – move the conversation on
  - Pick one paper you disagree with
  - Pick the most interesting / challenging argument in that paper
  - Your paper's as good as written...
    - Thesis: Argument *blah* in paper *whatsit* fails because...
    - Exegesis: *Blah* is interesting because...
    - Argument: Defend your thesis
- If you are really stuck
  - Try setting topics for each other

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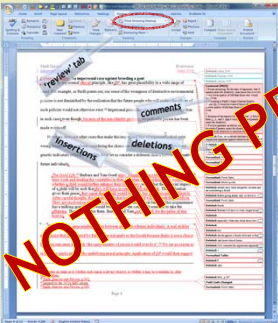
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**Thinking about feedback**



**NOTHING PERSONAL**

- View
  - 'final' showing 'markup'
- Consider
  - Strategy
  - Style
  - Substance
- Respond
  - Extensive revisions

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**Oops!**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thesis           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Vague</li> <li>- Overambitious</li> <li>- Banal</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exegesis           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Poor focus</li> <li>- Underestimating your opponent</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Argument           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Unfounded assumptions</li> <li>- Conclusion not what you argued</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Style           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Forgot audience</li> <li>- Hand-waving</li> <li>- Poor focus</li> <li>- Obfuscation</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

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