**PHI.100 Final (DUE MONDAY 5/17):**

**Assignments –** Your assignment is to write a short paper (1000-1250 words) that compares at least two of the thinkers that we’ve read in class. This paper should be submitted to me by email ([james.wheeler@stonybrook](mailto:james.wheeler@stonybrook)) no later than **11:59 PM EST on Monday, May 17th**. When emailing me, make sure that your header clearly indicates the content of your email (it should read “[Your name] PHI.100 Final” or something to that effect.

**Format and Citations** – All papers must be written double-spaced with normal margins and 12-point font. Times New Roman is preferred, but Calibri and Arial are also acceptable. **Papers should also be formatted for anonymous review, meaning that, ideally, your name should not appear anywhere on the document or in the name of the file. Please do include your Stony Brook ID# on the right-hand corner of each page.** Finally, all quotes, paraphrases, and presentations of ideas that are not your own **MUST BE PROPERLY CITED**. I would prefer you to use Chicago Style citations if possible, but MLA and APA are acceptable as long as you use them properly and consistently. Anyone who has questions or needs help with citations can get in touch with me. Purdue Owl (https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/purdue\_owl.html) and our library’s guide to citations and plagiarism (http://guides.library.stonybrook.edu/citations) are also good resources to look into.

**Grammar and Style** – Try your best to avoid mistakes in grammar and spelling, and make sure that your writing style is clear. Proofreading is key! I won’t grade you on these things specifically, but if your grammatical errors, spelling errors, and stylistic inconsistencies make it harder for me to read and understand your work then this will affect your grade. If any of you are worried about this, then please get in touch with me. The Writing Center at Stony Brook (<https://sunysb.mywconline.com/>) may also be of help in this regard.

**Topics –** I have taken the liberty of writing out several potential topics from which you may choose. If you choose one of these topics, then please **indicate which one you have chosen as clearly as possible**. Also, please only write on **one** of these topics. **Do not try to mix and match**. As you will note, all of these topics are comparative in nature, which means that it will be your responsibility to **BOTH** describe the individual positions of the figures you’re writing about **and** offer a tangible and clear point of comparison between them. Given this twofold task, having a strong thesis statement in which you state your argument clearly will be **indispensable.** As with the midterm, you have the option of choosing your own topic for the final, but if you do so then you need to get approval from me by **Friday May 7th**at the latest. The topics to choose from are as follows:

1. Descartes famously argues in his *Meditations* that the mind is more knowable than the body, but more contemporary figures such as Alva Noe and Paul Churchland have respectively argued that the mind is in fact reducible to the body or to the brain. For your essay, compare and contrast Descartes’ view of the mind with Churchland’s or Noe’s? Is the mind really separate from the brain/body, and if so, why? If not, then what does this mean for Descartes’ contention that the mind is the only thing that cannot be doubted?
2. Butler, Crenshaw, and Haraway are all noteworthy for the manner in which each, despite being feminists themselves, critique feminism in its more orthodox forms. Choose two of these three critiques, and after explaining them analyze their similarities and differences. Do these thinkers reject traditional feminism for the same reasons, and are their own feminist alternatives compatible with one another?
3. Marx and Engels famously argue that their historical materialism is based in the vital activity of human life, and for his own part Nietzsche argues something similar. That said, it appears that both conceptions of human individuality disagree about what life itself is and about what the relationship between the individual and history should be. Choose one of these two points of comparison (life or history) and critically evaluate how Nietzsche and M&E differ with respect to it. Are their conceptions of life/history in anyway compatible, and, if not, is one more compelling than the other? Why?
4. Haraway, Nietzsche, and Marx and Engels all present in the essays we read by them a conception of what it means to be an animal and of how animals differ from human beings. Choose two of these three conceptions and compare and contrast them. Is a view like Haraway’s that sees no real distinction between animals and humans more compelling than the difference in production that M&E argue for or the difference in forgetfulness that Nietzsche does? Are these conceptions of animality actually compatible with one another, and if so, why? If not, then which is the most compelling and for what reason?
5. In addition to discussing feminism, Crenshaw, Haraway, and Butler each have a conception of human identity and how it ought to be mobilized in politics. Crenshaw argues that certain identity categories should be championed, Haraway thinks they should be eliminated, and Butler thinks they should be set free to change and proliferate. Choose two of these three views and compare and contrast. Is one conception of identity more compelling than the rest, or is it possible for these conceptions of identity to be reconciled somehow. In either case, why?
6. Aristotle, Hume, and Schechtman each present their readers with a different philosophical conception of human selfhood. For Aristotle the enduring self is the vital potency of the soul, for Schechtman the self is a story we construct for ourselves, and for Hume it is a mere illusion. Choose two of these three views and compare them. Which, if any, is correct, and is it possible to bring any of them together productively?
7. Foucault, Nietzsche, and Marx and Engels all have a different view of how the human individual relates to the society of which they are a part. Nietzsche believes that the individual and their society are at odds, whereas both M&E and Foucault think that individuals are products of the societies in which they live. Choose two of these views and compare and contrast them.
8. Several of the thinkers we read this semester had starkly different views on science. For someone like Churchland, science is a uniquely powerful discipline that is capable of showing us truths about the world that no other discipline can. Marx and Engels also have a positive view of science, but they see it as more bound up with the historical and social contingencies of the society in which it is produced than Churchland does. Haraway believes something similar. For Nietzsche, by contrast, science is in fact an anathema to life and serves to deaden its subject matter by divorcing it from its real-life significance. Butler, in their repudiation of biological accounts of sex, also seems to believe that the purview of science ought to be limited. Choose two of these views and compare and contrast.