

First Paper Topic
Philosophy 168
Fall, 2016

Length should be approximately 5 pages. Please use a line spacing of 3 lines per inch (double-spaced) and a left margin of 1½ inches, 1 inch elsewhere. Point size may be no less than 10.* Papers will be evaluated on the basis of both content and quality of writing. You may cite the assigned readings in the text and the material on the course Web site.

Due: October 24, in class.

In the First Meditation, Descartes describes what is now called his “method of doubt.” Give a clear presentation of the nature of that method and what it is supposed to accomplish. Then describe how it is carried out, and what its result is. Comment on the success or failure of the method. Some questions that might arise are the following: Are the reasons for doubt brought forward by Descartes good reasons for doubt? Did Descartes go too far in trying to doubt whatever he could, resulting in a skepticism that cannot be overcome? Or are there things that Descartes should have subjected to doubt but did not, resulting in an unjustified dogmatism? Is doubting everything that can possibly be doubted a good way to rid the mind of its false opinions, or might some other method be preferable?

*This is an example of 10-point type.