

Philosophy 371
Professor Guerrero
Paper #2

Due by 9am on Monday, November 21, 2016
Please email your paper to me as a .doc or .docx file with the subject “Phil 371: Paper #2”
1000 to 1500 words (roughly 3-4 pgs)

Background

Consider the following proposed necessary condition for something to be a bad thing or a harm:

(ExpR2) Something can be a bad thing or harm for an individual at a time only if the individual can experience something unpleasant or “negative” (such as pain, suffering, frustration, and so forth) as a result of the thing in question.

Step One

In your paper, you will first create a Modus Tollens argument with this *conclusion*:

“Therefore, it is not the case that ExpR2 is true.” This is equivalent to:
“Therefore, not (ExpR2).”

Here’s the basic form your argument should take:

(P1) If ExpR2, then Q.
(P2) *Not* Q.
(C) Therefore, not (ExpR2).

In Step One, your job will be to come up with something to fill in for “Q.”

- You should aim to find some way of filling in Q such that both (P1) and (P2) of your argument are at least somewhat plausible.

- Indeed, after writing out your argument, spend at least one paragraph explaining and defending premise (P1) of your argument. Then spend at least one paragraph explaining and defending your premise (P2). Your task here is to convince your reader that (P1) and (P2) are both true.

- In this section, you are offering an argument *against* ExpR2. You are identifying an implication or consequence of that view, and suggesting that that implication or consequence is false (or implausible, or contentious).

- Your “Q” could be some claim about an imagined example, or it could be some more general claim.

Step Two

Having made this initial argument against ExpR2, the second task is to raise problems for your argument.

So, for this step, imagine that you are Professor Experience, a proponent of ExpR2. Since Modus Tollens is a valid argument form, you will need to argue that one of the premises—premise (P1) or premise (P2)—is false. Otherwise, there is a sound argument against your view!

In this section, write two or three paragraphs arguing against either premise (P1) or premise (P2) of the argument that you constructed in Step One. You can offer a formal argument here, complete with numbered premises, or your argument can be more informal, although you should still make it as convincing as possible.

Step Three

Now, forget all that you just did in Step Two.

You are still Professor Experience, but instead of trying to respond to the argument by arguing against (P1) or (P2), instead respond to the argument by *modifying* ExpR2 in some way, so that Q (whatever you have focused upon) is no longer a problem, because the new claim, ExpR3, does not imply Q.

In other words, develop a revised view so that this new first premise, premise (P1*), would be false:

(P1*) “If ExpR3, then Q.”

So the initial Modus Tollens argument doesn’t get off the ground against ExpR3.

You should write at least one paragraph explaining the modification to the view and how it no longer has the bad connection to/implication of Q.

Ideally, your ExpR3 will be in something of the same spirit as the original ExpR2, if possible.

Step Four

In one to three paragraphs, discuss the implications of (a) your argument in Step One and (b) your responses on behalf of Professor Experience in Step Two and Step Three on the debates about whether death can be a bad thing or a harm for an individual after that individual is dead. What is your overall view about whether death can be a harm for an individual, in light of the previous discussion?