Directions Write any type of essay on one of the topics we covered so far. Most students write a thesis defense essay in which they explain an issue and defend their view (see below). The essay must be at least three pages (see grading criteria below). Some Possible Topics Outline 3 major arguments for or against relativism. See my videos or pages 46-48. Defend your view. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9dRgPzAHYGE Buddhism is a good philosophy to follow. Buddhism is a poor philosophy to follow. Hinduism, Taoism, Confucianism are good philosophies/religions. If you write a paper on one of these philosophies, you could, for example, explain three central ideas from one of these philosophies/religions that could enrich a person's life. Use quotes from the Tao Te Ching, Upanishads, or other sacred texts. Compare/Contrast any two philosophies. For example, compare and contrast the idea of soul in Plato and Aristotle. Which view is closer to the truth? Explain Aristotle's Four Causes and why they are important. Hints: many modern people only think in terms of material and efficient causes. Is this a mistake? Can we understand the deeper philosophical questions if we omit final and formal causes? Do the 4 causes help you see from multiple perspectives and more deeply understand a thing? Defend or Critique Plato's Theory of Forms. Some related thoughts: your textbook explains the third man criticism and more. If our world is a computer simulation, the Forms would be like the computer code. They are not physically in this world but they control it. Do people actually believe we are in a simulation? Yes, see Bostrom's Simulation Argument online. Explain the main themes of Presocratic Thought. Use at least three philosophers to illustrate. Explain why they are important. Compare and contrast Plato and Aristotle's Theory of Forms. What are the problems with moral relativism? Moral subjectivism? Explain Plato's Theory of Forms. Could we be in a program/computer simulation like the Matrix? Example/Model For example, here is one student’s thesis statement for a paper on Stoicism (we will study Stoicism soon): “Stoicism is an enriching philosophy for three primary reasons. First, stoicism helps us better understand and internalize what is and is not in our control, and there is great power in this. Second, stoicism is a form of cognitive therapy, which helps us better understand and control emotions. Third, stoicism helps us focus on internal thinking instead of external events, which is one key to happiness.” Notice how this student’s thesis statement is clear and organizes/previews the essay well. The student went on to develop each of these three points in the essay. For point one, she gave examples of what is and is not in our control. She quoted Epictetus and Aurelius. She gave real-world examples on how to apply point one (e.g. expecting long lines and traffic). She developed point one in 3 paragraphs, about a page and a half. She developed point two in a similar way. Her paper ended with a summative conclusion. Paper Grading The back of your textbook has a model paper. 1. Content 75% Did you accurately explain at least three themes of the philosophy? Did you superficially retell what you learned about this philosophy (average), or did you offer unique insights, applications, or criticisms (good to superior)? Did you avoid the logical fallacies and present sound arguments? 2. Readability & Style 15% Is your writing clear and well organized? If you read your essay aloud, is it clear? Does it flow well? Check for grammatical and spelling errors since these will decrease clarity. 3. Mechanics 10% MLA, 12 point font, double spaced, at least 3 full pages. You may write up to 4 pages. \*The Writing Center offers assistance with these types of written assignments.