

PHIL 216: Formative Feedback on First Drafts

In course evaluations, most student comments (7 of 10) specifically mentioned the clarity and usefulness of feedback:

- “She was very open to meeting about feedback on essays and ***ensured that I understood where my essays were missing components.***”
- “***Great feedback*** on essays...”
- “...provided us with a lot of help in revising our paper.”
- “She gave me very ***clear comments*** in my essays and was always available for help.”
- “always available to ***talk through paper arguments*** and ***clarify thinking***”
- “Emily was super engaging and supportive the whole semester. She always offered ***valuable feedback*** whether it be regarding content understanding or while writing the papers for the course.”
- “She was very friendly and gave ***good feedback*** on my essays.”

Example 1: Helping students meet assignment requirements and articulate a concise thesis

- “This is a very thoughtful paper. In general, it is organized well. Area for improvement 1: *Make sure that you are addressing all aspects of the prompt.* You can do this in a different order, but make sure you do not miss any. I do not see the strengths and weaknesses of Bentham’s view sufficiently addressed....Area for improvement 2: ...your own view. If I was going to respond to you and quote you, *how would you state your view in two sentences?*”

Example 2: Encouraging charitable interpretation and choosing substantive objections

- “This is a solid essay on a difficult philosopher. You capture the relevant aspects of Kant relatively accurately, and your discussion of the two examples is good. Areas for improvement 1:... Arguing from a generalization about a philosopher is difficult except for experts familiar with the entire body of work - *unless you frame this as a “he does not address X here in this specific passage,” which is a much more modest claim.* Or you might want to *try for a different objection*, if possible.... I am available by Zoom or email if you wish to discuss this further! Good work.”

Example 3: Demonstrating understanding and using course materials in dialogue

- “This is a good start! You address all parts of the prompt and your writing is clear. Area for improvement 1: You have a good general idea about Kant’s view, but your discussion could be strengthened by putting the quotes in your own words and... giving an example... Area for improvement 2: Work on your objections... *You might consider the different views we have discussed and how they might raise an objection....* If you work on these issues, your paper will be much stronger!”