

Paper Assignment #2: Foundational Theories

This paper assignment will be due via Canvas by 11:59pm on Wednesday, December 2nd. The paper must be between five and seven pages in length (approximately 1800 to 2500 words), double-spaced, in 12-point font. It is worth 100 points or 25% of your final grade.

Part 1 (65 points; approximately 3-5 pages)

Explain and defend the foundational theory that you find most plausible. (Do not choose foundational pluralism or anti-foundationalism—this paper is much too short to even adequately describe any such theories.) Spell out as many of the details of the theory as you can. For instance, do not merely defend Egoism; rather, choose one of the many possible versions of Egoism to defend. Make sure to answer the following questions:

- a. What makes this theory a “foundational theory”?
- b. What is the basic idea at the root of this theory?
- c. What does it take as its primary evaluative focus, and why?
- d. If it is a teleological theory, what conception of the good does it employ?
- e. Very briefly, what sort of factorial theory do you think this foundational theory would generate? Pick one normative factor and show that your foundational theory explains its significance. You might also pick a *supposed* normative factor that your theory explains the *insignificance* of.
- f. What reason is there to believe that this foundational theory is correct? (This is an **important** part of the paper; spend at least a page explaining this argument.)

Part 2 (35 points; about 2-3 pages)

Explain in detail **one** strong objection to the foundational theory you defended in Part 1 and then respond to it.

Please feel free to ask me for advice as you write your paper. If you would like for me to read and provide brief comments on the final draft of your paper, you must email the draft to me by the end of Wednesday, November 25th.

This is not a research paper, but a test of your ability to articulate and explain concepts and arguments we have been thinking about in class. It is not expected that you look at any outside sources for help. If, however, you would like to read something about these arguments, you may want to take a look at the recommended articles that I have posted on Blackboard.