

PST Class Journal Assignment

Most of the routine work for this class will consist in making submissions to one cumulative project designed to reproduce in miniature what philosophers and scientists do to advance their fields of research. Specifically, you will write short essays and collectively create a body of literature that responds to and builds off of classic works in political philosophy and the work of your peers.

Every week of class that there is not a midterm scheduled, each student will have the opportunity to contribute an original or revised paper to the class philosophy journal, called *The Political and Social Thought Journal (PSTJ)*. Contributions are submitted for consideration by posting essays on the class blog. The pieces will be short—just 200 to 400 words (word limits apply to the body of the paper only, not to the title, citations, etc.). This limited space requirement is meant to force you to focus solely on philosophical arguments. Submissions are due on Sundays by noon. Essay writing advice and a list of common essay mistakes with explanations are on Blackboard.

The *PSTJ* is a part of the required reading for this course. In addition to submitting your own essay for consideration, you will be required to give critical feedback to three essays each week by commenting on the posts of your peers. Read them all; comment on the one's you feel most strongly about. Comments should total about 300 words. Writing comments will help you prepare to write response essays to your peers in later issues of the *PSTJ*. Additionally, you will need to have a good grasp of what is in the Journal so as to discuss these issues knowledgeably in class. Comments are due by Tuesday at noon.

You have 12 opportunities to submit original papers to the class journal, along with six opportunities to “revise and resubmit” (see below) for a total of up to 18 submissions. The dates for submissions are listed in the syllabus. Again, your contribution is due by noon on Sundays and comments are due Tuesday at noon. If a paper comes in late, it will be considered in the next opportunity to turn in a paper (i.e. the following Sunday).

Normally, you will receive feedback on your papers within a few days. Included will be one of four determinations:

Published (accepted for publication): This means your paper meets the full requirements for a paper in *PSTJ*. It doesn't need any changes—not even fixing of typos, spelling, or formatting.

Accept with minor changes: This means that your paper will be accepted into the current issue of the *PSTJ*, but you have to make some small changes like fixing typos, spelling, grammar or formatting. Normally you will have 48 hours to make those changes in order to have your paper in that issue (you will repost these papers as a comment to the original paper). Failing to make the changes in 48 hours is tantamount to receiving a ‘revise and resubmit.’ You can resubmit the paper on a different week, but doing so will count against your allotted resubmission opportunities.

Revise and resubmit: This is technically a rejection of the submission. The paper has some serious structural problems, but it shows promise. The paper is capable of making a valuable, original contribution to the *PSTJ* if it is rewritten. However, it must be rewritten and submitted to a future edition of the journal. You will be given up to six revise and resubmit opportunities this semester. If you get a revise and resubmit, you lose your chance to publish in the current issue of the class journal, but the work you've done can be used in a future edition.

Rejection: This paper is not close to being acceptable for the journal. You are better off starting fresh next time.

Note: it is also possible for a submission to be so poor as to not count at all.

Your grade will be a function of how many submissions you make and the determinations on those submissions. So long as you submit 10 papers that follow the guidelines (out of a possible 12), you will get at least a C- on this portion of your grade. In order to get an A on this portion of your grade you need 8 of your papers published into the journal (note that an ‘accept with minor changes’ determination is easily turned into a ‘published’ paper). As noted above, you will be allowed up to six opportunities to revise and resubmit. This means that you will have a total of 18 submission opportunities. Out of these, you’re aiming to get 8 of them published. Also, 3 determinations of ‘revise and resubmit’ for which you take no further action (either because you decide not to, or because you’ve already used up your six resubmission opportunities) will carry the same weight as an accepted. (Note: this means that if you take advantage of each opportunity to submit, getting at least a ‘revise and resubmit’, then even if you never get a paper published you will still get a B- on this portion of your grade)

In summary:

1. You have 12 opportunities to make an original submission (every Sunday at noon except on weeks with a midterm) and 6 opportunities for resubmission, for a total of 18 submissions.
 1. Part of submitting an essay is to read all other submitted essays and comment on 3 of your peers (comments are due by noon on Tuesday).
2. If you’re essay is:
 1. Published – great, nothing further is needed.
 2. Accepted with minor revisions – you’ll have 48 hours to make the revisions and resubmit the essay as a comment on your original essay, at which point it counts as published.
 3. Revise and resubmit – you can rewrite the paper as needed and hand it back in on any future Sunday (including midterm weeks). You’re allowed to do this up to six times.
 4. Rejection – try to learn and do better next time.

Once you have received 8 ‘published’ determinations, you need not make further submissions. Your grade will be determined by the following rubric:

Table of *PSTJ* Grades

Less than 10S	F
10S	C-
1P (or 3R)	C-
2P (1P + 3R or 6R)	C
3P (or 2P + 3R, etc.)	C+
4P (or 3P + 3R, etc.)	B-
5P (or 4P + 3R, etc.)	B
6P (or 5P + 3R, etc.)	B+
7P (or 6P + 3R, etc.)	A-
8P (or 7P + 3R, etc)	A

S=submissions; P=published; R=revise and resubmit