

PHIL 101 *Crito* 5 page Essay DUE THURS 12/3 via iLearn
100 points (same format guidelines and deduction as before)

Here's the question:

- (a) Would King try to convince Socrates to escape? (2 pages)
- (b) Would Thoreau? (2 pages)
- (c) Do you think Socrates should escape? (1 page)

Don't panic! These instructions are lengthy, but they are meant to help you produce a better essay. Take some time to read through the instructions a few times.

1. Overview

In addition to defending your answers to the essay prompt, your essay should demonstrate (1) your thoughtful position on the nature and scope of civil disobedience, (2) understanding of the positions of King and Thoreau on civil disobedience, and (3) understanding of Socrates' own justification for his decision to remain in prison and face execution.

What does this mean to demonstrate your “thoughtful position on the nature and scope of civil disobedience”? It means that what you write about civil disobedience reflects the fact that you've spent a lot of time thinking about what “civil disobedience” means and to what activities it extends. Use as a starting point for your reflections the discussion sheet I distributed with the series of questions (some of them real brain-stretchers) about civil disobedience. For instance, you might ask yourself whether Socrates' submitting to execution was a form of civil disobedience or if escape would be a form of civil disobedience. And then there's King and Thoreau. Go ahead and imagine them in the cell block with Socrates. Knowing what you know of these two and having read some of their most important work, what do you think their position would be on the question at hand? But to have some grasp of what *their* answers might be, first *you* have to think very carefully about what civil disobedience really means.

So to prepare for the essay you need to spend time thinking. Only you can do this. Neither Google nor Wikipedia can think for you. Discussing things with friends is helpful as is writing down your evolving ideas and views. But thinking is paramount. And of course you must read. Read, read, read, read. And re-read. While the essay focuses on the unfolding drama in the *Crito*, a lot of the rationale for what Socrates chooses to do is found in the *Apology*. King's *Letter from a Birmingham Jail* references many things that you'll find in the *Apology*. You cannot do even a mediocre job on this essay if you rely on your memory of the texts we've read this semester. One reading is never enough.

2. Structure of the essay

For sections (a) and (b), you must provide two reasons each to support your answers. For (c) you only need to provide one reason. You must present textual evidence to support your answers. What do I mean by “reasons”, “evidence”, and “support”?

Let's break this down. You must supply *evidence* to support your positions. That evidence comes in the form of two reasons why you think, for instance, that King would try to convince Socrates to escape. But those *reasons* themselves have to be proved. That is, they have to be supported, too. All the evidence you present must give the reader extremely strong support for what you've written. The basic outline looks like this. (We'll expand it later.)

I. King would not try to convince Socrates to escape

A. First reason why - X

- i. *Some proof that your first reason (X) is credible*
- ii. *Some more proof that your first reason (X) is credible*
- iii. *Even more proof that your first reason (X) is credible*
- iv. *Explain how A(i)-(iii) work to support your contention that your first reason (X) presents very strong evidence that King would not try to convince Socrates to escape*

B. Second reason why – Y

- i. *Some proof that your second reason (Y) is credible*
- ii. *Some more proof that your second reason (Y) is credible*
- iii. *Even more proof that your second reason (Y) is credible*
- iv. *Explain how B(i)-(iii) work to support your contention that your second reason (Y) presents very strong evidence that King would not try to convince Socrates to escape*

You'll repeat the same format for Thoreau in the second part (b).

How much support should you give for each *reason*? Plenty! Would the prosecutor only give the jury one piece of evidence to support a claim? No way.

In class I gave the example of the prosecutor demonstrating that the defendant had *motive, means, and opportunity* to commit the crime. Let's call these three reasons. But the essay only asks for two reasons. Let's designate them *motive* and *means*. Put yourself in the role of a prosecutor. The prosecutor may believe that Gail Gator is guilty of the crime, but the prosecutor must prove that she did it. Proving a claim, whether a philosophical or legal one, takes more than just presenting a series of statements. The statements offered in support of each piece of evidence must be consistent with each other. They must lead the reader to accept that piece of evidence as being relevant and true. The gold standard would be having an argument that is both valid and sound for each piece of evidence.

Claim: **Gail Gator killed Scooter.**
Reason #1 – motive *Gail was angry at Scooter for cheating on her.*

But where's your EVIDENCE for the motive? We can't rely on an argument that only gives us:

1. Gail Gator was angry at Scooter for cheating on her.
2. Therefore, Gail Gator killed Scooter.

There's lots of work to do here. What does it mean to “cheat”?

You: Don't tell Buffy, but I'm cheating on her.
Friend: Um, who's Buffy?
You: You know! Buffy the vampire slayer. The Buffy that's on TV.
Friend: Um, but you've never even met her!

You cannot “cheat” on someone if you aren't in a relationship with the person! That makes no sense! We're going to have to show that Gail and Scooter were in a relationship. And we're going to need evidence to convince the jury that Gail actually knew that Scooter cheated on her. But wait: even if she did know this, what will convince the jury that Gail was angry at Scooter about it and angry enough to *kill* Scooter? And after you've made this “mini” case, you need to tie up all the individual threads to make a sturdy cord. You must explain to the jury the relationship between angry at someone for breaking your heart and then killing that person.

1. Gail killed Scooter

C. Motive (first reason) Gail was angry at Scooter for cheating on her

- i. Gail and Scooter had been in a relationship at the time of the murder*
- ii. Scooter cheated on Gail*
- iii. Gail found out about Scooter's cheating*
- iv. Gail became angry about Scooter's cheating*
- v. Gail was angry enough to kill Scooter*
- vi. Explain how A(i)-(v) work together to support your contention that your first reason (X) presents very strong evidence that Gail had a motive to kill Scooter.*

However, simply stating (i)-(v) isn't enough. Where is the proof for (i), the proof for (ii), and so forth? What we need is something like this:

I. Gail killed Scooter

A. Motive (first reason) Gail was angry at Scooter for cheating on her

- i. Gail and Scooter had been in a relationship at the time of the murder*
 - a) they dated for 1 year
 - b) they lived together as a couple for 2 years
 - c) Scooter and Gail were recently engaged to be married
 - d) over the past four months Gail had been planning the wedding

Notice how a) through d) offer the jury concrete proof that Gail and Scooter had been in a relationship. Notice, too, the fact that a) alone doesn't prove that they were in a relationship at the time of the murder. Lots of people date for a year but that fact alone doesn't prove that they are still in a relationship. But taken together a) through d) does support the claim that “Gail and Scooter had been in a relationship at the time of the murder”. Had this been your essay you would provide textual evidence (Stephanus citations, page references from King, etc.) to back up your claims of a), b), c), and d).

We still need to connect “being in a relationship” with being angry enough to kill someone. That's where point I.A.vi comes in. You'd explain that the evidence presented thus far shows there was a significant commitment between Gail and Scooter. Anyone in a similar situation would be devastated by a betrayal such as Scooter's.

Back to reality! Here's how the real essay might be outlined:

I. King would not try to convince Socrates to escape

A. First reason why - X

- i. *Some proof that your first reason (X) is credible – CLAIM 1*
 - a) *support for CLAIM 1 with textual evidence to back it up*
 - b) *support for CLAIM 1 with textual evidence to back it up*
 - c) *support for CLAIM 1 with textual evidence to back it up*
- ii. *Some more proof that your first reason (X) is credible*
- iii. *Even more proof that your first reason (X) is credible*
- iv. *Explain how A(i)-(iii) work to support your contention that your first reason (X) presents very strong evidence that King would not try to convince Socrates to escape*

More specifically:

I. King would not try to convince Socrates to escape

A. First reason why King would not: King wasn't afraid of death

- i. *As a Christian, King believed that even if he were to be killed it wouldn't affect his soul.*
 - a) *King was a Christian. Find passages in the text that make and will support this claim. Paraphrase what King says (no quotes!) and give the page citation(s) to direct the reader to the evidence. [People's Exhibit A]*
 - b) *King distinguished physical from spiritual "death". Find passages in the text that make this claim. Paraphrase what King says (no quotes!) and give the page citation(s) to direct the reader to the evidence. [People's Exhibit B]*

... and so forth

Here's a pretend Sub-Conclusion for I.A.i.

So, ladies and gentlemen of the jury, based on a), b), c) and d), it is clear that King believed that even if he were to be killed it wouldn't affect his soul's destiny and so he was not afraid of death. But there is even more evidence that King wasn't afraid of death.

As things stand we don't have anywhere near enough evidence to support the view that King wouldn't try to convince Socrates to escape. We've only got to the point of basically saying that Gail and Scooter dated and had been in a relationship for two years. In other words, we've still got a long, long way to go before we can be confident that the jury will see things our way. We need to give more proof in support of the first reason.

I. King would not try to convince Socrates to escape

A. First reason why - X

~~i. Some proof that your first reason (X) is credible—CLAIM 1~~

~~a) support for CLAIM 1 with textual evidence to back it up~~

~~b) support for CLAIM 1 with textual evidence to back it up~~

~~c) support for CLAIM 1 with textual evidence to back it up~~

DONE

ii. **Some more proof that your first reason (X) is credible**

DO NEXT

iii. Even more proof that your first reason (X) is credible

iv. Explain how A(i)-(iii) work to support your contention that your first reason (X) presents very strong evidence that King would not try to convince Socrates to escape

When you're done with the King portion of the essay, you'll have given two reasons to support your view. You will have supported each of those reasons with loads of evidence that convinces the reader that "Reason #1" and "Reason #2" must be the case. Yet there's still the task of tying the two reasons together. You'll need to show how these two reasons work to lead someone to the your conclusion.

Then you get to start over and do the same thing with Thoreau. Two reasons why you think he would (or would not) try to convince Socrates to escape. Last, you present your personal view. Here we are asking for only one reason instead of two.

Readings : Gather support for your claims from the Crito and any of the other dialogues we've read, the King book and Thoreau's essay, *On Civil Disobedience*. You should also review the civil disobedience discussion sheet as a way to help you think through your positions.

Citations : Give citations throughout the essay to further support every piece of evidence. Don't wax poetic about how great King or Socrates was. Rather, use King's and Socrates' own thoughts to make your case. Not their *words*. Their *thoughts*. Be sure the passages you cite actually fit the point you are making. You must do the work of putting their words into your own. So don't use any quotations; there's not enough space for that. Follow this format for citing the texts:

blah blah blah (King, pp. 35, 67, 112)

blah blah blah (*Crito* 45a)

blah blah blah (Thoreau, p. 5)

Do not include the title of any of the King or Thoreau material. Just cite author and page as above.

Argument Reconstruction

The essay calls on you to demonstrate the ability to form arguments in support of particular claims. If you want to try your hand at reconstructing your arguments in what I call standard argument form, i.e., a number list that indicates inferences (as I did with the Argument from the Laws from the *Crito*), that's fine. Make a document for just the reconstruction(s) and upload this separate file on iLearn. There is no extra credit for this, however you'll receive our feedback on it.