

Representative philosophy algorithm assignments:

Responding to Locke's epistemology and philosophy of education

Writing response:

In *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*, John Locke offers his views on how children should be raised and educated. More importantly, he *defends* those views by providing arguments and reasons for why his proposals are valid. Underlying many of his arguments is an implicit understanding of how the human mind works. See if you can infer Locke's general conception of how the mind gathers knowledge and develops as an individual personality from his claims about childhood education. It might help to look at outside sources about Locke's philosophy, such as the entry in the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy.

Write up a two-part response according to these questions:

- 1) What are some of the main features and details of Locke's proposals for childhood education? Do you agree with them? Why or why not?
- 2) What general conception of how the human mind works do you think Locke has, given his ideas about education?

Your response should be 2-3 full paragraphs in length.

Algorithm:

Using the diagram software at draw.io, design an algorithm that expresses the dynamics of Locke's empiricist epistemology and philosophy of mind. Save the diagram as a pdf file and upload it here.

Responding to Leibniz's *Monadology*:

Writing response:

In his *Monadology* (on page 298 of the M. Beardsley anthology, paragraph #73) Leibniz writes, "... **there is, strictly speaking, neither absolute birth nor complete death, consisting in the separation of the soul from the body.**" Based on what Leibniz writes in the paragraphs leading up to this claim, especially paragraphs #60-73, explain how he justifies this claim in terms of the various concepts and principles that constitute his philosophical system.

Algorithm:

Using the drawing program available at draw.io, design an algorithm that "generates" the actual existing world according to the ideas presented by Leibniz in his *Monadology*. Think of the steps of the algorithm as being like the stages of constructing some product

in a factory. Your algorithm should include 3 main stages: (1) the constitution of individual monads; (2) the organization of monads into consistent or compatible worlds (possible worlds); (3) the choice by God from among all possible worlds of exactly one world that is determined to exist.

Responding to Kant's "What is Enlightenment?":

Writing response:

In your own words, what is the difference between what Kant calls the "public" and the "private" uses of reason? According to him, how may each of these be restricted and why? Do you agree with Kant's view? Why or why not?

Algorithm:

Using the online diagram drawing platform available at draw.io, construct an algorithm that expresses a decision procedure based on Kant's *What is Enlightenment?* that will determine if a given action constitutes a "public" or "private" use of reason and whether or not it is appropriate for the state to restrict it.

Save your diagram as a pdf file and post it here.

Responding to Schopenhauer's *The World as Will and Idea*:

Writing response:

In *The World as Will and Idea* Schopenhauer claims that someone who understands ultimate truth will deny their own will to live. What argument does he present that leads to that conclusion? Do you agree with his argument and its conclusion? Why or why not?

Algorithm:

Express, as a diagrammatic algorithm, the process of existential individuation (in general) and the development (in particular) of the saintly "denial of the will to live" as these are understood and explained by Schopenhauer in *The World as Will and Idea*.