

PHILOSOPHY 22: CONTEMPORARY MORAL PROBLEMS

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SECOND PAPER

ASSIGNMENT

Critically evaluate Mary Anne Warren's argument for the moral permissibility of at least some abortions in "On the Moral and Legal Status of Abortion."

As with your first paper, this one should proceed in two phases. In the first, expository phase, reconstruct and explain (in your own words) Warren's argument. What is the thesis for which she is arguing? What are the primary premises of her argument? How does she argue for those premises? Obviously, Warren's account of personhood plays a crucial role here. What is this account? How does she defend her claim that the moral category of personhood is distinct from the biological category of humanity?

Once you have reconstructed Warren's argument in your own words, you can proceed to the second, critical phase of your paper. Is Warren's account of personhood compelling? Does she demonstrate that fetuses fail to satisfy her criteria for personhood? Remember that Warren's view is nuanced: she does not insist that all abortions have the same moral status. Your discussion should be nuanced too: you need not conclude that Warren's view is either correct or utterly wrongheaded. (You may, for example, want to argue that her basic approach is sound but that she takes a couple of missteps that have implications for her conclusion.) If you want to criticize Warren's view, make sure you consider how she would respond to your objections. If, on the other hand, you want to defend Warren, make sure you consider some objections to her view (such as the ones she discusses at the end of her paper).

Remember that in a philosophy paper, it is your arguments that matter. Make sure you provide reasons that support the claims you make.

Note: You may discuss the assignment with your classmates, but the work you submit should be your own. You are *not* allowed to consult *any* secondary or outside sources for this assignment.

Format: Your paper should be no more than 5–7 pages in length. It should be double-spaced and set in a 12-point font.

Your paper is due at 5:00 PM on Friday, October 31.

SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

You should submit your paper (as an attachment) via email to mesilverstein@amherst.edu. The subject of your e-mail should be: Second Paper. I will return your paper to you via email with comments appended using Microsoft Word.