

Introduction to Philosophy
Professor Collier
Spring 2010
First Essay Topics

Directions: Choose one of the following topics and write a 3-4 page paper on it. (Note: this means that you should get onto the fourth page but not off the fifth). The paper should be double-spaced, and it should be formatted in 12 point font with one inch margins all around. You should avoid quotations from the text. You must rely solely upon primary sources for this paper.

Due date: March 3 (in class)

1. Explain and evaluate Plato's argument in pages 4-7 of the e-reserve reading entitled "Release of the soul from the chains of the body" (note: the relevant section is entitled "the soul's kinship with the eternal").
2. Explain and evaluate Aristotle's argument in Book 10, Chapter 7, Paragraphs 1-7.

Suggestions: There are two main parts of a philosophy paper: the first involves an interpretation of the structure of the argument; the second involves an evaluation of the argument. In the first (interpretative) part of the paper should present your reconstruction of the argument in question; the goal is to put the argument as elegantly and simply as possible, while not oversimplifying it. The second (evaluative) part should include two separate parts: (a) you should pose the strongest possible objection to the argument and then (b) consider whether the philosopher has the resources with which to adequately reply to it.

Note: You should assume that your reader is another student in the class. This means that you should assume that the reader has a basic grasp of the text in question. You don't need to introduce all the basic ideas in the text; instead, you can just launch into a discussion of the particular topic at hand.