Workshop on Writing and Academic Honesty

Date: 3rd Oct, 2026

Time: 11:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.

Speaker: Prof. LAU, Chong-fuk

What do you need to do in a philosophy paper?

- **Main aim: Present a claim & support it with reasons**
- This claim is the ***thesis***
- A paper must ***state a thesis*** and ***give an argument*** for it

The Writing Process

Four steps:

- Preparation
- Planning
- Writing
- Revising

- **Tip 1: Start early.**
- **Tip 2: Planning and revising are most important**
- If you plan carefully, writing a draft is relatively easy.
- Revising is the key to good writing, clear thinking
  - Revising is the step in which you ensure your work is clear, concise, and persuasive.

The Four Steps in the Writing Process

- **Preparation**
- Explore the issue.
- Analyze and evaluate arguments in readings
  - Consider all views, even ones you think are wrong
  - Are the arguments valid? Sound?
  - Do the arguments overlook important alternatives?

- Discuss the readings and your views with teachers and friends.
  - Can you explain your issues or view clearly and convincingly to others?

Evaluate your initial view.

- Write down your initial view on the issue and the reasons for your view.
- Are there possible alternatives to your view?
- Can you modify your argument to make it stronger?

- Evaluate opposing views.
- Write down a view that opposes your initial view and the reasons for it.
- Are you still sure the argument for your view is more convincing than that for the opposing view?
  - Do you want to change your mind?
  - Does thinking about the opposing view help you see how to strengthen the argument for your view?

Planning

- Determine your position.
- Write down your topic and thesis.
- Write down the reasons (argument) for your thesis.
  - Write down the reasons for those reasons (reasons supporting premises in your argument).
- Write down one or more objections to your thesis.
  - Write down the reasons for the objections.

- Write down the reasons why you think the objections don't refute your thesis.

- Choose an informative title for the paper.
- Consider the order in which to present your information.
- What concepts, issues, views, and arguments do you need to explain?
- What is the most logical, intelligible order to explain them in?
  - Do some of them presuppose others?

- In supporting or criticizing a view, usually the strongest argument goes either first or last.

- Where should you present the view or argument you are criticizing?
  - In what order should you present your criticisms and arguments?
  - Where should you consider objections?

- Write an outline.
- Use outline to develop details of all main points
- Don’t just write vague labels—be specific.
- The more specific and detailed your outline is, the easier your paper will be to write.

Writing

- Follow your outline.
- Keep the Introduction short.
- Introduce the issue, then state your thesis.
- Put a topic sentence at or near the beginning of every paragraph.
- Explain everything thoroughly.
- Ask yourself: Is this clear? Will every reader understand what I'm saying?

- Clearly indicate which parts explain issues or others' ideas and which present *your* ideas.
- Assume, to an appropriate extent, your reader is lazy, stupid, and mean.[1]

  - *Lazy:* He can't be bothered to try to understand convoluted or unclear sentences and arguments.
  - *Stupid:* You must explain everything to him in a simple, direct way.
  - *Mean:* He'll try to interpret what you say so that it sounds foolish, implausible, or incoherent.

- [1] This memorable formulation is due to James Pryor (http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/writing.html).

- Try to write so that even a lazy, stupid, mean reader still understands you correctly.

- Before presenting a long argument, summarize it.
  - Explain to readers the overall structure, so they can understand how the parts fit together.
- Explain relationship (if any) between different arguments.
  - Explain their relative strength.

- Be concise.
- Every paragraph, sentence, and word should be needed to explain and support your thesis.
  - Omit any paragraph, sentence, or word that doesn’t directly contribute to the main point, or that just repeats something you’ve already said.

- Stay focused on your specific topic and thesis.
  - No irrelevant information.
  - Don’t discuss other topics, no matter how interesting.
- Don’t try to say everything you know.
  - Your aim is to support your thesis, not to show how intelligent and learned you are.

Revising

- Key to clear, effective writing and thinking
- No one states an idea perfectly clearly the first time or writes a perfect paper in one draft.
- After writing first draft, put your paper away for 24 hours (two days or more is even better)
- Then read it from the viewpoint of a critical reader.

- Examine the structure of the paper.
  - Do you have a suitable title?
  - Do you have a clear, definite thesis?
  - Is the main argument clearly identified? Is it easy to understand?
  - Does each section have an informative title?
  - Does each paragraph have a topic sentence? Is the point of each paragraph clear?
  - Are issues and arguments presented in an order that's logical, coherent, and easy to understand?
  - Does the paper lead naturally and logically to its conclusion?

- As you read, ask yourself:
  - Are there errors in spelling, grammar, or punctuation?
  - Does what I say here make sense? Is the meaning clear?
  - Could a lazy, stupid, mean reader misinterpret this?
- Is what I say here really true?

- Is it clear why I think this?
- What's the connection between these two sentences?
- Does this sentence just repeat what I've already said?
- Is this point really relevant, or can it be omitted without affecting the argument?

- You will find parts of your paper that are wrong, unclear, imprecise, repetitive, or poorly organized.

- Revise to fix the problems.
- Put paper away for two more days, then revise again
- Revise at least three times before submitting
- Ask another person to read your paper and tell you if any parts are unclear, confusing, or unconvincing.
- Peer review gives you a chance to hear others' comments on your paper.

Bibliography: (Necessary. Every paper must include one)

- Items should be arranged in alphabetical order (English) or by 筆劃 (Chinese).
- Two or more items by the same author should be arranged in chronological order, from earliest to latest.

English bibliography format:

Book with a single author or editor

- Weston, Anthony. 2000. *A Rulebook for Arguments,* 3rd ed. Indianapolis: Hackett.

- Kane, Robert, ed. 2002. *Free Will.* Oxford: Blackwell.

Two or more authors or editors

- Olen, Jeffrey, and Vincent Barry, eds. 1999. *Applying Ethics,* 6th ed. Belmont, Ca.: Wadsworth.

Journal article

- Kitcher, Philip. 2001. “Real Realism: The Galilean Strategy.” *The Philosophical Review,* 110.2: 151–97.

Article collected in anthology

- Davidson, Donald. 1969. “True to the Facts.” In his

- *Inquiries into Truth and Interpretation,* 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon, 2001): 43–54.
- Nagel, Thomas. 1971. “The Absurd.” In E. D. Klemke, ed., *The Meaning of Life*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000): 176–185.

Two items by the same author

- Nielsen, Kai. 1971. “The Compatibility of Freedom and Determinism.” In Robert Kane, ed., *Free Will* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002): 39–46.
- ——. 1978. “Death and the Meaning of Life.” In E. D. Klemke, ed., *The Meaning of Life*, 2nd ed. (Oxford:

- Oxford University Press, 2000): 153–159.

(The line replacing the writer's name is the same height as a dash (—) and five letters long. Try using two dashes: ——.)

中文參考書目格式：

單一作者或編者 (Discuss. Contemporary vs. classic works.)

- 陳瑞麟 (2003)，《科學與世界之間》，台北：學富文化事業。
- 陳瑞麟，《科學與世界之間》，台北：學富文化事業，2003。

兩個或以上作者或編者

- 勞思光著、文潔華編 (1998)，《哲學淺說新編》，香港：中文大學出版社。
- 張知寒、李廣星編 (1993)，《墨子研究論叢第一輯》，濟南：山東大學出版社。

期刊論文

- 方克濤 (1995)，〈信念、真理與社會實踐〉，《思與言》33.1: 1–25。

文集中的論文

- 李明輝 (1990)，〈論所謂「儒家的泛道德主義」〉，收入氏著《儒學與現代意識》(台北：文津出版社，1991)：67–133。
- 姜寶昌 (1993)，〈墨經的邏輯理論與實踐總說〉，收入張知寒、李廣星編，《墨子研究論叢第一輯》（濟南：山東大學出版社）：159–179。

Citation format

- **In-text citations:**
- All page references should be given as in-text citations
- If directly quoting a writer, use quotation marks and a parenthetical citation
- If using your words, then parenthetical citation only
- Examples:
- …But a long life would not automatically be a meaningful life (Nagel 1971: 177)….

- …Nagel has argued that a long life would not automatically be a meaningful life (1971: 177)….
- …As Nagel says, “Absurdity is one of the most human things about us” (1971: 185).

If you need to cite the same book repeatedly,assign it an abbreviation instead of using the year of publication.

- Aristotle refers to knowledge (*epistēmē*) as “a state of capacity to demonstrate” (*NE* 1139b31-32).
- Rawls explains these obligations by appeal to the principle of fairness (*TJ,* 96).

Footnotes:

- Use footnotes only for comments or explanations that would interrupt the discussion if placed in the text.
- This format minimizes the number of footnotes.
- Footnotes are placed after punctuation marks.[1]
- Citing books in footnotes

- 1 陳瑞麟，《科學與世界之間》（台北：學富文化事業，2003），頁 28。
- 2 Robert Kane, ed., *Free Will* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002),
  [1] For example, this footnote comes *after* the full stop, not before it.

- [1] John Searle, *Rationality in Action* (Cambridge, Ma.: MIT Press, 2001) and Nomy Arpaly, *Unprincipled Virtue* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

- 2 David S. Nivison (1996), *The Ways of Confucianism*, La Salle, Ill: Open Court.

- 2 Arpaly, arguing that that weakness of will is explicable and intelligible, disregards the moral aspects of the problem and treats it simply as an issue concerning practical reasoning. (See Arpaly 2003, pp.16-23) But Searle considers the general idea behind Davidson's account to be the same as that behind accounts such as R. M. Hare's for resolving akrasia in moral contexts. Thus, Searle thinks, his criticisms of the shared general idea apply to both. See Searle (2001, pp. 221ff.)

資料庫
§圖書館哲學資源

- http://www.lib.cuhk.edu.hk/Common/Reader/Channel/ShowPage.jsp?Cid=355&Pid=2&Version=0&Charset=iso-8859-1&page=0&cat=Philosophy
- §哲學原典
- §中文
- > 台灣中央研究院史語所 漢籍全文資料庫計畫
  http://hanchi.ihp.sinica.edu.tw/ihp/hanji.htm
  例如：《莊子》《四書章句集注》

- §外文
- > Past Masters

  http://easyaccess.lib.cuhk.edu.hk/login?url=http://library.nlx.com/

  例如：Plato, *Collected Dialogues*; Kant, *Gesammelte Schriften*, Marx, Complete Works

- §哲學百科全書
- **>** Standford Encyclopedia of Philosophy

  http://plato.stanford.edu/

- > Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy Online (via library or VPN)

  http://easyaccess.lib.cuhk.edu.hk/login?url=http://www.rep.routledge.com/

- §國外哲學論文索引
- > Philosopher's index (Online)

  http://easyaccess.lib.cuhk.edu.hk/login?url=http://www.csa.com/htbin/dbrng.cgi?username=cuhh&access=cuhh378&db=philosopher-set-c

- 電子書庫
- > Oxford scholarship online. Philosophy [electronic resource]

  http://www.oxfordscholarship.com/browse?t1=philosophy

Introductory Books

1. Nagel, Thomas, *What Does It All Mean? A Very Short Introduction to Philosophy.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987.
2. Rachels, James/Rachels, Stuart, *Problems from Philosophy*, 3rd ed. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2011.
3. 勞思光，《哲學淺說新編》，文潔華編。香港：中文大學出版社，1998。
4. Berlin, Isaiah, *Concepts & Categories: Philosophical Essays*. Oxford University Press, 1950.
5. Blackburn, Simon, *The Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy*. Oxford University Press, 1996.
6. Blackburn, Simon. *Think*. Oxford University Press, 1999.
7. Cahn, Steven, *Exploring Philosophy: An Introductory Anthology*. Oxford University Press, 2000.
8. Falikowski, Anthony F., *Experiencing Philosophy*. Upper Saddle River, NJ : Prentice Hall, 2004.

9. Grayling. A. C, *Philosophy 1: A Guide Through the Subject: A Guide Through the Subject*, vol. 1. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998.
10. Guttenplan, Samuel/ Hornsby, Jennifer/Janaway, Christopher, *Reading Philosophy: Selected Texts with a Method for Beginners*. Malden, MA : Blackwell, 2003.
11. Hollis, Martin, *Invitation to Philosophy*. Wiley-Blackwell, 1997.
12. Martin, Robert, *Philosophical Conversations*. Orchard Park, NY: Broadview Press, 2006.
13. Morton, Adam, *Philosophy in Practice: An Introduction to the Main Questions. Malden*, MA: Blackwell, 2004.
14. Pojman, Louis P., *Introduction to Philosophy: Classical and Contemporary Readings*, 4th ed. Wadsworth, 1991.
15. Russell, Bertrand, *The Problems of Philosophy*, with a new introduction by John Perry. New York: Oxford University Press, 1997.

16. Sober, Elliott, *Core Questions in Philosophy: A Text with Readings Plus MySearchLab with eText*, 6th ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson, 2012.
17. Solomon, Robert/Higgins, Kathleen M., *The Big Questions: A Short Introduction to Philosophy*, 9th ed. Wadsworth, Cengage Learning, 2013.
18. Sumpf, Samuel Enoch, *Philosophy: History & Problems*, 8th ed. McGraw-Hill, 2011.
19. 唐君毅，《哲學概論》。臺北：臺灣學生書局，1975。