

### ***How to write an Outline of a Philosophy Text (for Dr. Harold)***

An outline *of* a text is different from an outline *for* a paper. Some of you may be used to following a format that looks *something* like this...

Part I	Part II
A.	A.
B.	1,
1.	2,
2. a,b,c...	B. etc...

...**But** when you are *analyzing* and *summarizing* a philosophy author, your job is not to invent a structure, but rather to accurately portray the structure which is already there. For example, we know that Plato's apology is divided into three "speeches", so an accurate outline *must* reflect that three-part structure. Look for internal clues which also show an author's structure, such as gaps or breaks in the text, or section headings. If there are none of these, the simplest format is to create a system of notation indicating either the *pages* or the *paragraphs* in the text. If text is long, you can list pages, then ¶1-4... (or whatever) finding the chunks of arguments or issues. If text is short, you can just list ¶1, ¶2, ¶3, etc... Once you get this structure correct, then it is a matter of trying to write clear simple sentences of summary capturing the highlights or main ideas. This should be mostly in your own words, though occasional quotations are OK, especially if you believe they are crucial sentences by the author.

Aside from all this, the other two necessary ingredients for an outline in this class are starting with a Synopsis, and ending with a Vocabulary list. The synopsis is a ***single-sentence*** summary of what the entire work is about. This is a crucial skill indicating your ability to see the big picture and articulate the essence of the work. The vocabulary list must include at least 5-10 words which are new to you and important in the text, with their Definitions... Finally, at end just put a couple of clear sentences, either with questions you would ask the author, or 1-2 things you like or dislike about the reading.

So, to sum up the Formula for an Outline --

- Start with a Synopsis at the top of page (also author and title, of course)
- Fill the bulk or body of the outline with the actual breakdown and condensation (also called analysis and summary). This should be significantly shorter than the actual work itself, yet still capture the main ideas and flow of the argument.
- Add Vocabulary List
- End with Interpretive Questions and/or Critical Comments