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Finnish National  
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World  
Philosophy  
Day



UNESCO  
Associated  
Schools

# INVITATION

## UNESCO World Philosophy Day, November 17th 2016 Baltic Sea Philosophy Essay Event

The Finnish UNESCO ASPnet, The Finnish Association for Teachers of Philosophy and Philosophy of Life and Societas Philosophica Fennica with the help of the Norwegian High School Philosophical Association organize a philosophical essay event for upper secondary school students. Even if the name of the event is the Baltic Sea Philosophy Essay Event it is open to all young philosophers.

In Finland the essay event also functions as a selection for the International Philosophy Olympiad in 2017. Norway use it to similar purposes. The schools that wish to participate in the essay event should order the topics of the essay and further information from association Feto in Finland by no later than October 10<sup>th</sup> by e-mail: [bspee.international@gmail.com](mailto:bspee.international@gmail.com) Schools are receiving the topics October 13th (Norway contact Thor Steinar Grødal for country specific arrangements).

Participating schools must

- send no more than 2 best papers
- provide 1-2 teachers for evaluation work during October 27<sup>th</sup>– November 8<sup>th</sup>
- follow the dates and instructions carefully

The papers should be prompt and concise, approximately one or two pages long, and they should be written in English or in German or French (however, not in the student's own mother tongue). The participating schools will arrange a monitored two hour event in which the participating students will write their essays. Students can use general dictionaries, but not philosophical encyclopedias. As a general rule, the schools should select at maximum two of the best papers. The written papers should be sent by e-mail to the address above. The deadline for the papers is October 27th 2016.

Diplomas will be awarded to the most illuminating papers. The names of the awarded participants will be announced on November 17th, and the best essays will be published on the internet. Therefore we are also asking the participants for permission to publish their essays.

BSPEE 2016 Juha Savolainen & Ilmari Hirvonen

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## **Baltic Sea-essay competition**

The interested schools register by requesting the topics via e-mail. The essay topics will be sent to the schools before the essay writing event. The essays are to be concise and to the point, approximately one or two pages long.

The philosophy teachers of the participating school monitor the essay writing in their school and select two best essays to be sent via e-mail for the final assessments.

After being coded, the essays are sent for assessment to the teachers of the participating schools. Of course, no teacher can mark an essay written by her or his students. The identity of the contestants is finally revealed only at the end of the assessment work.

All essays receive two readings by teachers of participating schools during the first reading of the essays. If there are great disparities in marking a particular essay, a third reader reads such an essay. If the point average the essay received is sufficiently high, the essay is given minimum two extra readings in the second reading. This second round of readings filters the potential medal essays for the organizing committee. While confirming the results, it also decides the number of the medal essays and the number of essays to be awarded honorary mention.

After the final assessment and confirmation of its results, the leading essays are sent to the former Chancellor of Helsinki University, professor emeritus Ilkka Niiniluoto, for final decision regarding the medals. Even if assessment and evaluation of philosophical merits of essays is always demanding and problematic, and despite the familiarity of teachers with other marking systems of philosophical essays, the organizing committee gives the following advice for teachers in their assessment of BSPEE essays:

Criteria of evaluation:

1. relevance to the topic (max 2 points)
2. philosophical understanding of the topic (max 2 points)
3. originality (max 2 points)
4. persuasive power of argumentation (max 2 points)
5. and coherence (max 2 points)

Total maximum 10 points

The grade boundary of 7,5 points

The grade boundary to enter the second round is 7,5. When the difference in grading is more than 3 points, the essay is read by a third assessor. If the average is more than 7,5 points after including the assessment of the third reader, the essay goes to the second round.

The use of the citations

In assessing the essays, the assessors do not expect that the student to know the philosophical works of the author on whose citation s/he is writing. Neither should they expect that s/he knows the larger context of the citation.

All that is expected of the student, as far as the citation is concerned, is that s/he can provide a coherent and philosophically meaningful interpretation of the citation. That is, (a) to identify a philosophically meaningful question that is in accordance with the whole citation and (b) to identify an associated claim (or an idea) that is been presented and then discussed.