

FIRST PAPER TIME AND MEANING

Due Date October 11th

Length Five pages

Guidelines The style of your paper will depend very much on the kind of question that you are answering. Here is one piece of advice that applies regardless: avoid vague generalities! When you reach a point where you feel you must say something very sweeping about time (as you will, given our topic) go ahead and say it—succinctly—but then *back it up*. How you back it up will depend on your topic, but here are some likely methods: giving an example, giving an argument, imagining a (specific) possibility. If you can, try more than one of these methods for each generalization (give, say, an argument *and* an example) or try a given method more than once (give, say, two arguments or two examples).

Reading You do not need to do any extra reading for any of these topics. In a way, I'd prefer that you didn't. Spend the time thinking instead.

Topics Pick one of the following. Or if you have a better idea, run it by me.

1. What (do you think) is the meaning of Thomasina's fate in *Arcadia*?
2. Everything important in history happens twice, first as tragedy, and then as farce. In what ways does *Arcadia* play with this well-known dictum of Karl Marx's, and to what effect?
3. What is "the attraction that Newton left out"? What is its significance in *Arcadia*?
4. Explain how an eternal world is contrasted with our own world of change and decay in either Cicero's "Scipio's Dream" or Augustine's *Confessions*. Find a parallel in *Arcadia*.
5. Explain McTaggart's argument against the "moving now" conception of time. Is the argument a good one? Is the conclusion correct?
6. Suppose that the "moving now" conception of time is mistaken. What are the implications for human lives, if any? For example, should we still hold that it's fruitless to worry about the past, but that we should plan for the future?