

This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 United States License](http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/us/).

# Week Three Assignment

Here's the assignment for week three, the brief version first, the fuller version second. Again, some folks may find it helpful to print out these assignment pages so that they are conveniently available for review.

Readings: The Phaedrus

Study Qs: [The Phaedrus SQs](http://philosophycourse.info/SQsite/sq-homepg.html)

Mini-lectures:

• [Outline of the third speech in The Phaedrus](http://philosophycourse.info/lecsite/lec-phaedrusoutline.html)

• [The Phaedrus and the Eternal](http://philosophycourse.info/lecsite/lec-phaedrus%26eternal.html)

• [Plato's three parts of the sou](http://philosophycourse.info/platosite/3schart.html)l

• [A few books about erotic love](http://philosophycourse.info/platosite/erosbks.html)

Discussion: Eros and philia

Memorize: one passage from The Phaedrus

Due date: 6pm Wed evening

Reminders: • 1st Self evaluation due by this Monday evening

• Projects OK’d by next week

Now a few notes on a couple of these things:

Readings: You will be reading only the first part of The Phaedrus, from the beginning up until the end of the third speech (i.e., to the end of Socrates’ second speech.) See the [Weekly Schedule page](http://philosophycourse.info/businessite/phi-sched10.html) or the[Requirements page](http://philosophycourse.info/businessite/phi-requirements.html) for the exact stephanus numbers.

Study Qs: [SQs for The Phaedrus](http://philosophycourse.info/SQsite/sq-homepg.html)

Mini-lectures:

• [Outline of the third speech in The Phaedrus](http://philosophycourse.info/lecsite/lec-phaedrusoutline.html)

It's only an outline, though, not a full description. And it's an outline of only the third speech. The first two speeches are interesting and well done, but not nearly as rich and complex as the third speech, so you don't really need me to write an outline of their arguments.

• Also, a short lecture on [The Phaedrus and the Eternal](http://philosophycourse.info/lecsite/lec-phaedrus%26eternal.html)

• [Plato's three parts of the soul](http://philosophycourse.info/platosite/3schart.html)

• And [a few books about eros](http://philosophycourse.info/platosite/erosbks.html)

The Phaedrus (at least the part we're reading) is all about love. The heart-palpitating, sweaty palms, struck dumb, crazy, head-over-heels, ga-ga kind of love. It's about being in love (eros). And it's also about friendship (philia). One of the primary questions in the dialog is about which of those two kinds of relationships (or two kinds of love) is preferable.

You've also got to take note of the dramatic setting and the characters in this dialog, as well as the subplot, because all those things play a part. This really is a piece of drama; it’s just a philosophical one.

For some readers of Plato, this is their favorite dialog. I hope you enjoy it.

Discussion Qs: Please discuss the material you’ll be reading in The Phaedrus. In the first two weeks of the quarter I provided you with the specific discussion questions to talk about in class, but this week your task for the online discussion will be to raise the questions yourselves and to discuss this dialog as fully as you can

All your discussion should, of course, be focused around your reading for the week (The Phaedrus).

In effect, this week’s class discussion will be very much like a book seminar. Everyone comes to the seminar having read the same book and your job in the seminar is to discuss the themes in that book. Your job in the seminar is, as one of my colleagues says, to "mine the text." There are profoundly precious metals and jewels to be found in The Phaedrus, it is rich with material for discussion, and your job is to do the mining necessary to extract those metals and jewels and bring them to the surface to show to others.

The part of The Phaedrus that you’ll be reading is essentially made up of three speeches.

1. The first speech is by Lysias, but is repeated (from memory, sorta) by Phaedrus. The theme of that speech is how sick erotic love is and how much better friendship love (philia) is.

2. The second speech is by Socrates, and it’s theme is approximately the same as the first speech.

Because these two speeches have pretty much the same theme, I would like us to discuss only these two speeches in the first 2-3 days of this week, i.e., from Thur till Saturday. So anything you have to say about what they’re talking about in those first two speeches, try to get it said before Saturday evening. After Saturday we will more or less leave those first two speeches behind, except maybe to refer to them here and there, and instead discuss that third speech.

3. The third speech is given by Socrates and is a masterpiece of brilliance, richness, persuasiveness and downright profundity. In it he says that eros may be a kind of madness or sickness, but it is a divine madness, and it somehow connects us to the divine and eternal. This speech has several different dimensions and themes and tones running through it, so you’ll probably want to read it at least twice.

So again, your discussion will focus only on the first two speeches from Thursday till Saturday, and then only on the third speech from Sunday onward.

Again, as noted in past weeks, your discussion contributions (i.e., back and forth dialogue) should start to appear earlier in the week rather than later, so that others will have an opportunity to respond to them.

Reminders:

• Projects OK’d by the end of week four (let’s say by Tuesday, 12 days from now)

• 1st Self evaluation due by Monday evening. See guidelines on the class website for mid-quarter self evaluations.

Your research project

This week is a tiny bit lighter in reading than the previous two weeks, so it will be a good opportunity for you to look around for a research topic that will be interesting to you. Since there won’t be any duplication of research topics, when you find one that you like, you’ll want to get dibs on it right away. The way you do that is to send me an email at tkerns@sccd.ctc.edu with your proposed topic. I'll look it over and probably ask you some questions about it. Once you respond to that and you get a formal OK from me on that topic, then you send me an email (to that same address) with four things listed on it:

i. your name

ii. your topic’s title

iii. some of the books and other resources you plan to use for your research

iv. the date on which you will post it to the class

After I reply to you approving that topic, then from that point on you’ve got dibs on that topic.

After your topic has been approved, you can then post a message to the classroom Research Projects forum explaining what your approved topic is and what sources you'll be using, so everyone can see what everyone else is planning to do their research on. People may be interested in each other’s topics, and may even be able to help point each other to resources that they happen across in their own research.

So here’s the process:

Hunt and discover a topic or thinker that sounds like it could be interesting to you, research that topic or thinker, then post a short written report to the whole class (in the research project folder in our classroom) on what you have learned about that topic. The report can be as short as you like, even one page if you can cover your material in that short space, but the maximum length you can have for the presentation is approximately five pages.

The purpose of your paper is to describe to your classmates what you have learned in your researches. This is not a persuasion paper, or a compare and contrast paper, or an opinion paper. The assignment is simply to go learn as much as you can about your chosen topic, then to write a paper describing to your classmates what you have learned about your topic from doing your research.

Here are some possible topic areas

You may choose to research

i. a philosophical idea or theme (e.g., the idea of free will, arguments for the existence of God, life after death, the nature of justice, moral questions, or any of a thousand other themes and questions)

ii. a school of thought (epicureanism, stoicism, existentialism, natural law, phenomenology, etc)

iii. a spiritual tradition (Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, etc)

iv. a particular thinker (Aristotle, Augustine, Confucius, Immanuel Kant, or any other thinker, ancient or modern, male or female, eastern, western, northern or southern)

v. a classic text and commentaries that have been done about it. (not a text that we are already reading in class)

vi. a comparison of two classic texts, or two philosophical viewpoints, or two schools of thought, etc

The requirement is that your project be in some way related to Philosophy. That’s a very broad range of stuff, so the main way for you to tell whether the topic you’re thinking about is related to Philosophy or not is to just ask me.

This project is not to just do a book report; it is expected that you will write a term paper that uses at least three or four different sources in your research.

You may wish to work together with another person or two, perhaps creating a kind of online "panel," or perhaps each of you presenting different viewpoints on the same general theme, or whatever. Working with another person or two can be fun and fruitful.

How to get ideas for your project

You can get ideas about philosophical topics that could work by going to the philosophy section of a bookstore or library and just browsing through the books there, or by paging through some Introduction to Philosophy textbooks (such as the ones used in some Introduction to Philosophy courses), or by browsing around some philosophy websites. Browsing in these places may uncover something that sparks an interest in you.

Let yourself get creative here, and find something that sounds like it might actually capture your interest. Your idea needs to be OK'd by me prior to your starting on it, though, so propose the idea to me early -- at least a week before the approval deadline -- so I can make sure you've got all the necessary elements and can make sure you get it approved. You need to get it OK'd by me (via private email) before the Tuesday of week four (or earlier), and then the final paper needs to be posted to the online classroom before the end of week eight. This is all noted on the [Weekly Schedule page](http://philosophycourse.info/businessite/phi-sched10.html) of our website, but you may also want to underline those dates and circle them in red to remind yourself.

Remember: Please email research project requests to my regular email account -- tkerns@sccd.ctc.edu -- not the email system here inside Angel. That will help keep things organized more efficiently and will reduce the chances of your request getting lost. Thanks.

An important note about writing your research paper

As you write your paper for this course, one essential thing that will be important to include are connections between what you're learning in your researches and what we have been studying in class. Your paper will need to find and make such connections, partly as a way of incorporating your researches into the whole of your own personal learning, and partly as a way of making connections for your readers, to help them understand your paper more easily.

Project SE

Then after your research project has been presented to the class, you will then need to write a complete self-evaluation of your project. See the [Self Evaluations page](http://philosophycourse.info/businessite/sesite/phi-sehomepg.html) on the class website for details.

I hope your research becomes an interesting and learningful (?) project for you.

For more important details about this assignment, you should definitely take a look at the [research projects assignment page](http://philosophycourse.info/businessite/phi-rsrchprj.html).