

I. GENERAL PURPOSE/AUDIENCE

Philosophy is the study and practice of argumentation. The process of statements working to support conclusions and then developing new statement results in a deeper understanding of and search for the truth. The study of philosophy should result in students being able to effectively assess and analyze the arguments of others as well as being able to produce solid arguments of their own. Philosophers write primarily for other philosophers in an academic setting. Writers should always assume that their readers are educated, well-read intellectuals.

II. TYPES OF WRITING

- Argument Reconstruction
 - The presentation of complicated philosophical concepts in simpler terms.
- Objections and Replies
- Original Arguments
- Applications
 - Summarizations or reapplications of philosophical ideas.
- Thought Experiments
 - Hypothetical explorations of theoretical principles in real or imagined scenarios.

III. TYPES OF EVIDENCE

- Logical proofs
- Deductive and inductive reasoning
- Definitions of terms
- Primary sources (works of great importance in the field)
- Secondary sources (academic articles and books studying great works)

IV. WRITING CONVENTIONS

- Writing should be in active voice and avoid a conversational tone.
- First and third person are both acceptable; second person should be avoided.
- Grand introductions and conclusions are frowned upon in favor of appeals to the rationality of an audience and the logic of the argument.
- Anticipate the objections to your argument and address those theories or concerns instead of ignoring them.
- Avoid overstatement: Words that limit such as “never,” “none,” “always,” “no,” or “all” should be used minimally if ever.
- Carefully consider the fallacies in the argument when writing. Remain consistent and focused rather than general and vague.
- Do not attack other philosophers personally or engage in excessive praise. Philosophy is about ongoing dialogue.
- Do not attempt to appeal to faith, bias, authority, or tradition.
- Be careful to define controversial or debatable terms.
- Concluding the paper with your final argument or thesis can be acceptable.

V. COMMON TERMS AND CONCEPTS

- Belief
- Concept
- Conceptual competence
- Epistemology
- Ethics
- Intersubjectivity
- Justification
- Ontology
- Rationality
- Semantics
- Subjectivity
- Warrant

VI. CITATION STYLE

- Chicago
- Harvard
- Modern Language Association (MLA)
- Use style recommended by professor or organization