

## Reflective Diary – Assessment requirements and guidance

Word count: 2000-2500 (including references)

### Introduction

In this assignment you'll write a reflective diary on three philosophical topics from the reflection component. You should select topics that connect with your research project, and the classes you attend will help you draw those connections. In exceptional circumstances you can select a philosophical issue not covered in the classes or pick topics that don't fit very well with your research project. Just contact YJ and she will help you to find such solutions.

### What is the point of a "reflective diary"?

The aim of the diary is to encourage you to actively and critically reflect on the philosophical topics that you choose and the ways in which these connect with some elements of your research project.

### What will I get from doing this assignment?

- An understanding of key philosophical problems, concepts, and theories, related to your own field of study;
- Development of your ability to identify philosophical problems relevant to a research topic;
- Development of your ability to critically evaluate argumentation relevant to these problems and identify, assess, and critique your own stance towards these problems.

### What do I need to do?

- First, bear in mind that you are expected to work on the diary throughout the course, noting down your reflections while you are in class or studying, while reading course materials or conducting further research, and when listening to recorded content. Class discussions and the peer review assignment will also help you to develop your arguments, ideas, and critical reflection.
- When working on each diary entry, you should try to answer the following question(s): *"How is this topic relevant to my research?"* and/or *"What is my stance (as a future professional in the field) to the theories discussed?"*

### How do I write a reflective diary?

- Start your diary with a short introduction. This should (very briefly) describe your project and the three topics you have chosen and why.
- Each diary entry should cover a separate topic from the reflection component. Try to pick topics that fit well with your research project.
- Finish your diary with a short conclusion. This could sum up your main findings and/or pose more questions.

### Is there a word limit for each section/entry?

How much space you give to each section is up to you, but bear in mind that your work will be graded according to assessment criteria that priorities some things (e.g. critical reflection) over others (e.g. description of your project). So, you should aim to be succinct in those sections that are of course necessary but mainly as scaffolding for the work (descriptions) and go into more detail in those parts that will help you achieve a higher grade (analysis).

### How should I structure the diary?

Here is an example structure that you may find helpful but remember **this is just a guide**. The final word count for each section will depend on the content and your own writing style:

- 1. Introduction (200 words – it would be a good idea to consider this a maximum):**
  - Brief introduction to your research project/field (try to focus on what's relevant to your diary).
  - Succinct account of what follows (diary entries/topics, and some pointers to the conclusion, i.e. what your entries show).
  - Definitions of any concepts that may not be easily understood by someone outside your field.
- 2. Each diary entry covering one topic (roughly 700-800 words per entry):**
  - Explain how the topic is relevant to your research project (if that's not easy to do, consider reflecting on the broader context of your project, or think about how this topic is relevant to your specialisation).
  - Offer a critical analysis of the topic by examining the claims carefully, providing arguments and, where appropriate, evidence.
  - Demonstrate your understanding by providing a concise summary of key concepts and relevant theories and showing how these are relevant to your argument.
  - Use course materials and further research to support your argument.
  - N.b. You are expected to explore at least one topic in more detail by doing your own extended research beyond the course materials.
- 3. Conclusion (200 words max):**
  - What are some key points that you took from the materials?
  - What is the main point (topic or question) you want your reader to remember?
  - How might some of your arguments support each other or conflict?

Note that you don't need to write your diary in the order listed above. For instance, you'll probably find it easiest to write the individual diary entries first, and then write the introduction and conclusion last.

### How do I get a good grade in this assignment?

- First, read more than you think you should! Go beyond class materials when you can. And whenever you're struggling to write, go back to reading. Take notes as you read. Philosophy is about active, critical thinking, rather than passive or rote learning.

- Second, start writing your diary entries immediately after class (or even during!). Ideas that are fresh in your mind won't stay if you then distract yourself with other things.
- Third, come to as many classes as you can, even if the topic does not appeal to you. Philosophical thinking works best when you engage with ideas and topics beyond a narrow focus. We'll also spend time in class seminars thinking about the diaries, so the more we discuss, the more answers you'll have to your questions.
- Fourth, spend a good amount of time on the Eduflow peer review assignment. Maximise the feedback that you give and receive in order to sharpen your critical understanding of the assignment and your understanding of the assessment criteria.
- Fifth, pay attention to key terminology used in the assessment criteria. For instance:
  - explain = describe in (sufficient yet succinct) detail;
  - illustrate = give (useful) examples;
  - reason/argue = do not just *state*, explain why and defend the explanation;
  - ground/support = provide references (research literature / course materials).
- Finally, bear in mind that a good piece of work:
  - has a clear structure (beginning, middle, end) with paragraphs that connect;
  - discusses the main issues arising from the topic;
  - critically analyses key claims (e.g. strengths and weaknesses);
  - reflects on ideas presented, and considers alternative perspectives;
  - makes critical use of primary and secondary sources;
  - answers any questions that are posed and stays on topic;
  - is well presented and carefully edited;
  - is easy to navigate (e.g. page numbers and headings);
  - is neat and accessible (e.g. use Times New Roman, font size 12, or similar)
  - uses correct and consistent referencing throughout;
  - has a correctly formatted bibliography with all sources consulted.

### What are the formal requirements?

- Include your name, student ID, and title of your work.
- Keep within the word limit of between 2000-2500 words, including references.
- Figures or tables can be used as necessary, but these count towards the word limit.
- You must use course materials; you are encouraged to use additional (academic) sources. All sources must be appropriately cited.

### How will my diary be assessed?

Your reflective diary is graded on a 1-10 scale based on the following criteria. More information about the specifics can be found in the reflection assessment criteria on Canvas:

**30%: Structure and quality of argumentation:** Is the paper well written, clear and understandable? Are the central claims/ explanations/ arguments clearly outlined? Is the overall structure of the diary apparent to the reader? Does it have a suitable conclusion that follows from the arguments and evidence?

**30%: Philosophical discussion:** Does the diary identify and discuss relevant philosophical dimensions of the research project? Does the diary incorporate relevant themes and materials from the lectures?

**20%: Research and evidence:** Are factual claims supported by relevant data, statistics, or other types of evidence? Does the diary include references to reliable and reputable sources, including peer reviewed, academic sources?

**20%: Reflection and analysis:** Does the diary contain any original insights or discussions? Does the work show that the students have thought about and tried to apply themes from the lectures to their own unique projects?

### When is the diary due?

The finished diary is due for submission on **24 June, 23.59.**

Work submitted after this time will not receive a grade.

If you miss this deadline, you will either need to go through the OXIE, or take this component again during Q2 next academic year.

Please speak to your study advisor if you are experiencing difficulties that make it hard to complete this or any other university work.

### Academic integrity

We expect everything you submit to be written **by you** (and in your own words) and not copied from the internet or other sources. Among other things this means that you cannot copy/paste any part of third-party materials into your text, unless you use quotation marks **and** acknowledge the source (incl. course materials).

If you are unsure what plagiarism is see UT manual: <https://www.utwente.nl/en/service-portal/university-library/referencing-copyright/referencing-plagiarism>

If we establish that your paper has been plagiarised, i.e. copied, you will receive a failing grade for the course and can expect disciplinary action.