

## GUIDELINES FOR PAPER #2

Your papers due at **4pm on Tuesday, November 19<sup>th</sup>** should be **7-10 pages** (approximately 2,500-3,000 words), in 12-point Times New Roman font with standard 1” margins. Your citations should be in [Chicago Style](#); you can use appropriate secondary sources, but it is not required. Please submit a copy **online on Courseworks** (under the ‘Assignments’ tab) **AND bring a paper copy** to class. You may use your grace days for this assignment.

In the week of November 11<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup>, we will hold one-on-one meetings in my extra office hours. **You should prepare EITHER a detailed outline OR a full first draft of your paper for your meeting** which we will go over together.

Once again, a helpful guide to writing argumentative papers by Prof. Emmanuelle Saada, chair of Contemporary Civilization for the Office of the Core, is available on Courseworks under ‘Files.’

Choose one of the following prompts and answer it fully:

***FOR EACH OF THESE QUESTIONS:*** *your answer should address at least three texts; at least two of them should be from the medieval period onwards (Thomas Aquinas, Al-Ghazali, the Kabbalah, Julian of Norwich, Ibn Tufayl, Machiavelli, the Conquest texts, Luther, Descartes, Galileo, and Hobbes).*

1. Many of our texts explicitly or implicitly address the topic of human nature. Do you see any patterns across our works regarding whether human beings are seen as essentially good, or essentially depraved? How are some humans described as naturally superior or inferior to others, and why/for what reason? Are you particularly convinced by any one of these descriptions of what humans are ‘really like?’
2. Is it better to be ruled by the Best, the Many, or the One? Should the answer to this question be affected by political circumstances ‘on the ground,’ or is one answer always right? Which of these definitions are you most convinced by – or, which of them would *you* prefer to be under the rule of?
3. Do our ‘Renaissance’ or ‘early modern’ texts represent a break from the past, or a continuation of it? You should focus your answer on a specific idea or theme (e.g. how society is ordered, the nature & description of Gods, how later authors are responding to a particular idea from Aristotle, etc.) which we will discuss in office hours.
4. Do human beings have free will, or not? Is our answer dependent on our understandings of God(s), or are answers to this question also on offer from pagan sources? What is the *source* and *meaning* of free will for each of your chosen authors?
5. Design your own topic & set of questions, based on ideas you have been interested in over the course of the semester so far. We will discuss your plan in depth over email and during office hours.