

Comparative Essay

In order to demonstrate your knowledge of the paradigms relating to ethics that we have discussed in class, you will write a comparative essay. Both the first and final draft of the essay will be **2 to 3 pages**. While you may choose your own topic for the term paper, your options for the comparative essay are somewhat limited. You may either:

- 1) Compare Kant's categorical imperative to Hegel's *Sittlichkeit*;
- 2) **or** compare Hegel's *Sittlichkeit* to Kierkegaard's teleological suspension of the ethical;
- 3) **or** compare Gautier's *l'art pour l'art* to Kierkegaard's *Tendenslitteratur*.

In order to illustrate your comparison, apply both paradigms to a specific ethical question, and contrast the results.

At some point before turning in the assignment, you are required to meet with the Writing Desk in Rolvaag Library about your essay: <https://wp.stolaf.edu/academic-support/writing-help/>.

As always, this assignment should be written according to the *Chicago Manual of Style*, 17th edition ("Notes and Bibliography"), which is available online in Catalyst on the St. Olaf College libraries page. A bibliography page will not be necessary; just footnotes will do.

Your main text shall be set in 12-point Times New Roman, and double-spaced, with one-inch margins. Footnotes shall be set in 10-point Times New Roman, and single-spaced. **The first draft of the comparative essay is due in the Google Classroom at the beginning of class on [REDACTED]. A hardcopy should also be brought to class.** For this first draft, students will receive full credit for merely submitting the completed assignment on time, as they will be asked to revise their first draft according to the feedback that they receive in the peer-review workshop. **The final draft of the comparative essay is due in the Google Classroom at the beginning of class on [REDACTED].** The final draft will be graded according to the rubric on the opposite page.

Comparative Essay Rubric

Grade	Percentage	Description
A	100–90	The student has an excellent command of both paradigms. The discussion of the two paradigms not only covers what was presented in class, but also makes new and original comparisons in applying them to a specific ethical question. The student crafts a thoroughly convincing case in favor of one paradigm over the other, or otherwise reveals the respective advantages or disadvantages of both. The essay adheres to all of the prompt’s formal specifications, and is a full two to three pages.
B	89–80	The student, for the most part, has an understanding of both paradigms. The discussion of the two paradigms covers the main points of what was presented in class. The student makes a plausible argument for one paradigm over the other, or for the respective advantages or disadvantages of both, in applying them to a specific ethical question. The essay follows most of the formal specifications cited in the prompt, and is a full two to three pages.
C	79–70	The student has a shaky command of one or both of the paradigms. The discussion of at least one of the two paradigms only covers a single point presented in class. The student makes an unconvincing case for one paradigm over the other in applying them to a specific ethical question. The essay adheres to only some of the formal specifications mentioned in the prompt, or is less than two full pages.
D	69–60	The student does not understand one or both of the paradigms at all. The discussion of the two paradigms does not cover any of the main points presented in class or does not apply the paradigms to a specific ethical question. While asserting the validity of one paradigm over the other, the student does not supply supporting evidence. The formal specifications of the prompt are largely neglected, or the essay is less than one-and-a-half pages.
F	59–0	The student fails to discuss one or both of the paradigms, and thus does not argue for or against one paradigm over the other. The student does not apply the paradigms to a specific ethical question. There is no indication that the student has read the prompt’s formal specifications, or the essay is only one whole page or less.