



WHAT STRONG PHILOSOPHY PAPERS ACHIEVE

Strong papers will display most or all of the following characteristics.

Significance, Struggle, and Originality are particularly important to **Stance**.

STRUCTURE

Precise thesis presented early, thesis developed/subject to scrutiny, comprehensive closing

ORGANIZATION

Sensible connection and order of ideas, strong transitions/signposts, revealing section headings

CLARITY

Strong command of language, transparent word choice, ambiguity avoided, simplicity

CONCISION

Economical word choice, no tangents, directness, each point is made clearly and only once

BALANCE

Paper has both depth and breadth while remaining entirely self-contained and interesting

COHERENCE

The paper argues for one and only one main idea by connecting reasons with conclusions

RIGOR

Relevant textual material and technical language is used and defined at appropriate times

ARGUMENTATION

Dogmatism and autobiography are supplanted by justifications; preaching does not occur

MODESTY

Conclusions are not overstated, pretentious language and arrogant tone are avoided

STRUGGLE

Powerful opposing ideas are charitably elucidated, resolution of sincere controversy is attempted

SIGNIFICANCE

Plausible but contestable ideas are compellingly defended

ORIGINALITY

The author advances ideas beyond a text or class experience; not a “quote-based” paper