

20th Century Analytic Philosophy
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Fourth and Final Paper Assignment

The fourth paper assignment is due Friday, April 26 at 5:00 in my e-mail inbox: bricker@philos.umass.edu. Same rules as the first three papers. It should be around 800 words (2-3 double spaced pages), but anything between 600 and 1000 words is fine. You should choose some specific issue or argument from one of the articles we have read and try to clearly say in your own words what that issue or argument is. Then try to say something of your own about the issue or argument. It could be something critical, or it could be just asking a question raised by the issue or argument. You can write on any of the six articles, or prompts, from the third paper assignment. That includes two articles by Russell, and articles by Black, Quine, Moore, and Gettier. Or you can write on any of the articles we have done (or will do) since then: papers by Goodman, Nagel, Lewis, Chisholm, and Williams.

Here are some “prompts” for the last five papers. Again, they are meant only to suggest topics you might write on. You do not need to gear the paper to specifically answering the questions asked.

1. Present Goodman’s “grue” paradox. (You might want to make up an example of your own to show that you thoroughly understand it.) Any attempt to give rules of induction, it appears, will have to have a way of distinguishing “projectible” predicates like ‘green’ from non-projectible predicates like ‘grue’. What do you think the difference might be?
2. Explain what Nagel means by the “subjective character of experience”. Nagel asks (p. 308): “Does it make sense to ask what my experiences are *really* like, as opposed to how they appear to me?” Suppose the answer is “no”. What would that mean for any attempt to explain subjective experience in terms of neurophysiology?
3. Lewis accepts an identity theory: the state of being in pain is identical with some neural state (e.g., c-fibers firing). Explain how this is compatible with allowing that Maritans, how have no c-fibers, can be in pain. You will want to explain how, on Lewis’s view, ‘pain’ fails to be a rigid designator.
4. Explain why Chisholm thinks human freedom and responsibility are incompatible with either determinism or indeterminism. How does introducing “agent causation” solve the problem? Can there be either introspective or scientific evidence for agent causation?
5. Consider Williams’ argument against the psychological view where he lists a series of six cases, (i)–(vi), and argues that A (from his own point of view) has reason to fear the torture in each of these cases. To counter Williams’ argument, the psychological view must claim that, for some case in the series, A has reason to fear the torture in that case, but not in the case that comes after. Where do you think the psychological view should say the break comes in the series. Defend your answer.