

Saint Leo University

PHI 110RS Encountering the Real: Faith and Philosophical Enquiry

Course Description:

This course examines definitions, assumptions, and arguments central to religious existence via the lens of several key classical and contemporary philosophers. Students will develop and refine their ability to think impartially and objectively about personal religious commitments, understand alternative religious points of view, and formulate and defend informed arguments and objections with respect to the subject matter. Topics include faith and reason, arguments for the existence of God, the problem of evil, and responses to religious diversity.

Prerequisite:

None

Textbooks:

Saint Leo University. *Encountering the Real*. 2013 ed. New York: Cengage Custom. Print.
ISBN: 978-1-285-55349-8

Course Objectives:

This course is an opportunity for students to:

1. Discuss key terms, concepts, and ideas held by some of the most important figures contributing to Western philosophy of religion.
2. Reflect upon classical and contemporary philosophical arguments.
3. Read complex philosophical texts and develop excellence in the use of critical thinking tools and concepts.
4. Express multiple, critical philosophical points of view through college level writing.

Learning Outcomes:

At the conclusion of this course, the successful student will be able to:

1. Identify and explain key terms, concepts, and ideas held by some of the most important figures contributing to Western philosophy of religion, including, but not limited to, St. Anselm, St. Thomas Aquinas, Søren Kierkegaard, Alvin Plantinga, and John Hick.
2. Explain and evaluate (in informal discussion and in formal writing) several classical and contemporary philosophical arguments, including arguments pertaining to God's existence, the problem of evil, and arguments for and against religious pluralism.
3. Analyze and evaluate complex philosophical texts via application of critical thinking tools and excellence in reasoning.
4. Distinguish and describe multiple points of view within classical and contemporary philosophy of religion.

Core Value:

Excellence: Saint Leo University is an educational enterprise. All of us, individually and collectively, work hard to ensure that our students develop the character, learn the skills, and assimilate the knowledge essential to become morally responsible leaders. The success of our University depends upon a conscientious commitment to our mission, vision, and goals.

(arête = virtue) According to the ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle, a thing is excellent (virtuous) if it performs its function well; and since the proper function of a human being is to exercise reason, an excellent human being is one who thinks critically, wonders contemplatively, and brings his or her reason to bear on action through the exercise of practical wisdom (phronesis). Reflecting this core value of excellence (arête), it is hoped that each student in this course flourishes both intellectually and spiritually as we seek to think critically and contemplatively about matters of faith and religion.

Evaluation:

Assignment	Points
Critical Writing Assignments	240 (2 @ 120 each)
Logic Quiz	40
Critical Thinking Quiz #1	40
Critical Thinking Quiz #2	40
Objective Content Quizzes	210 (7 @ 30 each)
Final Project	110
8 Discussions	320 (8 @ 40 each)
Total	1000

Grade	Score (%)
A	94-100
A-	90-93
B+	87-89
B	84-86
B-	80-83
C+	77-79
C	74-76
C-	70-73
D+	67-69
D	60-66
F	0-59

Critical Writing Assignments:

There will be two (2) Critical Writing Assignments. Topics for each writing assignment are in Module 3 (Assignment 1) and Module 6 (Assignment 2).

Some generic requirements to be observed for all Writing Assignments include that all papers must:

- Defend a thesis and should proceed according to the following format: Thesis, Argument, Objection(s), Response(s), and Conclusion.
- Include citations to the primary required class readings. These and any additional sources must be properly cited using MLA format.
- Fall within the following length requirements: 1200-1500 words. □ Use a standard 10-12 pt. font and be double-spaced.

Critical Writing Assignments 1 and 2 are **due no later than Sunday 11:59 PM EST/EDT of Modules 3 and 6** respectively. (These Assignment folders are linked to Turnitin.)

Information on MLA Citation style can be found here: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>

Review the following site on plagiarism: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/589/02/>

See Appendix A of the syllabus for a grading rubric.

Logic and Critical Thinking Quizzes:

One of the most important skills that students can take from a philosophy course is the ability to analyze and evaluate complex arguments. Developing this skill is particularly important when attempting to think objectively and critically about matters of faith and religion. It is all too easy to "like" an argument when it establishes a conclusion that confirms what we already think we know and to "dislike" arguments that

lead to conclusions that make us uncomfortable or put our cherished beliefs into question. Accordingly, it helps to lay out the rules of good reasoning prior to engagement in the emotionally charged arena of the philosophy of religion. That way we can be sure that we are being guided by reason and not emotions or traditional prejudices.

Logic Quiz: 70% will consist of multiple-choice questions which will test the ability to identify and utilize important concepts and tools for evaluating philosophical arguments. The remaining 30% will consist of two short answers in which students are given specific parameters and then asked to construct arguments accordingly.

Critical Thinking Quiz 1: This quiz will be all objective and will test specific knowledge of the concepts and tools discussed at www.criticalthinking.org, which students will read during the first week of the course.

Critical Thinking Quiz 2: This quiz will test the student's ability to critically analyze a small piece of prose philosophy. Students will be guided by the skills learned in the main part of the course, but will also be required to have mastered the terminology and concepts at www.criticalthinking.org. So a review the site is encouraged prior to taking Critical Thinking Quiz 2.

The Logic and Critical Thinking Quiz 1 occurs in **Module 1**. Critical Thinking Quiz 2 occurs in **Module 8**.

Objective Content Quizzes:

There will be seven (7) objective (multiple-choice) content quizzes. Each quiz will consist of six questions of varying difficulty. As quiz questions will be drawn mainly from the required readings, it is very important that students stay on top of the readings. Students will have one (1) hour to complete each quiz. The content quizzes may be taken as many times as students would like until they are satisfied with the grade that is received.

Final Project:

*The Final Project consists of two options. You are strongly encouraged to choose between Option 1 and Option 2 as early as feasible and then plan accordingly, though you are required to inform the instructor of the chosen option no later than **Sunday 11:59 PM EST/EDT of Module 5**. You are encouraged to review each option fully and choose the one that best suits your particular gifts, abilities, and/or geographical limitations.*

Option 1 – Interview a Spiritual Leader

The objective of this option is to conduct and record (video or audio only) an interview with a spiritual leader with respect to one of the philosophical topics discussed in class, namely, the problem of religious diversity.

The person you interview may or may not belong to your particular faith tradition (if you have one). That aspect is up to you. Potential interviewees might include (but are not limited to) a Catholic priest, a Baptist youth group leader, an Islamic imam, a Jewish rabbi, a Presbyterian elder, a Buddhist sangha leader, or a Wiccan high priestess. The possibilities are limitless. The only requirement is that you interview a bona fide spiritual leader in a recognized religion. If you should have any question about whether a particular individual would be appropriate to interview or not, ask your instructor. You should put together a list of around three to five prepared questions before conducting the interview. All questions (prepared or otherwise) should be related to some aspect of or perspective upon the problem of religious diversity as discussed in class and should be framed to suit the interviewee. Potential interviewees might be more willing to accept your interview request if you supply your interviewee with an interview protocol beforehand.

All content must be original. You, the student, should be the sole interviewer in the recording. It is fine to use prepared materials, but all content must be your own creation.

Each digital recording or video should be around **10-15 minutes** in length. It need not be edited, but it may be edited to help keep the length down as necessary.

Webcams, smartphone apps, digital audio recording devices of most any type are generally acceptable provided that the file is of sufficient sound quality and that it is a common file type.

Video files tend to be large, so upload times to the Assignment folder will vary depending on your Internet connection speed. **Before you submit your video, convert it to either a .mp4, .wmv, or .mov file** as these file types will be most readily viewable by your instructor. There are many free video conversion software packages available on the Internet. Just search for, select, and download the one you want to use and follow the instructions for converting videos. You may want to compress your video as well. Like conversion software, there are many free compression software packages available on the Internet.

Video must be submitted to the appropriate Assignment folder **no later than Sunday 11:59 PM EST/EDT of Module 8**. It is strongly recommended that you attempt to submit early in order to have sufficient time to head off potential technological difficulties prior to the deadline.

Step-by-step instructions for conducting Option 1 of the Final Project are as follows:

Step 1: After reading these instructions in full, **choose a spiritual leader** to interview and secure the consent of the interviewee. This should be completed no later than the conclusion of Module 7 at the latest; earlier is encouraged.

Step 2: Review the problem of religious diversity as discussed in Modules 7-8 and **write three or four questions to use as a protocol** for conducting your interview. Be sure to keep in mind that you are writing for a non-specialist who, depending upon the circumstances, may not have ever taken a philosophy class of any type. You should be prepared to ask follow-up questions in a way that illustrates your knowledge of the problem of the religious diversity, but which is also accessible to your interviewee. It is less important that you get through all of the questions in your protocol than it is that you **demonstrate critical thinking by the use of impromptu follow-up questions** fitting to the discussion.

Step 3: Conduct the interview at the time, location, and date predetermined with your interviewee. Be sure to either videotape or digitally record the interview.

Step 4: Review your video and then **write a 500- to 700-word reflection** on your experience.

The reflection must address each of the following questions:

- i. How did you go about choosing your interviewee and the specific topic with respect to the interview? Having now completed the project, do you wish you had done anything differently? Explain.
- ii. How did you go about coming up with interview questions? Is there anything you wish you had asked, but didn't? Is there anything you wish you had asked differently or in a different order? Explain.
- iii. Finally, are you satisfied with the responses that your interviewee provided to the questions you asked? Why or why not? Is there anything that you anticipated your interviewee to bring up or elaborate upon that he or she did not? Or conversely, is there anything that your interviewee said which surprised you? Explain.

Step 5: Submit the video or audio recording and the written reflection as separate files to the Assignment folder no later than **Sunday 11:59 PM EST/EDT of Module 8**. Earlier is encouraged in order to head off potential technological difficulties. (This Assignment folder is linked to Turnitin. Note: Turnitin is only used for the written reflection.)

Option 2 – Critical Writing Assignment on Interview with the Dalai Lama

Write a 1200-1500 word paper in which you critically analyze the perspective of the Dalai Lama as found in Module 7 of the course from the vantage point of John Hick's pluralistic hypothesis, which is encountered in the same module. You need not agree with Hick's position and you may role play if you choose, but your paper must take up and defend a clear thesis and the paper must include *substantial* engagement and *specific* references to both the Dalai Lama interview and the article by Hick.

Before getting started, please be sure to review the requirements to be observed for this and all other PHI 110RS Critical Writing Assignments. Your paper must:

- Defend a thesis and should proceed according to the following format: Thesis, Argument, Objection(s), Response(s), and Conclusion.
- Include citations to the primary required class readings. These and any additional sources must be properly cited using MLA format.
- Fall within the following length requirements: 1200-1500 words.
- Use a standard 10-12 pt. font and be double-spaced.

If you have questions about any aspect of the Final Project, please be sure to contact your instructor as early as possible.

Information on MLA Citation style can be found here: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>

Review the following site on plagiarism: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/589/02/>

See Appendices B and C of the syllabus for grading rubrics for each Final Project option.

Discussions:

Class participation is an important, graded component of the course. All students are expected to adhere to the course syllabus and schedule. It is the responsibility of the student to be aware of what is happening in the class. When preparing for the discussion assignments, the student should plan on, at a minimum, three separate discussion postings.

Initial posting: The initial response for the discussion question is due **no later than Thursday 11:59 PM EST/EDT** of each module. The initial posting will reflect the student's take on the assigned material. That posting should be well thought-out and well-written and include appropriately cited online research and text references. A posting of at least 200 words is required.

Response postings: Everyone is expected to build the discussion by posting thoughtful and substantive interactive responses to your classmates' posts. Two instances of interaction are required and more are encouraged. Interaction should include constructive criticism (positive and negative) offered in a supportive, collegial spirit. In an active learning experience such as discussion, constructive criticism can be a very powerful learning tool if offered in this manner. Students are also required to post responses to at least two (2) classmates **no later than Sunday 11:59 PM EST/EDT** of the respective module. Responses of at least 100 words each are required.

Course Schedule:

Module 1 **Logic and Critical Thinking**

Objectives

When you complete this module, you should be able to:

- Identify whether a deductive argument is valid or invalid, sound or unsound.
- Identify several common informal fallacies.
- Construct logical arguments according to given parameters.
- Identify the elements of thought, universal intellectual standards, and essential intellectual traits.

Assignments

Items to be Completed:	Due No Later Than:
Post an introduction to the class	Thursday 11:59 PM EST/EDT
Read <i>Encountering the Real</i> , Solomon and Higgins, "A Little Logic," "Deductive Logic Valid Argument Forms," "Common Informal Fallacies," and <i>The Miniature Guide to Critical Thinking Concepts and Tools</i>	
View Audio Visual Presentation (AVP)	
Post an initial response to the discussion question	Thursday 11:59 PM EST/EDT
Post responses to at least two classmates	Sunday 11:59 PM EST/EDT
Complete Logic Quiz	Sunday 11:59 PM EST/EDT
Complete Critical Thinking Quiz 1	Sunday 11:59 PM EST/EDT

Module 2 **Evidentialism**

Objectives

When you complete this module, you should be able to:

- Identify key terms, concepts, and ideas held by Clifford.
- Explain and evaluate the evidentialist argument against belief in God.
- Analyze and evaluate Clifford's evidentialist thesis via application of critical thinking tools and excellence in reasoning.
- Distinguish and describe multiple points of view with respect to the issue of relationship between faith and reason.

Assignments

Items to be Completed:	Due No Later Than:
Read Clifford, "The Ethics of Belief"	
View Audio Visual Presentation (AVP)	
Post an initial response to the discussion question	Thursday 11:59 PM EST/EDT
Post responses to at least two classmates	Sunday 11:59 PM EST/EDT
Complete Content Quiz 1	Sunday 11:59 PM EST/EDT

Module 3 **Classical Theistic Arguments**

Objectives

When you complete this module, you should be able to:

- Identify key terms, concepts, and ideas held by major theistic philosophers.
- Analyze and evaluate the fine-tuning argument for belief in God.
- Explain and evaluate one of the classical arguments for belief in God via application of critical thinking tools and excellence in reasoning.
- Distinguish and describe multiple points of view with respect to at least one of the classical arguments for God's existence.

Assignments

Items to be Completed:	Due No Later Than:
Read Anselm, "The Ontological Argument"; Thomas Aquinas, "The Five Ways"; Rowe, "An Examination of the Cosmological Argument"; Paley, "The Watch and the Watchmaker"; Collins, "A Scientific Argument for the Existence of God"	
View Audio Visual Presentation (AVP)	
Post an initial response to the discussion question	Thursday 11:59 PM EST/EDT
Post responses to at least two classmates	Sunday 11:59 PM EST/EDT
Complete Content Quiz 2	Sunday 11:59 PM EST/EDT
Submit Critical Writing Assignment 1	Sunday 11:59 PM EST/EDT

Module 4**Problem of Evil****Objectives**

When you complete this module, you should be able to:

- Identify key terms, concepts, and ideas held by some of the major philosophers contributing to classical philosophy of religion today.
- Analyze and evaluate the problem of evil as a potential argument against the existence of God.
- Distinguish and identify multiple points of view with respect to the problem of evil.

Assignments

Items to be Completed:	Due No Later Than:
Read Mackie, "Evil and Omnipotence"; Plantinga, "The Free Will Defense"; Hick, "Evil and Soul-Making"; Rowe, "The Inductive Argument from Evil Against the Existence of God"	
View Audio Visual Presentation (AVP)	
Post an initial response to the discussion question	Thursday 11:59 PM EST/EDT
Post responses to at least two classmates	Sunday 11:59 PM EST/EDT
Complete Content Quiz 3	Sunday 11:59 PM EST/EDT

Module 5**Pragmatism and Reformed Epistemology**

Objectives

When you complete this module, you should be able to:

- Identify and explain key terms, concepts, and ideas held by important modern and contemporary philosophical thinkers.
- Explain and evaluate possible theistic nonevidentialist responses to the evidentialist thesis encountered in Module 1.
- Analyze and evaluate the arguments of modern and contemporary religious nonevidentialists via application of critical thinking tools and excellence in reasoning.
- Distinguish and describe multiple points of view with respect to the issue of relationship between faith and reason.

Assignments

Items to be Completed:	Due No Later Than:
Read Pascal, "The Wager"; James, "Will to Believe"; Bergmann, "Rational Religious Belief Without Arguments"	
View Audio Visual Presentation (AVP)	
Post an initial response to the discussion question	Thursday 11:59 PM EST/EDT
Post responses to at least two classmates	Sunday 11:59 PM EST/EDT
Email Final Project Topic to the instructor	Sunday 11:59 PM EST/EDT
Complete Content Quiz 4	Sunday 11:59 PM EST/EDT

Module 6

Existentialism and Mysticism

Objectives

When you complete this module, you should be able to:

- Identify and explain key terms, concepts, and ideas held by important modern and contemporary philosophical thinkers.
- Explain and evaluate possible theistic nonevidentialist responses to the evidentialist thesis encountered in Module 1.
- Analyze and evaluate the arguments of modern and contemporary religious nonevidentialists via application of critical thinking tools and excellence in reasoning.
- Distinguish and describe multiple points of view with respect to the issue of relationship between faith and reason.

Assignments

Items to be Completed:	Due No Later Than:
Read Kierkegaard, "Truth is Subjectivity"; Selections of Mystical Experiences, James, "Mysticism"; Alston, "Perceiving God"	
View Audio Visual Presentation (AVP)	
Post an initial response to the discussion question	Thursday 11:59 PM EST/EDT
Post responses to at least two classmates	Sunday 11:59 PM EST/EDT
Complete Content Quiz 5	Sunday 11:59 PM EST/EDT
Submit Critical Writing Assignment 2	Sunday 11:59 PM EST/EDT

Module 7 Problem of Religious Diversity I

Objectives

When you complete this module, you should be able to:

- Identify key terms, concepts, and ideas held by some of the major philosophers contributing to classical philosophy of religion today.
- Analyze and discuss the problem of religious diversity.
- Distinguish and identify multiple responses to the problem of religious diversity.

Assignments

Items to be Completed:	Due No Later Than:
Read Dalai Lama, "Buddhism, Christianity, and the Prospects for World Religion"; Hick, "Religious Pluralism and Ultimate Reality"	
View Audio Visual Presentation (AVP)	
Post an initial response to the discussion question	Thursday 11:59 PM EST/EDT
Post responses to at least two classmates	Sunday 11:59 PM EST/EDT
Complete Content Quiz 6	Sunday 11:59 PM EST/EDT

Module 8 Problem of Religious Diversity II

Objectives

When you complete this module, you should be able to:

- Identify key terms, concepts, and ideas held by some of the major philosophers contributing to classical philosophy of religion today.
- Analyze and discuss the problem of religious diversity.
- Explain and discuss one of the standard problems of philosophy of religion.
- Identify and analyze key components of a short philosophical text via application of critical thinking tools and the Saint Leo core value of excellence in reasoning.
- Distinguish and identify multiple responses to the problem of religious diversity.

Assignments

Items to be Completed:	Due No Later Than:
Read Plantinga, "A Defense of Religious Exclusivism"; Basinger, "Hick's Religious Pluralism and 'Reformed Epistemology'—A Middle Ground"	
View Audio Visual Presentation (AVP)	
Post an initial response to the discussion question	Thursday 11:59 PM EST/EDT
Post responses to at least two classmates	Sunday 11:59 PM EST/EDT
Complete Content Quiz 7	Sunday 11:59 PM EST/EDT
Complete Critical Thinking Quiz 2	Sunday 11:59 PM EST/EDT
Submit Final Project	Sunday 11:59 PM EST/EDT

Appendix A
Critical Writing Assignment Rubric

Rating Scale

Exemplary: Corresponds to an A- to A (90-100%)
Proficient: Corresponds to B- to B+ (80-89%)
Basic: Corresponds to C- to C+ (70-79%)
Novice: Corresponds to D to D+ (60-69%)
Not Attempted: Corresponds to an F (0-59%)

Elements	Criteria					
	<i>Not Attempted</i> (Criterion is missing or not in evidence)	<i>Novice</i> (Does not meet expectations; performance is substandard)	<i>Basic</i> (Works towards meeting expectations; performance needs improvement)	<i>Proficient</i> (Meets expectations; performance is satisfactory)	<i>Exemplary</i> (Exceeds expectations; performance is outstanding)	
Paper Topic	Paper contains no thesis and/or does not address the essay prompt.	Thesis is difficult to discern and/or fails to address multiple parts of the essay prompt.	Thesis is discernible, but not explicitly stated in introductory paragraph and/or addresses most, but not all, of parts of the essay prompt.	Thesis statement is present in introductory paragraph, but it is wordy, generic, or unclear, and/or paper addresses all parts of the essay prompt, but not adequately.	Thesis statement is present in introductory paragraph. It is concise, articulate, and narrowly focused. Paper adequately addresses all parts of the essay prompt.	___/20
Length Requirements	There was little or no evidence of a complete assignment.	Paper is entirely too short.	Paper contains a great deal of "fluff" and still doesn't meet the length requirements	Paper is on the short side or meets requirements only because it contains "fluff."	Paper falls within the required length requirements without going off topic.	___/20
Mechanics of Writing	Little to no evidence of proper writing mechanics.	The grammar of the paper greatly impedes understanding of content. Organizational structure is unclear.	Paper needs a good deal of improvement with respect to grammar, spelling, and/or style. Organization and/or flow of ideas need improvement.	Paper is mostly free of errors with respect to grammar, spelling, and/or style, but needs some improvement. Organizational structure is adequate.	Paper is nearly perfect with respect to grammar, spelling, and style. Organizational structure is clear and the paper flows nicely.	___/20

Conceptual Analysis & Thoughtful Engagement	Paper exhibits a complete lack of thoughtful engagement with the text. Concepts are identified, but not clearly defined. No attempt to elaborate/exemplify.	Paper exhibits very little thoughtful engagement with the text. Few concepts are clearly defined using elaboration/exemplification.	Paper exhibits basic engagement with text, but needs improvement. Some concepts are clearly defined using elaboration/exemplification,	Paper exhibits thoughtful understanding of the text, but some improvement needed. Most concepts are clearly defined using elaboration/exemplification.	Paper does an excellent job demonstrating an accurate understanding of the text and goes beyond mere summary. All relevant concepts are clearly defined using elaboration/exemplification.	___/20
Points of View/ Consideration of Objections	Paper does not acknowledge the existence of alternative points of view. Does not state objections to thesis.	Acknowledges existence of more than point of view, but does not clear articulate a specific objection and respond.	Acknowledges existence of more than point of view, but considers only one. States a specific objection to thesis, but makes no clear attempt to respond.	Acknowledges existence of more than point of view. States at least one objection to thesis and responds, but needs some improvement.	Acknowledges existence of more than point of view. Clearly and articulately states at least one objection to thesis and then adequately responds to the objection.	___/20
MLA Style/Citations	Paper lacks both in-text citations and a proper works cited list.	Paper lacks either in-text citations or a proper works cited list, but not both.	Paper contains in-text citations and a works cited list, but does not follow MLA style.	Paper contains in-text citations and a works cited list, but several stylistic errors are present.	Paper contains proper in-text citations and a works cited list. Few stylistic errors are present.	___/20

TOTAL: ___ / 120

Appendix B Final Project Option 1 Rubric

Rating Scale

Exemplary: Corresponds to an A- to A (90-100%)
Proficient: Corresponds to B- to B+ (80-89%)
Basic: Corresponds to C- to C+ (70-79%)
Novice: Corresponds to D to D+ (60-69%)
Not Attempted: Corresponds to an F (0-59%)

Elements	Criteria		
	<i>Not Attempted</i> (Criterion is missing or not in evidence)	<i>Basic</i> (works towards meeting expectations; performance needs improvement)	<i>Exemplary</i> (exceeds expectations; performance is outstanding)

Interview Topic and Content	Recorded interview is ungradable, absent, or does not demonstrate understanding of the problem of religious diversity.	Recorded interview demonstrates adequate understanding of the problem of religious diversity.	Recorded interview demonstrates excellent understanding of the problem of religious diversity.	___/35
Use of Follow-up Questions in Interview	Recorded interview is ungradable, absent, or does not make use of impromptu follow-up questions fitting to the discussion.	Recorded interview makes use of impromptu follow-up questions, but improvement is needed in this regard.	Recorded interview demonstrates excellent critical thinking by the use of impromptu follow-up questions fitting to the discussion.	___/35
Written Reflection Content	Written reflection is ungradable, absent or does not address all three questions specified in Step 6.	Written reflection is of inadequate length or does not exhibit thoughtful reflection upon all three questions specified in Step 6.	Written reflection is of adequate length and demonstrates thoughtful reflection upon each of the three questions specified in Step 6.	___/40

Total: ___/110

**Appendix C
Final Project Option 2 Rubric**

Rating Scale

Exemplary: Corresponds to an A- to A (90-100%)
Proficient: Corresponds to B- to B+ (80-89%)
Basic: Corresponds to C- to C+ (70-79%)
Novice: Corresponds to D to D+ (60-69%)
Not Attempted: Corresponds to an F (0-59%)

Elements	Criteria				
	<i>Not Attempted</i> (Criterion is missing or not in evidence)	<i>Novice</i> (Does not meet expectations; performance is substandard)	<i>Basic</i> (Works towards meeting expectations; performance needs improvement)	<i>Proficient</i> (Meets expectations; performance is satisfactory)	<i>Exemplary</i> (Exceeds expectations; performance is outstanding)

Paper Topic	Paper contains no thesis and/or does not address the essay prompt.	Thesis is difficult to discern and/or fails to address multiple parts of the essay prompt.	Thesis is discernible, but not explicitly stated in introductory paragraph and/or addresses most, but not all, of parts of the essay prompt.	Thesis statement is present in introductory paragraph, but it is wordy, generic, or unclear, and/or paper addresses all parts of the essay prompt, but not adequately.	Thesis statement is present in introductory paragraph. It is concise, articulate, and narrowly focused. Paper adequately addresses all parts of the essay prompt.	___/18
Length Requirements	There was little or no evidence of a complete assignment.	Paper is entirely too short.	Paper contains a great deal of "fluff" and still doesn't meet the length requirements	Paper is on the short side or meets requirements only because it contains "fluff."	Paper falls within the required length requirements without going off topic.	___/18
Mechanics of Writing	Little to no evidence of proper writing mechanics.	The grammar of the paper greatly impedes understanding of content. Organizational structure is unclear.	Paper needs a good deal of improvement with respect to grammar, spelling, and/or style. Organization and/or flow of ideas need improvement.	Paper is mostly free of errors with respect to grammar, spelling, and/or style, but needs some improvement. Organizational structure is adequate.	Paper is nearly perfect with respect to grammar, spelling, and style. Organizational structure is clear and the paper flows nicely.	___/18
Conceptual Analysis & Thoughtful Engagement	Paper exhibits a complete lack of thoughtful engagement with the text. Concepts are identified, but not clearly defined. No attempt to elaborate/exemplify.	Paper exhibits very little thoughtful engagement with the text. Few concepts are clearly defined using elaboration/exemplification.	Paper exhibits basic engagement with text, but needs improvement. Some concepts are clearly defined using elaboration/exemplification,	Paper exhibits thoughtful understanding of the text, but some improvement needed. Most concepts are clearly defined using elaboration/exemplification.	Paper does an excellent job demonstrating an accurate understanding of the text and goes beyond mere summary. All relevant concepts are clearly defined using elaboration/exemplification.	___/18

Points of View/ Consideration of Objections	Paper does not acknowledge the existence of alternative points of view. Does not state objections to thesis.	Acknowledges existence of more than point of view, but does not clear articulate a specific objection and respond.	Acknowledges existence of more than point of view, but considers only one. States a specific objection to thesis, but makes no clear attempt to respond.	Acknowledges existence of more than point of view. States at least one objection to thesis and responds, but needs some improvement.	Acknowledges existence of more than point of view. Clearly and articulately states at least one objection to thesis and then adequately responds to the objection.	___/18
MLA Style/Citations	Paper lacks both in-text citations and a proper works cited list.	Paper lacks either in-text citations or a proper works cited list, but not both.	Paper contains in-text citations and a works cited list, but does not follow MLA style.	Paper contains in-text citations and a works cited list, but several stylistic errors are present.	Paper contains proper in-text citations and a works cited list. Few stylistic errors are present.	___/18

Total: ___/110