Emotions in Art and Philosophy. Paper writing checklist 0) Make your thesis statement ‘controversial’, arguable, and interesting. 1) Outline: as much as possible, make a detailed outline before you start writing. Then you’ll know what you need to include in earlier paragraphs to back up your later paragraphs. This is also the time to think about what you’re writing. Feel free to email me outlines. I can’t read drafts (no time!), but I’m happy to look at outlines or answer questions in person or over email. 2) Formatting and page length: Standard formatting is 12 point, Times New Roman font, double spaced, single inch margins on all four sides, indented paragraphs (i.e., no empty lines). Using those standards, each page contains roughly 330 words. So, if a professor suggests four pages, that means about 1300 words, and so on. For this class, at least, I don’t mind if you go over (even a lot over). 3) Paper Introduction: don’t introduce important information that you will rely on for your argument. Explain the topic (i.e., what the paper is about, broadly speaking). Conclude the introduction with your thesis statement (i.e., what you will argue about the topic, specifically). (If writing a longer paper, explain how you will argue for that thesis). 4) Paragraphs: each paragraph should have one unique point—not two points, and not a point that is made in another paragraph. 5) Argument: each paragraph should, ideally, relate to the other paragraphs in your paper, and rely on the paragraphs that come before it. The aim is not to provide a wide range of reasons to support your argument, but to argue for your position by showing that it is logically necessary, given common assumptions or empirical evidence. Note: simply providing empirical evidence does not prove anything of interest. 6) Are you writing a compare and contrast paper? If no, go to 7. If yes: a) DO: tell the reader why she should care about the comparison. What does it tell us about something other than the things you’re comparing, or about one of the things you’re comparing? This is part of your thesis statement (see 3). b) DO: explain each of the things you’re comparing separately, and fully, before comparing them. c) DO NOT: flip between the things you’re comparing, either within a single paragraph, or paragraph after paragraph. 7) Are you writing on a single text or idea? If yes: a) Explain the text or idea sympathetically, before you offer your argument. b) Don’t summarize too much: your summary should only include what you need in order to make your argument. 8) Citation: Every time you provide information to the reader, you must tell her that you’re taking the information from somewhere, and where you get the information from—which will include the author’s name, the name of the text, the venue of the text (if a journal, for instance), and the location of the text (page numbers and so on). Ideally, you should “quote your source” (Evans, 2018). You can also paraphrase, and include a citation at the end of the paraphrase (Evans, 2018). Your works cited page must include full information for every text that you have used (see below). Only pedants care which citation system you use. There are a lot of pedants in universities, but they are not admirable people. 9) What to cite: Academic work should rely on peer-reviewed material as much as possible. Academic journals only accept articles that have been reviewed by experts in the field, and judged acceptable; websites will print anything; literally anyone anywhere can put a video on youtube. There is an informal hierarchy of sources (see below). Your papers should, wherever possible, only quote from (a) and (b), except for very general information, which can be found in (d)—but should really also come from (a). a) peer reviewed work (academic journals; books from academic presses; books from non-academic presses; major professional reference works); b) respectable media outlets (major professional newspapers and journals, like The Economist) c) partisan media (i.e., media sources with obvious and strident ideological bias, like Murdoch family newspapers) d) crowd-sourced encylopedias (i.e., Wikipedia) e) other online material. 10) Redraft: Once you have completed your work, redraft it—this does not mean proofread. You need to reconsider your thinking and argument, and try to improve it. Where are the holes in your argument? How might an enemy reader attack you? 11) Proofread: Once everything else, including redrafting, is done, proofread your paper for typos, poorly phrased sentences, and so on. Your computer will literally do much of this for you: use spell check and grammar check software!