

Introduction to Philosophy

Letter to Future Students

In about 400 words, write a letter to future students about the experiments in philosophy. You should discuss the parts of the experiments in philosophy you liked (and why) and the parts you did not like (and why). You are welcome to bring up course concepts that are relevant as you think about answering the questions below.

Examples

Here are some examples of what other students have written in their letters to future students:

- "After taking this course, I have a more positive outlook on volunteering and charity as a whole. I see just how truly accessible change is to an individual, and that gives me hope for the future of the world."
- "Overall, I think that the experiments definitely opened my eyes to things I would not have considered to care about if I had not taken this class."
- "Unexpectedly, I developed a goal to be as impactful as I could be, within the limits of covid and time, with my projects. While they were each somewhat stressful at times, I am walking away from this course really proud of what I was able to accomplish."

Here's What I Want You to Do

First, in two or three sentences, list the different things you did for your volunteer activities and your organization an activity. If you had a particularly profound experience with any other experiments in philosophy, please include what you did for these too. How much total time you did you spend outside of class doing the experiments in philosophy? Here's an example for you to follow:

I spent about 20 hours total working on my experiments in philosophy outside of class. I volunteered at Feed My Starving Children and I knit 3 hats for those experiencing homelessness and donated them to another classmate's winter clothes drive. I also organized a shoe drive at my gym.

Second, reflect on your experience with your experiments in philosophy, answering the following questions (not necessarily in this order):

- Did your organization an activity accomplish what you hoped for? What would you do differently next time? What would you recommend to others if they wanted to organize something similar?
- Was your volunteering experience meaningful? Did you learn anything new or gain a new perspective through this work? Did it help you realize something important about class materials? Please be honest.
- Reflect on your change making letter. What did it help you learn, if anything?
- What did you learn from the charitable giving experiment? Did it make you think about anything differently?
- Should I assign experiments in philosophy again?

Third, review these objectives of the experiments in philosophy:

- Make the world better (even if only a tiny little bit).
- Engage the public in issues that are important to you.
- Connect the activity of philosophy to your own life and the lives of other people.

This "Experiment in Philosophy" is based upon a similar "Experiment in Ethics" from Ramona Ilea and Monica Janzen. I highly encourage you to visit their website on Engaged Philosophy (<https://www.engagedphilosophy.com>) for much more!

Letter to Future Students (Continued)

- Learn some ways in which your own life and the lives of other people raise questions about the activity of philosophy.
- Learn more about the issues you are addressing, and be in a better position to have and defend your own views on those issues.
- Define, plan, and carry out social action and activities.
- Develop civic engagement and leadership skills.
- Practice your organizational skills and ability to delegate tasks.
- Attain experience and skills to act on social problems.
- Become inspired and motivated to act on social problems.

Which of the above objectives did you reach or make progress toward? Which did you not reach or make progress toward? What should future students know or do? Carefully explain your answers.

Here's Why I Want You to Do It

I am having you write this letter to future students because this activity has you...

- Make connections across course content.
- Reflect on the value of purpose of the various experiments in philosophy taken all together.

Here's How It Will Be Graded

Your letter to future students will be assessed according to the following criteria:

1. Actually being a letter addressed to, and intended for, a future student in this course. (In other words, write this like you would actually write to a future student; and do *not* write it to me, the professor.)
2. Reflection on and use of course materials.
3. Extremely polished (no grammatical mistakes, no typos) and college-level writing.
4. Crystal clear organization.
5. Word count. (Letters that are either shorter than 350 words or longer than 500 words will incur a large penalty.)

Collaboration & Academic Integrity

Since the letter to future students has you reflect on *your* experiences with the experiments in philosophy, I expect you to write your letter on your own without resorting to artificial intelligence (AI) tools to write it for you. (Perhaps not too surprisingly, AI tools do a pretty bad job in completing these sorts of letters.) After all, I am primarily interested in how *you* are thinking about your experiences with the experiments in philosophy!

As a result, **letters to future students are not group activities**; you must write your letter on your own. Let me know if you are struggling and I'll gladly help!

However, **I actually encourage you to talk with your classmates about your letters**. You might also talk about your letter with friends and family. Just be sure that you write out the results of those conversations on your own and in your own words when putting together your letter.

Above all, **please be honest if you do receive any outside assistance or use the ideas of others**. This includes using AI tools. In any of those cases, be sure to let me know what assistance you received, and I will let you know how to properly acknowledge that assistance in accordance with standards of academic integrity.