

Here is the list of options from which to choose your paper topic. The idea is to use the same topic for all three papers in this course. If you want to switch topics between papers or if you want to choose a topic not on this list, it is best to consult with your instructor first.

Your paper topic is a particular question that you will attempt to resolve using logic and critical thinking. Choose a question from the list below that interests you and about which you feel that you will be able to conduct scholarly research and construct logical arguments on both sides. Feel free to modify the question into something more concrete and specific if it would allow for a stronger or more interesting paper.

Here are the topics from which to choose (they are organized into categories to make it easier to narrow down your choice):

Ethical Questions:

- Is it permissible to use capital punishment on persons convicted of certain crimes?
- Is physician assisted suicide morally acceptable when a person is suffering from a painful, incurable, terminal condition?
- Is abortion morally acceptable when the woman's life is not in danger due to the pregnancy?
- Is it acceptable to purchase clothing made by underpaid and poorly treated workers in other countries?

Legal/Political Questions:

- Should a photo ID be required for voting?
- Should legal marriage be available to couples of the same sex?
- Should marijuana be legal for recreational use?
- Should vaccinations be required for all children of certain ages?

Economics:

- Does federal assistance for college education for people with low incomes help the economy in the long run?
- Are government subsidies (e.g. for agriculture, oil exploration, etc.) generally good for the economy?
- Would shifting to alternative sources of energy (wind, solar, etc.) be likely to benefit or harm our economy in the long run?

Daily Life:

- What is the best way to invest one's money (example: Are mutual funds better on average than investing in real estate)?
- What is the best method for managing one's time?
- Does the use of Social Media tend to improve or harm relationships?
- Are video games (or is pornography, TV, etc.) addictive (or harmful)?

Education:

- Is online education 'as good as' on ground education generally?

- Is it unwise to major in the arts or humanities (given debt to employment ratios, etc.)?
- Should the government shift to funding charter schools rather than public schools?

Health/Medicine:

- Is the use of therapy (or yoga, meditation, religion, etc.) effective in improving one's long term well-being?
- Are psychiatric drugs beneficial for (or detrimental to) long term mental health?
- Do vaccines cause autism or other harmful diseases?
- Does alternative medicine (e.g. acupuncture, homeopathic medicine, etc.) work better in many cases than standard western (allopathic) medicine?

Environment

- Is climate change real and human caused?
- Should the government regulate the emissions of greenhouse gas emissions?
- Is our current rate of rainforest clearing (or ocean fishing, etc.) sustainable?
- Should wolves (or bison) be allowed to roam free in the western states?

Animal Ethics:

- Which types of animals possess consciousness (or reasoning, language, emotion, etc.)?
- Is it ethically acceptable to raise animals for food on factory farms?
- Should people be required to spay/neuter pets?

Science and Reality:

- Is there evidence for non-physically explainable phenomena being real (ESP, auras, astrology, ghosts, etc.)?
- Is intelligent design science?

Parenting:

- Is the 'cry it out' method good for babies?
- What methods of discipline have been shown to be best for child development?
- Is breast feeding better than formula in all cases?
- Are children raised with opposite-sex parents better off in general than those raised with same-sex parents?
- Should 'junk food' be allowed in public school vending machines?
- Should sex education be taught in public schools?