

Philosophy 190E: Hegel's Logic

Short Writing Assignment 3

Due Tues., Nov. 1

Instructions

Note: this assignment is for students in Group IV *only*.

As explained on the syllabus, the assignment is due by e-mail to the instructor. You may send it at any time on the due date (i.e., up to midnight, if you want to be precise).

Please respond to the following in two pages or less (double spaced). (Needless to say this should be your own original work.)

One of the traditional laws of logic is the so-called Law of Excluded Middle (also known as the law of *tertium non datur*, “a third is not given”). As stated by Hegel the law is: “Of two opposed predicates, only one belongs to something, and there is no third [alternative]” (Remark to §119, p. 185).

In the second Addition (*Zusatz*) to the same section (p. 187), Hegel goes on to say that a better principle would be the following: “Everything stands in opposition” (or better: “Everything is opposed” [*Alles ist entgegengesetzt*]). Explain why he thinks this is another way of stating the same thing that the Law of Excluded Middle is trying to express. Hint: to be “opposed,” as he explains in the section itself and in the Remark, is to be “essentially distinct.” That is: something is opposed when it is what it is only insofar as it is distinct from something else (as the positive, in general — positive distance, positive charge, etc. — is positive only insofar as it is distinct from the negative).

Why does Hegel think, however, that his way of putting things is better?