

LSC # 40
Action Approved
2-21-91

COVER SHEET: Request for Approval to Use W-Designation

TYPE I. PROFESSOR COMMITMENT

- (✓) Professor Dr. Carol Caraway Phone 2310
- (✓) Writing Workshop? (If not at IUP, where? when? _____)
- (✓) Proposal for one W-course (see instructions below)
- (✓) Agree to forward syllabi for subsequently offered W-courses?

TYPE II. DEPARTMENTAL COURSE

- () Department Contact Person _____ Phone _____
- () Course Number/Title _____
- () Statement concerning departmental responsibility _____
- () Proposal for this W-course (see instructions below)

TYPE III. SPECIFIC COURSE AND SPECIFIC PROFESSOR(S)

- () Professor(s) _____ Phone _____
- () Course Number/Title _____
- () Proposal for this W-course (see instructions below)

SIGNATURES:

Professor(s) Carol Caraway

Department Chairperson Joel Meach

College Dean Richard Taylor

Director of Liberal Studies Charles Adams

COMPONENTS OF A PROPOSAL FOR A WRITING-INTENSIVE COURSE:

- I. "Writing Summary"--one or two pages explaining how writing is used in the course. First, explain any distinctive characteristics of the content or students which would help the Liberal Studies Committee understand your summary. Second, list and explain the types of writing activities; be especially careful to explain (1) what each writing activity is intended to accomplish as well as the (2) amount of writing, (3) frequency and number of assignments, and (4) whether there are opportunities for revision. If the activity is to be graded, indicate (5) evaluation standards and (6) percentage contribution to the student's final grade.
- II. Copy of the course syllabus.
- III. Samples of assignment sheets, instructions, or criteria concerning writing that are given to students.

Provide 12 copies to the Liberal Studies Committee.
Please number all pages.

WRITING SUMMARY

PH 120 INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY -- WRITING INTENSIVE

I. DISTINCTIVE CHARACTERISTICS: PH 120 Introduction to Philosophy is designed to introduce students to the problems, methods, and major areas of philosophy. It has been approved for the LS Philosophy/Religious Studies Knowledge Area requirement. Multiple sections of the course are offered every semester. Students at all undergraduate levels take the course. W sections will be limited to 25. The course counts toward the philosophy major or minor, but is not designed primarily for majors and minors.

II. TYPES OF WRITING:

A. UNGRADED FREEWRITING: Students will periodically be asked to freewrite for some period of time, generally 10 minutes. These freewrites will be ungraded, but will sometimes be collected and read. Students will freewrite either to explore their own ideas in preparation for discussion or to express their reactions to readings, class discussion, or course requirements and activities. [ungraded]

B. NOTE-TAKING: Some material presented in lecture and discussion is not in the texts, and material in the texts is difficult to understand. Students will be encouraged to take thorough class notes using two different colors of ink: black or blue for recording lectures and class discussions, red or green for recording their reactions, questions, etc. Notes are not collected or graded, but may be examined if a student has questions or is having difficulty. [ungraded]

C. WRITING TO ENHANCE READING AND PREPARE FOR CLASS DISCUSSION: Before each class discussion, students will prepare either a review or a thesis card. Reviews state their understanding and evaluation of an important point in the essay (either the thesis or a subthesis). Reviews are two pages long and include two things: 1. a brief summary of the point to be evaluated, and 2. a careful evaluation of the point. Each thesis card states the thesis of the reading on the front and the student's reaction to the thesis on the back. Students will do eight reviews and approximately 23 thesis cards. (See attachments for evaluation standards.) [24% of grade]

D. WRITING TO INTEGRATE LEARNING AND THINK CREATIVELY ABOUT A TOPIC: Students will write two 3-4 page typed, double-spaced papers. They may choose any one of three formats: philosophical letter, philosophical dialogue, philosophical essay. Papers will be monitored at various stages: thesis choice, first paragraph, and initial draft. I will grade the fully edited paper according to criteria distributed on a check sheet. Students may revise and resubmit papers. (See attachments for further details.) [36% of grade]

COURSE SYLLABUS

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WRITING INTENSIVE PH 120 INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY

I. CATALOG DESCRIPTION

PH 120 INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY

3 credits

Prerequisites: None

Designed to acquaint the beginning student with philosophical problems and methods in such areas as metaphysics, epistemology, logic, and value theory.

II. COURSE OBJECTIVES

A. **PRIMARY:** to acquaint the beginning student with philosophical problems and methods.

1. **Content:**

- a. Students will learn what philosophy is and how to distinguish a philosophical question from an empirical question.
- b. Students will become acquainted with some of the major areas of philosophy.

2. **Method:**

- a. Students will come to view themselves as philosophers who reason about fundamental issues.
- b. Students will learn that philosophy is not just different opinions on fundamental issues, but reasoned argument for and critical evaluation of those opinions.

3. **Practical Application:**

- a. Students will be shown examples of how philosophical reasoning can help them to think more clearly about their own lives and to make responsible decisions about fundamental issues of value.
- b. Students will be shown connections between the fundamental issues studied and current issues, ideas, institutions, and events.
- c. Students will learn enough about the major areas of philosophy to choose wisely a second course in philosophy.

B. **SECONDARY:**

1. **Skill Development:** to enhance intellectual skills.

- a. **Literacy:** Students will develop literacy through active, critical reading and listening and through discussion and writing.
- b. **Critical Thinking:** Students will develop the skills of inquiry, abstract logical reasoning, critical analysis, and other aspects of the critical process through the close analysis and evaluation of fundamental issues.
- c. **Creativity:** Students will become aware of the interconnections between writing, critical thinking, and creativity and will learn techniques for fostering their own creativity.

2. *Self-esteem*: Coming to view themselves as philosophers and developing literacy, creativity, and critical thinking skills should enhance students' self-esteem.
3. *Consciousness-Raising*: Students will become aware that philosophy develops over time and is a product of its historical and cultural context. They will become aware that this is why women and minorities have not been equally represented in the field. They will also gain an appreciation of the perspectives of these groups on fundamental issues.

III. TEXTS:

A. REQUIRED:

1. Harrison Hall & Norman E. Bowie, editors. *The Tradition of Philosophy*. Wadsworth, 1986 [H & B].
2. James C. Edwards & Douglas M. MacDonald, editors. *Occasions for Philosophy*, 2nd edition. Prentice-Hall, Inc. 1985 [E & M].

B. RECOMMENDED:

1. Strunk & White, *The Elements of Style*.
2. Henriette Anne Klausner, *Writing on Both Sides of the Brain, Breakthrough Techniques for People Who Write*. Harper & Row, 1987.

IV. COURSE OUTLINE & REQUIRED READINGS:

A. PHILOSOPHY, EDUCATION, & ETHICS [3 weeks]

1. PHILOSOPHY: SCOPE & SOCRATIC METHOD. E & M 1-3, H & B 2-8, 34-35.
 - a. C. D. Broad, *Critical & Speculative Philosophy*, H & B 20-24.
 - b. A. C. Ewing, *What Philosophy Is & Why it is Worth Studying*, H & B 24-26.
 - c. Plato, *Euthyphro*, H & B 8-18.
2. EDUCATION: PHILOSOPHY, EDUCATION & THE LIBERAL ARTS. E & M 47-49.
 - a. Walter Kaufmann, "Four Kinds of Minds," E & M 59-61 (# 6, 7 & 8).
 - b. Peter Herbst, "Work, Labor, & University Education," E & M 82-85.
3. ETHICS: RIGHT & WRONG. H & B 384-390, 481-485. WHY BE MORAL? H & B 391-392.
 - a. Plato, *The Myth of Gyges*, H & B 392-394.
 - b. Kurt Baier, *The Supremacy of Moral Reasons*, H & B 394-398.
 - c. RELATIVISM, H & B 399-400. Paul Taylor, *Ethical Relativism & Ethical Absolutism*, H & B 406-414.

OBJECTIVE EXAMINATION 1.

B. PHILOSOPHY & PERSONAL RELATIONS [4 weeks]

[All readings in B are from E & M.] PERSONAL RELATIONS, 181-183.

1. FRIENDSHIP:

- a. Aristotle, "Friendship & its Forms," 183-191.
- b. Simone Weil, "Friendship," 191-195.

2. LOVE:

- a. W. Newton-Smith, "A Conceptual Investigation of Love," 196-212.
- b. Robert R. Ehman, "Personal Love and Individual Value," 212-226.

3. MARRIAGE:

- a. John McMurtry, "Monogamy: A Critique," 253-262.
- b. Lyla H. O'Driscoll, "On the Nature & Value of Marriage," 262-272.

4. PARENTS & CHILDREN:

- a. Hugh LaFollette, "Licensing Parents, 273-283.
- b. Jane English, "What Do Grown Children Owe their Parents?" 284-288.

MIDTERM PAPER.

C. KNOWLEDGE, MINDS & BODIES [4 weeks]

[All readings in Section C are from H & B.]

1. THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE, 36-41, 133-135. DOUBT & CERTAINTY, 42-45.
 - a. Descartes, *Meditation I*, 45-49.
 - b. Descartes, *Meditation II*, 49-54.
2. PERSONS & COMPUTERS, MINDS & BODIES, 136-143, 285-289.
 - a. DUALISM, 144-146. Descartes, *The Distinction between the Mind & Body of Man*, 146-149.
 - b. BEHAVIORISM, 200-202, B. F. Skinner, *Scientific Behaviorism*, 203-207.
 - c. DOUBLE ASPECT THEORIES, 192-193.
 - i. P. F. Strawson, *Persons*, 193-195.
 - ii. Jerome Shaffer, *The Person Theory & its Difficulties*, 196-200.
 - d. FUNCTIONALISM, 215-216.

Jerry Fodor, *The Mind-Body Problem*, 216-227.
 - e. MATERIALISM, 166-169.

Paul M. Churchland, *Reductive & Eliminative Materialism*, 182-192.

OBJECTIVE EXAMINATION II.

D. RELIGION, EVIL, LIFE & DEATH [3 weeks]

RELIGION, H & B 486-490, 586-588. E & M 289-291.

1. THE PROBLEM OF EVIL, H & B 531-533.
 - a. St. Augustine, *The Problem of Evil*, H & B 533-534.
 - b. Stephen T. Davis, *Free Will & Evil*, H & B 535-541.
 - c. J. L. Mackie, *Evil & Omnipotence*, H & B 542-548.
 - d. John Hick, *Humanism & the Problem of Evil*, H & B 548-553.
2. DEATH & THE MEANING OF LIFE, E & M 390-392.
 - a. Leo Tolstoy, "My Confession," E & M 393-404.
 - b. Thomas Nagel, "Death," E & M 404-411.
 - c. Thomas Nagel, "The Absurd," E & M 456-465.

FINAL PAPER.

V. EVALUATION METHODS:

The semester grade will be determined as follows:

- [40%] TWO OBJECTIVE EXAMINATIONS: multiple choice, true/false, and matching [20% each].
- [36%] TWO PHILOSOPHICAL PAPERS: essay, letter or dialogue. 3-4 typed, double-spaced pages. [18% each]
- [16%] EIGHT CRITICAL REVIEWS: Review two assigned readings from each section [A, B, C & D] of the course. 2 typed, double-spaced pages. [2% each]
- [8%] 23 THESIS CARDS: For each reading by a philosopher for which you do not do a review, you must submit a thesis card.

CHECK SHEET FOR REVIEWS**PH 120: INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY**

Dr. Carol Caraway, IUP

- I. Staple a copy of this check sheet to the top of each of your reviews. I will NOT accept reviews without check sheets.
- II. Put personal information--name and class time--in the upper right-hand corner of both your check sheet and each page of your review. I will not accept papers without this information on every page.
- III. Give your review a title consisting of the author's last name and the title of the reading. For example: Review of Plato's *Euthyphro*. If no author is named, you have chosen an editor's introduction rather than a philosophical reading. Reviews of introductions are unacceptable. If you submit a review without a title, I will return it to you, and ask you to give it a title before I grade it.
- IV. Type and double-space your review. I will return untyped reviews ungraded, and ask you to type them before I grade them.
- V. If there are so many spelling and grammar errors that they detract from the content of your review, I will return the review and ask you to correct them before I grade it.
- VI. If your review is longer than two pages, I will read and grade only the first two pages.
- VII. Your review will be accepted only if you submit it at the beginning of class on the day the reading will be discussed.
- VIII. Your review should do two things in this order:
 - A. Summarize an important point in the reading [the thesis or a subthesis]. (Put the point in your own words. Do not quote.)
 - B. Evaluate the chosen point. (You may support or criticize it.)

HINT: Pick a reading and a point you understand and want to evaluate.

GRADING: Each review is 2% of your semester grade. Points will be assigned as follows:

- | | |
|----|--|
| 0 | You did not submit a review. |
| 5 | Your review was on an editor's introduction or did not do VIII. A & B. |
| 10 | Your review shows little thought and understanding. |
| 20 | Your review is good; you did what was expected. |

THESIS CARDS

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For every reading by a philosopher for which you do not do a review, submit a 3x5 thesis card with the following information. Put your name and class time in the upper right-hand corner. Then, below that, starting from the left, put the author and title of the reading and below that the thesis:

your last name, first name
time of your PH 120 class

Author and Title:

Thesis:

Use the back of the card to give your reaction to the thesis. Before stating any comments, use one of these symbols:

- (+) I agree.
- (-) I disagree.
- (0) I have no reaction/opinion.
- (+ & -) My reaction is mixed.
- (?) I don't understand it.
- (!) Add this to another symbol for an especially strong reaction.

Cards will be graded 0-10. Only your statement of the thesis will be graded, not your reaction.

- 0 -- You did not turn in a card.
- 1 -- You were not even close to the thesis.
- 2 -- You were partly right.
- 3 -- You correctly identified the thesis.

PHILOSOPHICAL PAPER ON PERSONAL RELATIONS

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Dr. Carol Caraway

PH 120 INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY

IUP

SCHEDULE :

- R 10-11 PAPER ASSIGNED and DISCUSSED. Pick a topic from one or more of the following: Friendship Love Marriage Children. Pick a type of paper from one of the following: philosophical letter, philosophical dialogue, philosophical essay.
- T 10-16 THESIS CARD DUE. Bring to class two 3X5 cards with your name and class time in the upper right-hand corner and your tentative thesis on the front. Put any questions or reservations you have about your thesis on the back of each card. I will give you guidelines for formulating a philosophical thesis ahead of time. These will serve as guidelines for peer evaluation, so bring them to class along with your cards. During class you will discuss your thesis with two other students, then you will submit one thesis card to me for my approval. Keep the other for your own use. Your paper will be accepted only if you have submitted a thesis card, and I have approved your thesis. If your initial thesis is unacceptable, you will revise it until it is acceptable.
- R 10-18 FIRST PARAGRAPH OF DRAFT DUE. Bring to class two copies of a draft of the first paragraph of your paper to discuss with peers. Your paragraph need not be typed. You will be given guidelines on writing the paragraph ahead of time. These will serve as the basis for peer evaluation, so bring them to class along with your paragraphs.
- R 10-25 ROUGH DRAFT OF ENTIRE PAPER DUE. Bring to class two copies of your draft for peer assessment. Your draft need not be typed. Guidelines for evaluation will be distributed ahead of time. Be sure to bring them to class with your drafts.
- R 11-1 PAPERS are DUE at the beginning of class. Late papers will be accepted; however, one percentage point will be deducted from your grade for each day past the due date.

MECHANICS: 3-4 typed, double-spaced pages. Make a copy of your paper before you submit it. Keep the copy in case your paper should be lost.

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR ALL TYPES OF PAPERS: Since you will not be tested on the readings in this section, you will show knowledge of at least one reading by using at least one significant idea from the reading in your paper. Review the readings and your class notes until you understand the philosopher's position, then write your paper. Do not quote from the readings. Put the philosopher's position in your own words. I expect proper documentation. This means references not only for quotations, but also for paraphrases. Whatever type of paper you write should be properly documented. Put references to the readings in the body of your paper as follows: . . . (Aristotle, p. 183).

Your paper should have at least one such reference; otherwise, you have not done what is required.

Before beginning work on your paper, study H&B Appendix 589-596. Pick a thesis that is plausible and somewhat controversial. Don't waste your time attempting to defend something no one will believe or proving something everyone already believes. Think of your audience as other IUP students who have never taken a philosophy course. Write a paper they could understand and would find interesting.

TYPES OF PAPERS:

PHILOSOPHICAL LETTER: Write a philosophical letter to one of the philosophers-- Aristotle, Weil, Newton-Smith, Ehman, McMurtry, O'Driscoll, LaFollette, or English. Explain your criticisms of the philosopher's position. Your first paragraph should include your thesis statement, which may take the form "I disagree with X's thesis that ... because ..." or "X holds that ...; I propose that X's thesis be modified to state" or "I agree with X's thesis that ... because" Your letter should show both an understanding of the philosopher's position and the ability to critically evaluate his or her position. You do not have to be the author of the letter. You may make one of the other philosophers the author of the letter or you may create an imaginary author. The only restriction on this is that a philosopher cannot write a letter to herself. Ideally, you will offer some original criticisms or at least some original variations on or illustrations of the criticisms of others. (See directions for essay; these also apply to letters.)

PHILOSOPHICAL DIALOGUE: Write a philosophical dialogue between two or more of the following: Aristotle, Weil, Newton-Smith, Ehman, McMurtry, O'Driscoll, LaFollette, English, you. If you are unfamiliar with the dialogue form, look at a play or a philosophical dialogue such as the *Euthyphro*. Begin with a brief description of the scene which includes a statement of your thesis. Avoid many rapid changes of speaker. Make clear who is speaking and when there is a change of speaker. Since you are writing dialogue, you may use contractions, exclamations, asides, and other appropriate devices. Avoid foreign languages and odd spellings to indicate odd pronunciations. You may use sentence fragments and colloquial expressions so long as the meaning is clear. (See directions for essay. These can be adapted to the dialogue form. One of the characters should develop arguments for your thesis.)

PHILOSOPHICAL ESSAY: Write a philosophical essay on some aspect of one of the following or on the relationship between two of the following: friendship, love, marriage, and children. Your essay should have an introduction which includes a thesis statement or conclusion which your essay will establish. Your essay should consist of arguments to support your thesis. The whole essay should be in the following form:

- P1: Introduction with thesis statement/conclusion.
- P2: Support for A.
- P3: Support for B.
- P4: Support for C.
- P5: MAIN ARGUMENT:
 - (1) Premise A.
 - (2) Premise B.
 - (3) Premise C.
 - Conclusion.

GRADING: All three types of papers will be graded on:

accuracy, depth & scope	4 %
clarity, coherence & organization	4 %
strength of reasoning	4 %
grammar, style & documentation	4 %
<u>originality</u>	<u>4 %</u>
total	20 %

These CRITERIA are explained in detail on the evaluation check sheet.

REWRITES: You may rewrite and resubmit your paper. Rewrites will be graded only if accompanied by the original paper containing my comments and the original grade. After grading your rewrite, I will average your rewrite grade and your original grade.

EVALUATION SHEET FOR THESIS CARD
AND
FIRST PARAGRAPH OF PAPER ON PERSONAL RELATIONS

PH 120 INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY

Dr. Carol Caraway

Fall 1990

1. **THESIS:** Your first paragraph should include your thesis.
Your thesis should be *philosophical, not factual*.
 - a. A PHILOSOPHICAL THESIS can be any of the following:
 - i. a *conceptual statement*: a statement of the meaning or concept of "friendship," "love," "marriage," etc. A good example of this sort of thesis is Newton-Smith's in "A Conceptual Investigation of Love." Aristotle and Weil also have this sort of thesis.
 - ii. a *phenomenological statement* about the nature of the conscious experience of a personal relationship such as love or friendship. Ehman has this sort of thesis.
 - iii. a *normative or ethical statement* about right and wrong or virtue and vice or a recommendation about how a certain type of personal relationship should or should not be. English and LaFollette have this sort of thesis.
 - iv. a *statement criticizing one or more basic assumptions* operating in discussions of a certain type of personal relationship. McMurtry does this in "Monogamy: A Critique."
 - b. Have you made your thesis as narrow as possible? If not, how can you narrow or focus it?
2. **READING:** Your first paragraph should make clear which reading(s) you will use in your paper. Stating the author's name is sufficient.
 - a. Is the reading you have chosen the best one for your thesis?
 - b. Are you going to agree or disagree with the philosopher?
 - c. How will you use the reading in your paper?
3. **READER:** Be considerate of your reader. Think of your audience as other IUP students who have never taken a PH course.
 - a. Have you written an introduction another IUP student who has never taken philosophy could understand? If not, how could you revise the paragraph so that such a student could understand it?
 - b. Have you captured the reader's attention? If not, how could you revise the paragraph to do so?
4. **PREVIEW:** Set the stage for what is to come.
 - a. Can your reader tell from your first paragraph where you are going to go in the paper and how you are going to get there?
 - b. If not, how could you revise it so that the reader could tell?

 last name, first name

class time

PH 120 CHECK SHEET FOR PAPER ON PERSONAL RELATIONS

[18% of GRADE]

I. ACCURACY, DEPTH & SCOPE: [4%]

- A. Did you use a philosopher's work in your paper? Did you *accurately* represent that philosopher's view?
- B. Does your paper show a *depth* of understanding of the issue and reading(s), or is it superficial/shallow?
- C. Does your paper adequately cover your chosen thesis? Did you narrow your thesis enough so that you could cover it adequately in two pages?

II. CLARITY, COHERENCE & ORGANIZATION: [4%]

- A. Is your paper *clear*?
 1. Could an IUP student who has never taken philosophy understand it?
 2. Did you explain all technical terms?
 3. Did you give examples to illustrate your points?
- B. Is your paper *coherent* and *well organized*?
 1. Does it have a clear (and somewhat controversial) thesis?
 2. Does every paragraph in your paper support your thesis?
 3. Does every statement in a paragraph support its topic statement?
 4. Does the order of the paragraphs make sense?

III. STRENGTH OF REASONING: [4%]

- A. Do you support all statements that are not obviously true?
- B. Does your paper provide fairly strong support for your thesis?
- C. Have you considered and responded to possible objections to your thesis?
- D. Have you considered and criticized alternative theses?

IV. GRAMMAR, STYLE & DOCUMENTATION: [3%]

- A. Have you had a reliable person check your grammar and spelling?
Have them sign here: _____
- B. Have you avoided run-on sentences?
- C. Have you written in a style that is comfortable for you?
 1. Did you read your paper aloud?
 2. Did you have someone else read it?
- C. Have you properly documented your paper?
 1. Did you document paraphrases with a reference in the body of your paper?
 2. Did you avoid quotations?
 3. If you used sources other than the text, did you provide proper documentation?

V. ORIGINALITY: [3%]

Can you answer "Yes" to some of the following questions?

- A. Is your thesis original?
- B. Have you provided some original arguments for your thesis?
- C. Have you given some original criticisms of another's position?
- D. Have you given some original examples?
- E. Have you considered and responded to some original objections to your thesis?

Date: 22 February 1991
Subject: Writing Intensive Proposal
To: Charles Cashdollar, Chair, Liberal Studies Committee
From: Carol Caraway

I was pleased to learn of the Committee's approval of my application for professor commitment to Writing Intensive Courses. In light of your suggestions, I have revised the instruction sheet for thesis cards to correct the discrepancy noted. To clarify the distinction between the two types of thesis cards, I have revised the headings of the two instruction sheets to read "Thesis Cards on Readings" and "Thesis card on Paper on Personal Relations." Thank you for pointing out these problems.

Attached are corrected versions of the two instruction sheets and an additional sheet on formulating and revising a thesis which I developed recently from Jonathan Adler's fine paper "Alternatives, Writing, and the Formulation of a Thesis." Jonathan likes the handout very much and has asked if he may use it himself. I thought you might find it of interest.

Dan Boone and I have talked with Joel Mlecko, PH & RS Department Chair, concerning our team-teaching multiple sections of PH 120 Introduction to Philosophy Writing Intensive. He is supportive. We are revising the proposal and can send you a copy if you are interested.

cc: Joel Mlecko, Department Chair

THESIS CARDS ON READINGS

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your last name, first name
time of your PH 120 class

Author and Title:

Thesis:

Use the back of the card to give your reaction to the thesis. Before stating any comments, use one of these symbols:

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EVALUATION SHEET
FOR
THESIS CARD FOR PAPER ON PERSONAL RELATIONS
AND
FIRST PARAGRAPH OF PAPER ON PERSONAL RELATIONS

PH 120 INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY

Dr. Carol Caraway

Fall 1990

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 - b. Have you made your thesis as narrow as possible? If not, how can you narrow or focus it?
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 - b. Have you captured the reader's attention? If not, how could you revise the paragraph to do so?
4. **PREVIEW:** Set the stage for what is to come.
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 - b. If not, how could you revise it so that the reader could tell?

GUIDELINES for FORMULATING and REVISING a THESIS

Dr. Carol Caraway

IUP

1. The thesis should be philosophical, not factual or scientific [blue sheet].
2. The thesis should be neither certain nor highly unlikely, but plausible and controversial.
 - a. REASONABLE ALTERNATIVE STANDARD: A thesis must have at least one reasonable, but not certain alternative.
 - i. alternatives = statements that cannot be true if your thesis is true: both the denial of your thesis and positive alternatives.
 - ii. Both your thesis and its alternatives should meet all simple and obvious objections.
 - iii. The more defensible the alternative(s) are, the more significant your thesis is.
 - b. If there is an alternative to your thesis that is certain, modify your thesis accordingly.
 - c. To discover a reasonable alternative to your thesis, ask yourself "What view(s) do I disagree with? Formulate a fair statement of that opposing view(s).
 - d. Modify your thesis to oppose the reasonable alternative. Look for minimal changes in the original thesis that retain its simplicity.

SAMPLE APPLICATION: After reading LaFollette's "Licensing Parents," a student formulates the thesis: *the state does not require parents to be licensed.*

1. Her thesis is factual, not philosophical. Through discussion, she realizes that she really wants to prove that the state *should not* require parents to be licensed. This thesis is philosophical.

2. Her original thesis is questionable because the state requires adoptive parents to be licensed. The original thesis must be modified to accommodate this fact (certain alternative). The student could simply tack on the phrase "unless they are adopting," but a simpler modification would be to add the word "biological." The thesis would then read: *the state does not require biological parents to be licensed.*

3. If the student supports licensing adoptive parents, then she can combine the modifications in 1. and 2. to produce the thesis: *the state should not require biological parents to be licensed.*

4. To help with the proper formulation of the thesis, other students now ask her what view(s) she disagrees with. She explains that she disagrees with LaFollette's thesis: *the state should require all parents to be licensed.* Since this view is well defended by LaFollette, it is a reasonable alternative to her thesis. She has, therefore, satisfied the reasonable alternative standard.

5. To further modify her thesis, she could look for other reasonable alternatives. To do so, she could ask whether she agrees with LaFollette on other points besides the need for licensing adoptive parents. LaFollette's goal in proposing the licensing of parents is to reduce child abuse and neglect. She can certainly agree with that goal, so she could look for other ways of achieving it. These might include mandatory parenting courses in high schools, tougher penalties for child abuse and neglect, active monitoring of child rearing by the state, and more stringent requirements for obtaining a marriage license. If she favored mandatory parenting courses in high schools, she could modify her thesis to state: *the state should require not that biological parents be licensed, but that high schools offer mandatory parenting courses.*