

Preliminary Paper on Happiness
DUE IN DISCUSSION SECTION, Friday Jan. 22, 2010

Instructions—content:

This preliminary essay is designed to encourage you to think about and argue for your own views on one of the questions listed below. You can use this preliminary essay and the comments you receive on it from your peers and the Instructor or your T.A. to help you rework your arguments for your second essay on happiness, due Monday March 8. Think of this as your first thoughts on the topic, which you can further develop later in the second essay (and the third essay, due Monday April 12). You will then turn in this early essay along with the second one, to show your progress.

Your essay must have the following elements:

1. Give a thesis statement in the introduction that states your answer to one of the following questions (a-c): (a) What constitutes a happy life for humans? Give one or more of the most important elements. (b) What is the relationship between happiness and morality? E.g., you could consider one or more of the following: Must one be moral to be happy? Does the nature of what counts as moral action have to do with providing happiness for oneself and/or others? (c) What sort of responsibility, if any, do governments have to promote the happiness of their citizens?
2. Provide arguments in the body of the paper for your answer to your chosen question. Your arguments should provide reasons that anyone could conceivably consider valid. In other words, you are not just giving your own personal view, such that you could simply say you think this, but others need not. The point here is to try to come up with reasons for your conclusion that others could also accept (even if they are not persuaded by your arguments, the arguments should be ones that any rational being could discuss with you and conceivably accept).

-- There is not space in this very short paper to go into much depth in your arguments. Do the best you can in this short space, and recognize that you will have more space in the second and third papers. This paper is just a preliminary one, where you explore your thoughts and come up with early ideas for arguing for them.

Instructions—format

Page length, margins, etc. The essay should be between 2-3 pages, typed, double-spaced, with margins between 0.75 and 1 inch, and font size between 10 and 12 points. The margin and font requirements are to ensure approximately the same range of text within the 2-3 page requirement.

Citations for quotes and paraphrases: Any time you use a quote or you paraphrase an idea from any text (whether from readings assigned for class, or from another source), you must cite the source of that quote or idea. If you use only text assigned for the course, you do not need to provide a bibliography or “works cited” page at the end of the paper, just the author and page number after the quote or paraphrase. But if you use anything beyond what is assigned for the course, you must provide a bibliography or “works cited” page. You may use any of the standard citation methods: e.g., MLA, APA, Chicago/Turabian. If you are unsure how to use any of these, please ask the Instructor or your T.A. for help.

Avoid plagiarism: It is the policy of the Instructor to prosecute plagiarism to the fullest extent allowed by UBC. Any use of another's words, including just a sentence or part of a sentence, without citation, constitutes plagiarism. Use of another's ideas without citation does as well. To avoid plagiarism, always give a citation whenever you have taken ideas or direct words from another source. Please ask Christina if you have any questions about this.

Depth of explanation and narrowness vs. breadth and superficiality: It's usually best to focus your paper on narrow claims and argue for them in some depth rather than trying to range widely over a very large number of claims that you then only have space to justify very quickly.

How essays will be marked

This essay will not receive a letter or number mark, but will be marked as one of the following: (+) adequate, (-) inadequate, (0) not turned in at all. (-) or (0) will affect the marks on your second and third essays on happiness: if you get (-) "inadequate" on the preliminary essay, you will lose 5% on the mark for the second paper. If you get (0) "not turned in" on the preliminary essay, you will lose 10% from the mark for the second paper. In addition, you must turn in a copy of the preliminary essay (with comments by the instructor or TA) with your second essay on happiness (so you must keep a copy of the preliminary essay with comments after you receive it back). Failure to turn in the preliminary essay with comments, along with your second essay, will result in a 5% deduction from the mark for the second essay. Thus, if you get a (-) "inadequate" mark on the preliminary essay, and also fail to turn it in with your second essay, you can lose 10% of the mark on the second essay.

Your preliminary essay will be considered (+) "adequate" if: it adheres to the above requirements (1-3), your arguments are largely clear and well-organized, and it reflects that you have done some independent thinking about the topic to be discussed. If the arguments are quite superficial and seem to reflect very little effort, or if they are unclear or don't provide much in the way of reasons for your thesis, you may receive an (-) "inadequate" mark. If so, you may have a chance to re-submit the essay. Please talk to Christina to discuss this possibility.

In addition, you will receive comments from at least one other student on this essay, since it will be peer reviewed in discussion section. You can use these comments, plus the ones from the Instructor or your T.A., to revise your ideas for your second essay on happiness. The peer review comments will not factor into your mark for this essay, or for the second essay (which will also be peer reviewed).

Late penalty

Late essays will automatically be considered (-) "inadequate" unless you have an acceptable excuse for turning in your essay late. Late essays must be accompanied by a "late paper form," accessible on the course web site on Vista (www.vista.ubc.ca). You should contact Christina or your T.A. before turning in a late essay if you want to avoid this penalty, unless this is physically impossible; or at least, as soon as you can after it is late. Mon. Feb. 8 is the last day essays will be accepted, and you will receive a (0) "not turned in" if you do not turn in your preliminary essay by this date (unless you have an acceptable excuse discussed with Christina or your T.A.).