

Dr. Carlin
Philosophy 109
Paper Assignment

Basic Requirements

- The paper is due IN CLASS on **Wednesday, December 2, 2009**. **No late papers will be accepted under any circumstances.**
- Your paper should be about two pages in length, typed, double-spaced, and simply ***stapled*** once in the upper left corner. The paper should **not** be in any kind of binder, or plastic cover, or anything of this kind. *The paper should not exceed two pages.*
- A good philosophy paper is one that is *clear, succinct, organized, well written, and forcefully* argued. The best way to achieve this is to go through rough drafts.
- A significant portion of your paper grade will be determined by how well your paper is written and organized. A poorly written paper **will** be marked down. You are encouraged to consult a good grammar and style guide, and to read your paper out loud (ideally with another person present) to help you identify grammatical errors, awkward expressions, and organizational defects.
- The topic requires that you **defend** a certain view. This means that you are not merely to say what you think, but **argue** for what you think. Present a good reason(s) for concluding as you do.
- Do **not** bring in any outside sources!
- Have fun! There is no reason this should not be an enjoyable, and intrinsically rewarding project on a fascinating and controversial topic.

Topic #1: The Hiddenness of God

In “The Hiddenness of God,” Robert McKim argues that the fact that God is hidden provides a strong case for believing that it must not matter whether one believes in God. Your job in this paper is to do the following:

(a) *Clearly, carefully, and precisely* explain McKim’s argument on pages 255-257 of our course text. You should focus *only* on the section, “The Disadvantages of God’s Hiddenness.”

(b) After explaining the argument, make an argument of your own: If you think McKim is wrong, clearly and carefully explain why you believe he is wrong. If you think he is correct, clearly and carefully consider how one might argue against you and McKim, and defend your position against that objection.

Topic #2: Famine Relief

In “Famine, Affluence, and Reality,” Peter Singer argues that each of us has a moral obligation to give to the poor. (Note well: his conclusion is not simply that it would be nice to give. His conclusion is that we are morally required to give, i.e. if we do not give, we are being immoral). Your job in this paper is to do the following:

- a) *Clearly, carefully, yet concisely* explain Singer’s argument: Why exactly does he believe that we are obligated to give to the poor? (**NB:** Be sure to explain the relevance of the “assumption” and “principle” presented on page 375.)

- b) Critically discuss Singer’s argument: If you agree with the argument, then explain how one might object to it and defend it from that objection. If you do not agree with it, then carefully explain where you believe Singer goes wrong.