Writing Workshop Forms for Methods of Philosophical Inquiry class

Fall 2017

Writing Workshop – PHL 230: Methods of Philosophical Inquiry – Fall 2017

Day One: Argumentation

Feedback Sheet

Name of reader:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Name of author:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Title of paper:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

The purpose of this stage of editing is to evaluate the author’s argument. This means that you should NOT give feedback on any writing issues (clarity of organization, word choice, spelling, etc.). Your job here is to isolate the conclusion of the argument, its premises and subarguments, and determine where it can be strengthened.

1. Paraphrase the author’s central claim. Do NOT quote directly; restate the thesis in your own words.
2. Articulate at least three major premises that the author presents as evidence for that thesis.
3. For each of the major premises you’ve articulated above, list the evidence the author presents for them. Having listed the evidence, mark it (as a total aggregate of claims) either “strong,” “moderate,” or “weak”.
4. Now, brainstorm. Are there any issues concerning the central claim that the author hasn’t addressed at all? (For example, if the author was making an argument about the death penalty, you might wonder if s/he had addressed the economic aspect.) List these issues.
5. Has the author considered counterarguments? If so, have they been represented fairly? Have they been refuted convincingly? If not, what counterarguments specifically should be considered?
6. Provide some more general feedback: do you find the author’s argument convincing? If so, why? (Let the author know which parts of the argument are particularly successful.) If not, why not? What would make the argument more convincing?

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Day Two: Writing (Organization and Style)

Feedback Sheet

Name of reader:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Name of author:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Title of paper:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

The purpose of this stage of editing is to evaluate the author’s writing in terms of its expressive efficacy. Don’t worry at this stage about things like spelling or typographical errors; instead, focus on three main elements of the author’s writing: organization, clarity, and voice. Provide specific comments for each section below.

1. **Organization**
	1. Consider the overall organization of the paper. Are all the specific premises that support the main thesis presented in an order that makes sense? Are there distinct sections of the paper, each with its own purpose that is clearly related to the thesis? Are there sections that are unnecessary or misplaced? Can the reader easily and clearly follow the development of the author’s argument?
	2. Consider the organization of individual paragraphs. Do they each have their own purpose? Do the sentences flow in an orderly and reasonable manner? Does each clearly relate back to the main thesis? Are there any specific paragraphs that need to be significantly re-organized?
2. **Clarity**
	1. Isolate and describe parts of the paper that are particularly clear, where the author’s meaning is unmistakable, and the reader understands the author’s points easily.
	2. Isolate and describe parts of the paper that are particularly unclear, where the author’s meaning is not easily comprehensible, and where misunderstandings could easily arise.
3. **Voice**
	1. Generally speaking, does the author choose words that are specific, strong, and subtle? Does the author avoid clichés, oversimplifications, and vagueness? Isolate and describe examples of strong writing, as well as examples of phrasing and word choice that need improvement. Articulate patterns (for example, the overuse of certain words) that need to be addressed.
	2. Generally speaking, does the author vary sentence structure to avoid a plodding or clunky rhythm? Are there sentences that seem meandering, haphazard, or overly long? Isolate and describe examples of smooth, flowing sentences, as well as examples of sentences that need to be reworked.

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To-Do List

Name of author: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Title of paper: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Type of feedback received and list of readers:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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Now that you have received peer feedback on your paper, you need to translate that feedback into a list of specific, concrete tasks that you believe will improve your paper. Be sure to evaluate the feedback you have received carefully; not all suggestions will be helpful, and it’s your job as the author to sift through them for the most productive insights. You will also need to translate feedback into specific objectives; for example, one reader may have indicated that your thesis wasn’t sufficiently clear. Don’t write down, “clarify thesis” as one of your to-do items; specify precisely how you plan to do so (for example, you might write, “incorporate specific claims concerning race and class into the thesis”). Itemize each objective below; continue on the reverse if necessary, and break down each step into sub-steps as needed. The goal here is to have a list of tasks that will sharply focus your next revision and make it as efficient and productive as possible.

1.

2.

3.

4.