**Second Paper Topic**

1. **General**

(a) **Length**: Approximately 7-8 pages.

(b) **Due Date**: Friday, December 4, 2009, by e-mail

(c) **Formatting**: 12 pt., normal font, normal margins

(d) **Parts**:

i. **Introduction**: The introduction should contain a clear and concise statement of the thesis that you will be defending in the paper. It should also set out your plan of attack (for example, “I will first explain what key terms X, Y, and Z mean. I will then set out the core argument for my thesis, and respond to three major objections that could be brought against it...”). Yes, it’s okay to use personal pronouns (‘I’, ‘me’, etc.).

ii. **Body**: Here’s where you set out your arguments. The body should be organized and structured in a way that will be easy to follow and readily apparent to the reader. If you have three arguments for a particular claim, don’t mix them all up into one enormous paragraph. Develop each separately in its own space.

iii. **Conclusion**: Reiterate for the reader how you have argued for your thesis (without actually restating the arguments). The conclusion is also a good opportunity to indicate where you think the debate should go from here. The conclusion is not a good place to introduce new controversial claims. Such claims should be argued for in the body of the paper.

2. **Do’s and Don’ts**

(a) **Do** argue for your claims. If you think So-and-So’s argument is unconvincing or naive, don’t just say that it’s unconvincing or naive, give the reader a well-reasoned argument that shows her what’s wrong with it. In your arguments, strive for clarity and logical rigor; don’t take rhetorical cheap-shots.

(b) **Do** define your terms. When you use any technical philosophical term, tell the reader exactly what you mean by it.

(c) **Do** take your time with your arguments. It’s better to have three arguments that are well worked out than ten that are merely suggestive.

(d) **Do** argue against yourself. Imagine how your intellectual opponent would respond to what you have just said. Include a discussion of this imagined response in your paper. (NOTE: be careful to always make it clear in whose voice a given argument is being offered. You can say things like “Someone might object to my argument by saying blah”, or “My response to this objection is blah”.)

(e) **Do** limit use of quotations. You should use quotations only when there is some thesis or short argument to which you want to draw special attention, perhaps to focus on the way it’s phrased or to highlight the particular words that are used. Whenever possible, put things in your own words. This will demonstrate your understanding of the material better than a string of quotations.

(f) **Don’t** worry about additional secondary sources. Spend your time re-reading and thinking about the readings that were assigned in class. I want to see evidence that you have thought long and hard about the issues. I’m less concerned to see evidence that you have looked long and hard for a book by someone else who has thought long and hard about the issues. That being said, if you find a secondary source that you find particularly helpful, by all means use it (and cite it!).

(g) **Don’t** clutter your writing with flowery prose. This isn’t to say that you should make your writing boring and sterile, it just means that you should eliminate anything that’s just filler (for example, any statement...).
that begins “since the dawn of time”.

(h) **Don’t** be timid. If you have some bold or unpopular claim to defend, go for it! Just make sure that you give arguments.

(i) **Don’t** be afraid to disagree with me. If I said something in lecture that you want to take issue with in your paper, go for it! Just make sure that you give arguments.

3. **Topics**

1. Critically evaluate Strawson’s response to Russell in “On Referring.” Also critically evaluate Russell’s response in his “Mr. Strawson on Referring.” Does Russell succeed in responding to Strawson’s criticisms? One approach would be to describe Russell’s theory of descriptions, then Strawson’s criticism, then Russell’s response, and then to argue that one or the other has the better position.

2. Give Ayer’s explanation of the views of Logical Positivism, in particular the distinctions between analytic and synthetic and the criterion of verification. How are Quine’s views an attack on that position? Do Grice and Strawson successfully respond to Quine’s critique?

3. Ryle rejects the idea that the mind is an inner cause of behavior. Ryle maintains that this idea leads to skepticism about other minds. Why does he think this? Is he right? Ryle gives an account of the mind in terms of dispositions towards behavior. Explain this account in detail—make sure to say what Ryle means by "disposition". It is common to think that acts of will are inner causes of behavior. Ryle argues, however, the will cannot be an inner cause of behavior. Explain this argument.

4. Choose your own adventure! You may write on a topic of your own choosing, but only if you clear it with me first—and **AT LEAST a week before the paper is due.**