

Social & Political Philosophy Current Events Paper

Due: Friday, December 3, 2010

What to do: You are to find and write a paper based on a current topic related to the some social or political issue. This article must appear in a reputable print media and must be substantial in content and length. The selection and your paper should address some aspect of social and political philosophy that we have addressed in class. Your paper should include a summary of the article, it should clearly connect the article to some aspect of the course, and it should critically assess the article in light of the issues and arguments we have talked about in class.

For example, suppose the *New York Times Magazine* published an in-depth article on China's pollution problem (<http://www.nytimes.com/2007/08/26/world/asia/26china.html>). First, this article should be substantive and lengthy (as this one is). Second, this article must deal with some issue that you can connect to theoretical issues discussed in class. Third, you are to write a four-page paper briefly summarizing the main arguments of the article, how this article addresses environmental ethics, a brief discussion of the relevant ethical theory, and your take on the author's position. Fourth, it should be clear from your discussion whether you agree or disagree with the author and his/her treatment of the environmental issue and its ethical implications. Fifth, you must hand in a copy of the article with your paper.

Other publications that might have in-depth articles of interest include the *Washington Post*, *Los Angeles Times*, *New Yorker*, *Atlantic Monthly*, *The Economist*, *The Republic*, etc. Do not expect to find in-depth articles that would satisfy this assignment in the *Janesville Gazette* or *USA Today*. Also, most of the papers mentioned above do not have substantial articles in their daily news sections. You will find appropriate articles in their supplemental materials, like the *NYTimes Magazine*.

Expectations: I expect this paper to be a well-written essay that (i) displays a clear and precise understanding of the article you have selected including the author's main points and arguments, (ii) a clear and precise comprehension of the philosophical theory we have covered in class, (iii) a relevant application and clear discussion of the current event to the philosophical theory, (iv) and, a persuasive analysis of the author's article and arguments.

Paper Guidelines: (i) 4 pages, absolutely no more than five pages; (ii) double-spaced, pages numbered with one-inch margins, Times font, 12 point; (iii) cover page with name, date, title--do not place name or other identifying marks anywhere else on the paper; (iv) stapled, no binders or loose sheets