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**Folks**

I've decided that there will **not** be a midterm exam this quarter. That may feel like a temporary relief for some folks.

The part of this news that should be seen as not quite such a relief is one of the things it implies. It means that your grades for the course (at least up until the final exam) will be based even more on the quality and substantiality (and quantity, to some extent) of your discussion contributions in the classroom, of study questions (and your discussions about them), of the research project, and of the discussions about the projects that will follow their posting.

Here's what I look for both in your classroom discussion contributions as well as in your contributions to SQs and other folders:

1. I look for evidence that you understand the ideas and questions that have been presented. (With the problem of evil, for example, it seemed to me that some folks didn't really understand the problem itself, and therefore didn't have a grasp of what the various possible answers implied.) I'll be looking for this especially during the next three weeks when we'll be discussing some more difficult and challenging concepts in epistemology.

2. I look for evidence that you have actually read the assigned readings, both books and lectures. A good way to give evidence of this is to include a quotation now and then in your discussions (with citations of course) from the assigned readings for that week.

3. I look for evidence that you have thought seriously about the issues presented in the discussion questions and have responded reflectively, rather than just responding with more or less right-off-the-top quick answers.

4. I look for evidence that you have thought seriously and critically about the ideas presented by other students, and that you have responded to them thoughtfully and reflectively (and respectfully, of course).

5. Finally, here are some [guidelines for assessing your own discussion](http://philosophycourse.info/DQsite/dq-eval.html) contributions, as well as reminders of what kinds of things should be happening in discussions.

I hope the ideas we'll be exploring in these next epistemological weeks will be interesting and engaging for you.