

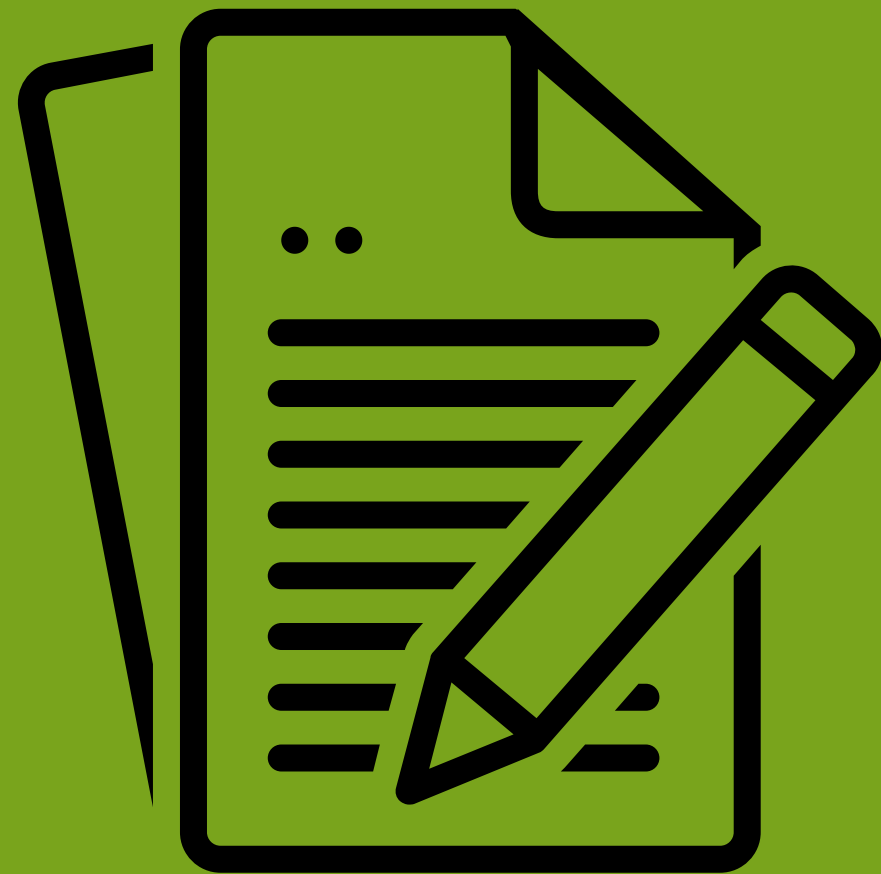


Goethe-Institut Essay Competition

“Sapere Aude – Dare to Know through Reason!”



Agenda



- 1 Introductions (ourselves and the essay competition)
- 2 Eligibility and terms of participation
- 3 Essay topics, preparation, development, and brainstorming
- 4 Jury
- 5 Evaluation criteria
- 6 Competition prizes
- 7 Preparatory workshop series

More resources can be found on goethe.de/usa/kantessay

Goethe-Institut USA Essay Competition



Age of the Enlightenment

(17th and 18th Century in Europe)

European movement that emphasized reason, science, and individual rights, challenging traditional authority and shaping modern democratic thought

Immanuel Kant

(April 22nd, 1724- February 12th, 1804)

German philosopher and central thinker of the Age of the Enlightenment

2024 is Immanuel Kant's 300th birthday

"Sapere Aude"

a quote from Roman poet, Horace, adopted by Immanuel Kant as a motto of the Age of Enlightenment

The Enlightenment



The Enlightenment was a pivotal intellectual movement in the 17th and 18th centuries, emphasizing reason, science, and individual rights. It profoundly influenced modern democratic and philosophical thought, promoting ideals like liberty, equality, and progress.

The movement was complex and not without contradictions. Critics highlight its Eurocentric focus, overlooking non-Western perspectives, and its failure to address the rights of women and marginalized groups fully. The Enlightenment's legacy is thus seen as both transformative and incomplete, sparking ongoing debates about its true impact.

Immanuel Kant



Immanuel Kant was a key Enlightenment philosopher known for emphasizing reason, autonomy, and moral duty. His “Categorical Imperative” shaped modern ethics by advocating for universal moral laws. While highly influential, Kant's philosophy is criticized for its rigidity and abstraction, and his personal views on race and gender reveal contradictions.

“Sapere Aude”



a quote from Roman poet, Horace, adopted by Immanuel Kant as a motto of the Age of Enlightenment

"Sapere aude," meaning "dare to know through reason," is a phrase associated with Kant and the Enlightenment. In his essay "What is Enlightenment?" Kant uses it to encourage individuals to think independently and use their reason without relying on authority. This motto was seen to encapsulate the spirit of the Enlightenment, emphasizing intellectual freedom, autonomy, and the courage to challenge established norms and beliefs. Kant saw this as essential for personal and societal progress, urging people to break free from self-imposed immaturity.

Eligibility and Terms of Participation



High School or
College Student

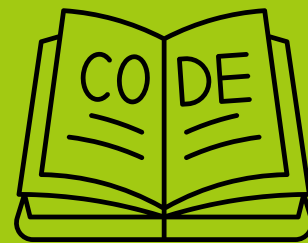


Essay length:
1500-2000
words



Language:
German or
English

Essay Topics



Kant's ethics in modern society:
How can the categorical imperative
guide us in navigating current ethical
challenges?



Epistemology in the era of information:
How are Kant's ideas about knowledge
and perception relevant in times of
information overload and "fake news"?



Aesthetics and art today:
What relevance do Kant's aesthetics
have for today's understanding and
appreciation of art?



Sustainable freedom:
How can we use Kant's concepts of freedom
and autonomy to develop a sustainable
relationship with the environment and shape
our individual freedoms in harmony with the
needs of the planet?

Pedagogical Strategies

Simplify Concepts: Break down complex ideas into simpler, relatable examples. Use analogies and real-life scenarios to illustrate philosophical principles.

Socratic Method: Engage students through questioning that leads them to discover philosophical ideas on their own, encouraging active learning.

Discussion-Based Learning: Facilitate open discussions where students can express and debate their interpretations, which deepens understanding and critical engagement.

Interdisciplinary Connections: Relate philosophical ideas to literature, history, or current events, making the concepts more relevant and tangible.

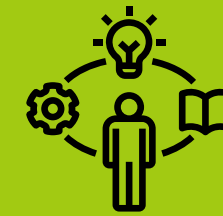
Encourage Reflection: Have students reflect on how philosophical concepts apply to their own lives, fostering personal connections to the material.

Use Primary and Secondary Texts: Introduce students to both Kant's original writings and accessible interpretations to build a deeper understanding.

Student Essay Development



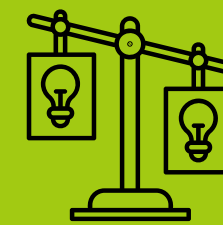
Link Theory to Practice: Encourage students to apply Kantian ethics to contemporary issues



Focus on Personal Relevance: Ask students to reflect on personal decisions or societal norms through the lens of Kant's Categorical Imperative.



Historical Context: Explore how Kantian ideas influenced historical events or movements, prompting students to consider the impact of philosophy on real-world outcomes.



Comparative Analysis: Suggest topics that compare Kant's views with other ethical theories, like utilitarianism, to highlight differences and encourage critical thinking.

Essay Topic Brainstorming

Artificial Intelligence in Art: Consider the ethical implications of AI-generated art and its impact on creativity and originality.

Climate Change: Examine the moral duty to address environmental sustainability and how Kant's principles can guide global responsibility.

Digital Privacy: Discuss the ethical concerns around data collection, surveillance, and consent in the digital age.

Social Justice: Analyze topics like racial equality, gender rights, and economic disparity through the lens of Kantian ethics, emphasizing universal moral laws and human dignity (while also taking into consideration Kant's contradictory views and the ethical limitations of his time).

Biomedical Ethics: Consider ethical dilemmas in medical practices, such as genetic engineering, end-of-life decisions, and patient autonomy.

Animal Rights: Consider the ethical treatment of animals in food production, testing, and entertainment.

Misinformation: Discuss the ethical implications of spreading false information, especially on social media.

Corporate Responsibility: Evaluate ethical practices in business, including fair labor practices and environmental impact.

Immigration Policy: Analyze the moral obligations of nations toward immigrants and refugees.

Jury



Desmond Jagmohan

Assistant Professor of Political
Science, University of California in
Berkeley, California



Katharina Kraus

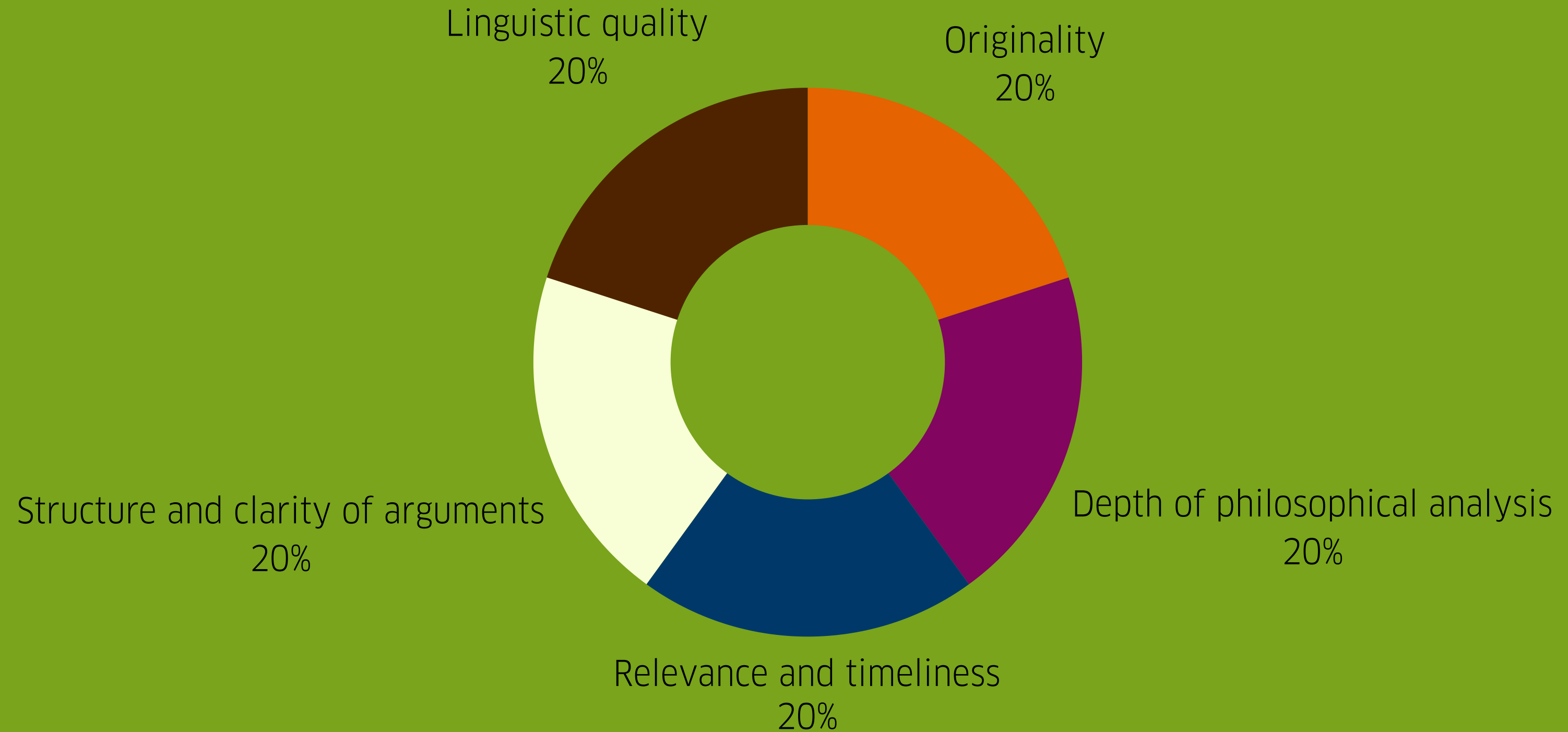
Associate Professor of Philosophy,
Johns Hopkins University in
Baltimore, Maryland



William Layher

German teacher, Ladue School
District in Ladue, Missouri

Evaluation Criteria



Competition Prizes

Top three high school and top three college student essays will be awarded the following prizes:



- Scholarship for a language course at the Goethe-Institut in Germany
- An Immanuel Kant themed prize package



- Scholarship for an online German language course by the Goethe-Institut USA
- An Immanuel Kant themed prize package



- Scholarship for an online German language course by the Goethe-Institut USA
- An Immanuel Kant themed prize package

All essay competition submissions will receive a certificate of participation

Preparatory Workshop Series

1

Kant 101 for Youth: the
Enlightenment Meets
2024

Date: 9/14/24
Time: 2pm ET

Target audience: High
school and college
students

2

Introduction of the
Immanuel Kant U-
Häppchen

Date: 9/23/24
Time: 6pm ET

Target audience:
German teachers

3

Media Literacy for
Youth: How to Know
What to Know

Date: 9/24/24
Time: 12pm ET

Target audience: High
school and college
students and teachers

Questions?



Website: www.goethe.de/usa/kantessay

Contact: teacherservice-usa@goethe.de