

Philosophy: Think About It!

“It is within limitation that mastery shows itself” - Professor Reginald Lilly, paraphrasing a philosopher I tried my best yet failed to find the name of

What is philosophy?

- The study of fundamental questions: existence, knowledge, power
- One of the founding disciplines within academia
- Often misinterpreted by newer students - rarely taught in high school or secondary school

What makes writing in philosophy successful?

- Having an advanced understanding of the readings/philosophers
- Writing from your own perspective but keeping the content you have learned in mind
- Focusing on your opinion or argument - “anybody can write a great sentence”

What can the Writing Center do to help?

- Be an educated reader - you don’t need to be an expert in philosophy to be of service
- Make sure to listen closely and encourage the student’s ideas
- Emphasize the importance of drafting - it helps to develop opinions and arguments

Professor Lilly doesn’t speak for every professor in his discipline, but some of his personal practices and beliefs could be of interest:

- Grades are an unfortunate necessity in academia, direct feedback matters much more
- Listening to student feedback when assigning prompts is helpful
- Very few people are good at reading their own work, which is one of the reasons the Writing Center is important
- Philosophical writing is always creative writing