

Papers, Please

HU 330 Midterm Assignment Sheet

For your midterm, you will play the game Papers, Please through three times and reflect on the ethical decisions you make as you play the game. Papers, Please is a game in which you are a border inspector for an authoritarian government, inspecting and stamping papers as you determine who to let in to the country on a day by day basis. Immigrant pleas, your boss, and personal financial strain are just a few of the factors that can influence the decisions you make along the way.

Your task for this assignment is to play the game through three times. Before you start a playthrough, you must write out your ethical principles you will adhere to on that playthrough. Students should select three of the broad frames covered in the class (nihilism, deontology, utilitarianism, or virtue ethics) and specify what that looks like for you in this role. For example, for deontology, you might set the principle that you will only follow the directions of your boss and higher ups, strictly following the manual you are given, and disregard all appeals outside of your boss and manual.

The assignment turned in should follow the format below.

1. First game

- a. **Ethical approach:** (nihilist, deontological, utilitarian, virtue ethics) You may choose a sub-category if you wish (ex. Hedonism, Kantian deontology, maximized consequentialism, eudaimonia virtue ethics)
- b. **Rules or guides you will follow:** Lay out the rules, codes, virtues, consequences, etc. that you will consider in your ethical decision making for this playthrough. Be specific: demonstrate a clear understanding of the practicalities of that ethical system and what that means for a job at an immigration checkpoint. Be sure to specify what you mean by some words that can have multiple meanings or be unique to the individual (ex. What do you mean by happiness, good, efficient, etc.) You may need to also list out what you will not consider in your decisions. This section will likely be a robust paragraph or two that clearly articulates the ethical parameters you will adhere to on this playthrough.
- c. Play through the entire game following the ethical guides laid out in part b
- d. **Describe the major events of the game, the ending(s), and how they resulted from the ethical decisions you made over the course of the game.** (1-2 paragraphs)
- e. **Reflect on the play through and the ethical ramifications from your decisions:** In 2-3 substantive paragraphs, reflect on the game you played and the ethical framework used to make decisions. Some considerations might include:

- i. How easy or difficult was it to follow the ethical framework you set out for yourself
 - ii. What ethical principles were difficult to implement, or perhaps easier than you expected
 - iii. what consequences directly resulted from ethical decisions you made
 - iv. what you would change if you were to repeat this ethical framework for a second playthrough
- f. Repeat for a second playthrough with a new ethical framework

2. Second game

- g. Ethical approach:
- h. Rules or guides you will follow:
- i. Play through the entire game following the ethical guides laid out above
- j. Describe the major events of the game, the ending(s), and how they resulted from the ethical decisions you made over the course of the game. (1-2 paragraphs)
- k. Reflect on the play through and the ethical ramifications from your decisions

3. Third game

- l. Ethical approach:
- m. Rules or guides you will follow:
- n. Play through the game following the ethical guides laid out above
- o. Describe the major events of the game, the ending(s), and how they resulted from the ethical decisions you made over the course of the game. (1-2 paragraphs)
- p. Reflect on the play through and the ethical ramifications from your decisions

4. **Final Reflection:** Once you have completed three plays of the game with three different ethical frameworks, answer the following:
- a. How did the ethical frameworks you set out at the beginning of the game get tested or revised as you played?
 - b. Where there any ethics you abandoned during the gameplay? If so, why?
 - c. How did the different ethical frameworks overlap or conflict with one another when you put them to the test by making decisions?
 - d. What ethical decisions did you feel best about?
 - e. What ethical decisions did not sit well with you?