

First assignment

Write a paper comparing the views of two of the thinkers we have read on a major social problem of your choice.

For example, in the last week we spent a lot of time talking about how Dworkin adapts his theory of equality to deal with the problem posed by people who have significant physical and mental handicaps. How would Locke, the libertarians described by Gibbard, Williams, the welfare economists described by Arrow, or Rawls handle this kind of problem?

Or you might pick up on an idea suggested by Arianna: we know that people's aspirations are affected by social influences. Some of these influences are benign while others are not. How would two of the thinkers we have read deal with the problem posed by the malign ones?

Health care is another fertile area as several of our authors have discussed that either directly or obliquely.

These are just examples. This is an opportunity for you to flex your PPE muscles on matters that concern you.

Here are some suggestions. First, it is best if you have a genuine comparison. It's not very interesting to read that thinker A has a lot to say on a subject while thinker B has nothing. Second, it is good practice to identify each side's strongest and weakest points. Third, it's always possible that the ultimate answer will not be one-sided: there may well be something to be said for each side.

Your paper should be no longer than 1800 words (about five to six pages long). Please bring a paper copy to class on the 15th of October *and* upload an electronic copy to your dropbox on Sakai. Good luck!