Reference Style in Philosophy

Some courses taught in Philosophy require a specific referencing style. Where this is the case, this will be detailed in the course handbook. Otherwise, no specific referencing style is required and any standard and consistent style of referencing is acceptable.

The rest of this document gives you an idea of some typical styles. (If you want to take a deep dive into referencing styles see here: https://citethemrightonline.com).

To see some examples, you could look at a recent paper in Mind (https://academic.oup.com/mind/issue) or Noûs (https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/14680068).

If using a short quotation, you may set it in text with quotation marks and cite it as AUTHOR (YEAR, PAGE):

Thomson (1993, 154) says, “These responses strike me as weird”.

Longer quotations may be indented and cited as (AUTHOR YEAR, PAGE).

Some philosophers therefore conclude that artifacts cannot undergo replacement of any part, and others that there are no artifacts at all. These responses strike me as weird. (Thomson 1993, 153).

It is usually better to use a final bibliography rather than full citing references in text or footnotes.

A fairly typical bibliographical entry for a journal entry would be as follows:


A fairly typical bibliographical entry for a book would be as follows:


A fairly typical bibliographical entry for a work in a volume of essays would be as follows:


For certain historical figures, it is common to cite the traditional pagination. This is normally reprinted at the side of the page. For example:

Most works of Plato will be accompanied by the traditional Stephanus pagination. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stephanus_pagination)

Most works of Descartes will be accompanied by the traditional Adam-Tannery pagination.

Most works of Kant’s Critique of Pure Reason will include in the page number in the original two editions, called A and B.

Some philosophical works are written in short numbered paragraphs which are cited instead of page numbers. See the citations to Wittgenstein’s Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus (TLP) here: https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/wittgenstein/