



“The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy.”

- Martin Luther King Jr., ‘48

Syllabus – Philosophy 202 – Introduction to Philosophy - Honors

This document is available here:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1EeKOVcILPxTnHOWDSJRIrZcw-PhEmL_UX3TNpuLrvT4/edit?usp=s_haring

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Course	<u>Intro to Philosophy (Honors) - 47419 - HPHI 201G - 03H</u>
Semester	Fall, 2020
Location	Fall 14 -week Online: 9:25 am - 10:40 am, Tuesday and Thursday; we are meeting on ZOOM: https://morehouse.zoom.us/j/8498379655

Instructor	Dr. Nathan Nobis: www.NathanNobis.com
Email	Preferred email: Nathan.nobis@morehouse.edu ; also available at nathan.nobis@gmail.com for Google Chat and Google video conferencing, if you’d like.
Phone	404-480-2717 : due to many SPAM phone calls, please text first and include your name and course time and I will call you back.
Hours of Availability - Chat time”	9 AM – 5 PM EST weekdays; 11-5 on the weekends, and by appointment. I typically respond quickly to emails: if you don’t get a response in 24 hours, please resend your email.

Course description

Philosophy involves asking types of questions that are hard in unique ways and trying to answer them with reasonable answers formed on the basis of understanding the options and their strengths and weaknesses. Some philosophical questions include:

- Logic: what is good reasoning? What is a good argument?
- Epistemology: What - if anything - do we know? What is knowledge?
- Philosophy of mind or philosophy of persons: What are we? Our bodies? Our minds? Both? Neither?
- Personal identity: How do we exist over time, despite the many changes that occur to us?
- Do we have free will? What is free will? Or are we determined? Or both?
- Is there a God? Is it reasonable to believe there's a God? Philosophy of religion.
- What is a meaningful life? What gives life meaning? Existentialism.
- Aesthetics: [philosophy of art](#) ; <https://aestheticsforbirds.com/>
- What is a just state or what is justice? When is there justice, and what is injustice?
 - E.g., reparations; punishing drug users.
 - Marxism; capitalism and socialism; voting;
- When are actions ethically or morally wrong? Which actions are wrong? Why?
 - E.g., **bioethics topics**: abortion, euthanasia, animals and ethics; environmental ethics.
 - Racism in dating / Charles Mills article;
 - Philosophy of sex and gender;
- ***And many many more! Please add other topics of interest using the comment feature!***

Learning Outcomes

Upon successfully completing this course, students will be able to:

1. accurately explain historically influential philosophical positions and common arguments for and against them, in light of their *implications*, *explanatory power* and *theoretical virtues and vices*.
2. evaluate arguments on philosophical issues – that is, premises given in support of conclusions—as (1) **logically valid or logically invalid** and (2) **sound or unsound** (i.e., logically valid with true premises, or not);
3. identify and explain reasons given to think an argument is sound, reasons to think it is unsound (often using **counterexamples** to general moral premises), and responses to these reasons;
4. accurately explain (in writing and in oral presentation) the most common arguments given on a number of controversial philosophical issues, from a variety of perspectives, and criticisms of these arguments.
5. better able to develop and evaluate their own philosophical views and arguments on philosophical issues.

Assignment Types, Point Distribution and Grading

Assignment & Guidelines for blogs and discussion posts	
Updated general assignment guidelines: ● Each week: 1 blog post; at least 2 responses to other students' blog posts. ● Each week: at least 2 discussion posts; at least 2 responses to other students' discussion posts. ● There are quantity (word count) and quality requirements on both of these. See below and https://www.nathannobis.com/2020/09/online-course-requirements.html	Points
1 weekly blog post to show comprehension of the week's material; at least 2 substantial replies to other students' posts. 10 points total for this assignment.	120

These should be at least 300 carefully chosen words that are well-organized and edited into a comprehensive presentation written for an audience who does not know the material: your job is to teach them some aspect of the material. There is writing guidance here that you should examine: https://www.nathannobis.com/p/writing-coaching.html You should always try to write and communicate in ways that are easiest for your readers and audience to access and understand: so, do not upload blog or discussion posts as attachments: paste those in so people can read them immediately; and follow the guidance above at the link on clear, direct, and organized writing. <i>These should be completed by Friday at midnight.</i> Assignment template: your work should look nice: it should look “professional”: please use this template to get your work into a good format: https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ix7TeTqLhpem1LvFwVUxW9BL4mhBJZf76EZRdAsrBco/edit?usp=sharing	
Weekly discussion board engagement: at least two substantial posts by you and at least two substantial replies to other students. @10 points for this assignment Your posts should be at at least 150 carefully-chosen words that are well-organized and edited into a comprehensive presentation written for an audience who does not know the material: your job is to teach them some aspect of the material in responding to these prompts. Your prompts should also reflect an understanding of the course material. You should always try to write and communicate in ways that are easiest for your readers and audience to access and understand: so, do not upload blog or discussion posts as attachments: paste those in so people can read them immediately; and follow the guidance above at the link on clear, direct, and organized writing. Your responses should be at least 75 words and show engagement with what the other person said: <i>while responses like “Great post!” “This was an amazing post!” are welcome, they do not count among these 75 words, which need to be substantial engagement.</i> Guidelines on how to form more engaging responses are here: https://www.nathannobis.com/2020/03/discussion-reply-prompts.html <i>These posts should be done over the week: please have your first post by Wednesday, second by Thursday and third by Friday, and then comments done by Sunday.</i> Your posts should look nice, so make sure the formatting is good. If they are not “wrapping” and are superwide on the screen, try this: https://www.nathannobis.com/2020/04/removing-formatting-from-blackboard.html	120
Midterm exam (a study guide will be provided)	40

Final exam (a study guide will be provided)	40
Final project	40
Total:	360

Assignment template: your work should look nice: it should look “professional”: please use this template to get your work into a good format:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ix7TeTqLhpem1LvFwVUxW9BL4mhBJZf76EZRdAsrBco/edit?usp=sharing>

Final grades will be determined by the standard grading scale.

There will be [no extra credit, due to concerns about fairness and ethics](#): please use any time you would have spent on extra credit on doing the regular assignments.

There will be three late slots created in BB for any late work. Once the regular slot closes, you cannot submit the work there (except with a justifying excuse) and you may submit it to the late slot. Please do not submit the same work into two slots: that will result in a zero for the assignment.

Materials and Access

All course materials will be freely available online. Most of it is from *1000-Word Philosophy: An Introductory Anthology* at www.1000WordPhilosophy.com Links to materials will be placed on the course schedule.

General Education

This course contributes to the General Education requirement for courses in *Ethics and Ideas*.

Course Policies and Expectations

Attendance

Class attendance is required of all students at Morehouse College. Each student is allowed as many unexcused absences as credit hours for the course. For example, a student is allowed three unexcused absences for a three-credit hour class. A student is expected to attend all classes and not absent himself without adequate cause. It is the responsibility of the student to make up scheduled work missed because of officially excused class absences. Absences from unannounced tests and other assignments may be made up at the discretion of the instructor.

As we are now in a virtual environment, a student’s attendance will also be determined by his participation. Bearing this in mind, students are required to attend all synchronous sessions. If a student cannot attend a synchronous session, his professor will detail how his participation will be tracked. Once the student receives the maximum number of absences, the professor has the right to have the student administratively withdrawn from the course. The student will be able to monitor his attendance in Blackboard and Starfish.

Academic Integrity

Morehouse is an academic community. All members of the community are expected to abide by ethical standards both in their conduct and in their exercise of responsibilities toward other members in the community. The College expects students to understand and adhere to basic standards of honesty and academic integrity. These standards include but are not limited to the following:

- In projects and assignments prepared independently, students must never represent the ideas or the language of others as their own.

- Students must not destroy or alter either the work of other students or the educational resources and materials of the College.
- Students must not take unfair advantage of fellow students by representing work completed for one course as original work for another or by deliberately disregarding course rules and regulations.
- Unless directed by the faculty member, students should neither give nor receive assistance in examinations.
- In laboratory or research projects involving the collection of data, students must accurately report data observed and not alter data for any reason.

Failure to maintain academic integrity will result in one of the following penalties: failure of the assignment, failure of the course, or possible expulsion. The instructor will determine the seriousness of the offence. The offence will be reported in Starfish and added to the student's academic file.

ADA Academic Accommodations

The College makes reasonable accommodations for all qualified individuals with disabilities. Any student requesting academic accommodations based on his disability is required to register with our Student Counseling & Student Accessibility Services Center (the "Center") by emailing SAS@morehouse.edu every semester. A disability accommodation letter can be obtained from the Center. Though faculty will receive an electronic letter from the Center which describes the kind of accommodations, each student who has been approved for accommodations must set up an appointment with the professor to discuss how the accommodations will be applied in each class. If you have any problems concerning the process or would like to be approved for accommodations, please email SAS@morehouse.edu.

Tutoring

Frederick Douglass Academic Success Center (FDASC) offers peer tutoring which can be accessed through Starfish. Please look for the available tutor for the courses which you are enrolled in the Student Success Network. You may schedule an appointment by clicking on their name.

Brainfuse Tutoring

In addition, the college is providing 24/7 tutoring through **Brainfuse**. You can access the link to this service in the Tools section of your Blackboard course.

Morehouse Writing Center

Finally, the Writing Center has available tutors to assist you with any part of the writing process. Please contact them to **schedule an appointment at the Writing Center morehouse.mywconline.com**.

Writing Tutors are available Monday – Friday 9:00 am- 4:30 pm. Note: get and use the free program / APP Grammarly.com

CLICK HERE for the Course Schedule (in progress!)

Week	Reading / viewing assignments:	Writing / creation assignments
	all readings are from <i>1000-Word Philosophy</i> unless otherwise noted. Note: get and use the free program / APP Grammarly.com	

1	Get an overview of the topics from the prompt on the discussion board: <i>A Rulebook for Students: Success in College and Beyond</i> at https://rulebookforstudents.blogspot.com/	Introduce yourself on the discussion board; answer a philosophical question; respond to other students
2	Introductions to Logic; introduction to epistemology: Philosophical Ethics: Almost Everything You Need to Know - one page and narrated video: https://makingmoralprogress.blogspot.com/p/basic-concepts.html Introduction to Logic - Ian Olasov: https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ZZEXmtSvFJb_stPZ4tUqLcsnurdMyH3_sYAs4Rac/edit?usp=sharing Better Argument with John Corvino: https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLsolewfmE_AY3M9y-I-70kdFG0QqNmm New: Introduction to Arguments by Liz Jackson: https://youtu.be/OtOIW6jqmQY Introduction to Epistemology or Theory of Knowledge: <u>Epistemology, or Theory of Knowledge</u> by Thomas Metcalf https://1000wordphilosophy.com/2020/08/24/epistemology-or-theory-of-knowledge/	Blog post (if you want, these could also be videos .. that you put on Youtube and embed into BB): Option 1: Explain to someone who doesn't know much about these topics some of the most important things they need to know about arguments in the philosophical sense of the term. Explain what an argument is, what a valid argument is (with examples), what a sound argument is (with examples) and tell them anything else you think they need to know about arguments, at least to get started in thinking better about arguments. Option 2: Explain to someone what knowledge is, using at least two examples where someone might question whether something is indeed knowledge. Use the relevant concepts from the short article to try to explain whether that claim or belief really is an item of knowledge or not. Please respond to at least two blog posts. NO DISCUSSION BOARD ASSIGNMENT THIS WEEK. CONTROVERSIAL Discussion posts: assignments TBA
3	Topics: Epistemology: Descartes' Meditations Focus: Descartes' Meditations, source of "I think, therefore I am!" <u>Descartes' Meditations 1-3</u> and <u>Descartes'</u>	Blog post: on BB; also below since it won't fit here. Discussion posts: assignments TBA

	<u>Meditations 4-6</u> by Marc Bobro (audio version is available at bottom of page) <u>Descartes' "I think, therefore I am"</u> by Charles Miceli There are many videos that give an overview of the Meditations, e.g., https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CAjWUrwvxs4 Something on "cancel culture" in philosophy and beyond: <u>Responding to Morally Flawed Historical Philosophers and Philosophies</u> by Victor Fabian Abundez-Guerra and Nathan Nobis (video available too)	
4	Metaphysics: What are we? Persons and personal identity (note: free will moved to next week) Personal identity cases: https://www.nathannobis.com/2020/09/personal-identity.html <u>Possibility and Necessity: An Introduction to Modality</u> by Andre Leo Rusavuk <u>Personal Identity</u> by Chad Vance [there are lots of good videos on this topic!] <u>Origin Essentialism</u> by Chad Vance We often think that we are persons, but what are <i>persons</i>? A selection from <i>Thinking Critically About Abortion</i> that we can use to address the question. The link is to this section: "5.1.3 Fetuses are persons" Added: Hell and Universalism by A.G. Holdier, https://1000wordphilosophy.com/2019/10/18/hell-and-universalism/ (this topic is an application of personal identity issues.	

5	Metaphysics: free will ; introduction to philosophy of religion; free will and divine foreknowledge	
6	What exists? Does God exist? What should we believe about God's existence?	
7	Midterm Exam Week	
8		
9		
10		
11		
12		
13		
14	Final Exams	

Notes from class

We have definitions of valid on our handout of “Almost everything you need to know . . .” What’s missing from that is discussion of arguments that are invalid.

Invalid = the premises do not lead to the conclusion; there is not a chain of reasoning from the premises to the conclusion. So, if the premises can be true but the conclusion is false, then the argument is invalid. (Valid means that “if the premises were true, then the conclusion would be true” -- since the premises lead to the conclusion so if they were true, then the conclusion would be true), so if the premises can be true but the conclusion false, that means the premises are not leading to the conclusion!

Valid or not?

1. If John goes to Morehouse, then he's a college student. T
2. John doesn't go to Morehouse. T
- C. Therefore, John is not a college student. F

This pattern of argument is called DENYING THE ANTECEDENT - it's INVALID.

3. If John goes to Morehouse, then he's a college student. T

4. John is a college student. T

Therefore, John goes to Morehouse. F

This pattern of argument is called AFFIRMING THE CONSEQUENT - it's INVALID.

Do the premises lead the conclusion? Is there a chain of reasoning from the premises to the conclusion? If the premises were true, would the conclusion have to be true? If so, then it's valid.

If not - and so you can have true premises but a false conclusion, then the argument is invalid.

Knowledge **that** .. knowledge **how** .. knowledge **who** ..

Things you / we <i>definitely</i> know	Things you / we <i>definitely</i> don't know
(meaning <i>what I am called</i>) (?) Kicking babies for fun is wrong . (?)	- that TT is impossible or that it's possible. . : how exactly things got started.

The things on the left are knowledge, or are known because .. ? ..

. . . good (empirical) evidence.. And no good contrary evidence ..

- We believe them;
- True claims or true beliefs or propositions.

Knowledge = belief , truth, and justification = JTB.

The things on the right are not knowledge and are not known because...

=====

Descartes "causal" (not casual!) argument for God's existence:

- (1) Any idea must be caused by something with as much reality as the idea itself.
- (2) Descartes has the the idea of God, a perfect, infinite being.
- (3) So, that idea must come from God, a perfect infinite being.
- (4) So, God exists.

Since the "blogs" function for assignments seems overly complicated, let's try this on a discussion board.

The blog post assignment for this week is to write something that explains something interesting about Descartes' Meditations to someone who doesn't know about them. So here's the discussion (and you are "A")

Q: "You've read Descartes' Meditations right?"

A: "Yes, at least a short version of them."

Q: "Cool, then tell me something about a philosophical argument found in them, since that's an important book. I don't want to know about the history of the book or anything: I want to know about the ideas and arguments, or at least one of them!"

A: OK, well, here's this blog post I wrote that does just that for you . . . "

PLEASE SEE THE SYLLABUS FOR THE GUIDELINES ON WHAT THESE SHOULD BE LIKE IN TERMS OF LENGTH, AUDIENCE, HOW TO POST THEM, ETC.

REVIEW THE ANNOUNCEMENTS THAT ADDRESS THESE CONCERNS.

PLEASE RESPOND TO AT LEAST THREE BLOG OR DISCUSSION POSTS FROM YOUR STUDENT PEERS: SEE THE SYLLABUS FOR WHAT'S REQUIRED FOR THOSE, IN TERMS OF LENGTH AND SUBSTANTIAL CONTENT.

And please review these writing guidelines:

Here are 5 general tips on writing, developed by my students:

- **Organization:** What are the parts of your discussion? Make an outline of those parts.
- **Introduction:** What's your topic? Present the "parts" of your discussion: give a "roadmap." Clearly state your thesis or your main point(s). Can you start with a "hook" or something especially interesting to bring the reader or audience into the topic?
- **Clarity:** Be understandable; give examples, don't use needless "big words"; define unclear or special words; explain everything adequately; have clear and labeled sections, and transitions between those sections. Cut out everything you don't need: words you don't need, sentences you don't need, sections you don't need. Have helpful people read your writing or hear your presentation and revise in light of their thoughtful and critical feedback and responses. Revise, revise, revise.

- Make good arguments!!! Give your conclusion(s), give your reasons; explain why the reasons support the conclusion and why your arguments are good arguments (if they are, and they should be!). Raise and respond to objections. Consider and respond to different points of view.
- Conclude: sum up what you did. Is what you discuss suggestive of anything new? Should you have a “call to action” or some suggestions on where to go now, such as what needs to be discussed next, what we need to do given your arguments, etc?

Here is an *imperfect* video on writing philosophy with an emphasis on organization and structure:

Here are some of my posts and an essay on better writing:

- ["Why Writing Better Will Make You a Better Person"](#) June 4, 2019, *Chronicle of Higher Education* by Bob Fischer and Nathan Nobis (in [PDF](#)).
- [Organization and Clarity in Writing: Seeing the Forest Through the Trees](#)
- [Writing Tips](#)
- [Essay Evaluation Sheet](#)
- Tips:
 - "ASSUME YOUR READER IS GOING TO DIE ANY MINUTE AND SO YOU WANT TO SAY THE MOST IMPORTANT STUFF FIRST. This has been today's writing advice." (haha!)
 - One main topic per paragraph.
- Here's something neat to help encourage concise sentences:
http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/quizzes/wordy_quiz.htm?fbclid=IwAR0mS6rYsFxxZKWJ7wKgPbl8l8tOwglv0yMK6oIMT8M_CkBXqjDMiQBRkg

Descartes' Discussion Questions

Here are some discussion questions about *Descartes Meditations* (1-6). Responses should be informed by the readings and discussions but also your own views.

Please respond to at least three questions; please respond at least three times to your peers here and/or on the BLOG discussion board.

Please see the syllabus guidelines on what these discussions should be like.

Questions that correspond to each Meditation:

- 1. What's Descartes' strategy to avoid false beliefs? Do you think it's a good strategy? If so, how and why, or why not? Do you have any better ideas for him? What (else) would you do to try to avoid false beliefs and find true beliefs, justified beliefs and/or knowledge? What strategies do you think would be effective toward that goal?*
- 2. Your essence is this: take away anything you can that - if you lose it, you can still exist - and then you are left with your essence. (E.g., if you lose your hair, you will still exist, right? So your hair is not part of your essence). What does Descartes think he is, in his essence? How does he come to that view? Do you agree with him on what his essence is? What do you think your essence is? Why?*
- 3a. Descartes' thinks he has the idea of God: what is that idea? He also thinks that since he has the idea of God, God must exist. What this argument? Do you think it's a good one? Why or why not?*
- 3b. Descartes argues that (a) there is a God and (b) that since there is a God, whatever he "clearly and distinctly perceives" is true. Can you explain what he seems to be thinking or reasoning here? And, in general, if someone argues that they know something because of something they claim to know about God, does that seem like a good way to show that they indeed know that thing? In general, how does appealing to religious beliefs to justify any claims to knowledge typically work out?*
- 4. Descartes wonders why, if God exists, God would allow him to have false beliefs. What's Descartes' answer? Do you think it's a good answer? If you think there's a God, it's interesting to wonder why - not just why God would allow us to do evil - but why God would allow us to have false and unjustified beliefs. Why do you think God might allow that? Is that a good reason?*
- 5. Descartes argues that since the idea of existence is part of the idea of God, God must exist. Can you explain how this argument might work? Do you think it might be a good argument?*
- 6. Descartes thinks that his mind and his body are separate things, and that he could exist without a body. Why does he think that? Do you agree with him, either with his reasoning or with the claim that you could exist without your, or any, body?*

Little quiz:

Quiz:

- 1. So, what is it to know something? Explain what knowledge is, please!**

1.1 From William Murphy to Everyone: 09:32 AM

To know something is to have a justified, true belief. This means you must affirm a proposition (have a belief) and you must have a good reason for doing so, likely evidence (justification). If the belief is factual, then that means you had knowledge. It is not enough to have two of these things. For example, if you have belief and truth, but no justification, then that is a lucky guess; similar to a coin flip. If you have a justified belief, but it isn't true, then you would not have knowledge. An example of this would be believing the earth is flat in the 1200's. The belief would be justified, because it would make sense in their situation. Without things such as satellites, or long distance travelling via ship, it would seem to make sense that the Earth would be flat. However, despite the belief being justified, it would not have been knowledge, because it was proven to be false. With that in mind, many of the things we now consider "knowledge" could later be demoted to justified beliefs as well.

1.2.

Knowledge is justified belief. It can be based on intuition or based on the assumption of something else. Knowledge can be based on empirical evidence which is something that is observed clearly. Knowledge can be based on feelings or learned experience. For example, black feminist epistemology verse white masculinist epistemology... White men have a different knowledge set than black women in America because living in a white suprimacist, patriarchal society affects(effects?) them differently.

(This was an example of learned experience).

From William Barnes to Everyone: 09:37 AM

Knowledge is defined as a justified true belief. To know something one must first have a belief and then use different ways of knowing to justify that belief. **Ways of knowing are the categories we use to describe the different ways we know things. For example, reason, intuition, emotion, language, memory, imagination, faith, and sense perception are the 8 ways of knowing.**

2. Hey, tell me something interesting about Descartes' Meditations that you think I should know and find interesting.

2.1

In Descartes second meditation he comes up with a phrase, "Cogito, ergo sum". This phrase is in the language of Latin. Latin is now a dead language but Latin is the language that Descartes wrote. 'Cogito, ergo sum' means I think, therefore I am. From the fact that the idea of him thinking is a true statement is a reason why he did not give up. He found that he could not doubt that he existed, as he was the one doing the doubting in the first place.

2.3

2.4

Descartes meditations tell a story as he explains the reflections on his thoughts. The first mediation especially is filled with skeptical beliefs so he utilizes multiple ones following it to get rid of these doubts and engage with the ideas of things like knowledge, God, and existence

Persons or the concept of person definitely applies	Unclear whether persons?	Definitely not a person
	Computers / AI ?	Rock

My neighbor, Me, a celebrity, a computer with beyonce's consciousness - retransferred into it Adam and Eve and the Snake Lebron James Peter Griffin - Family guy guy superman, KD (“Thoughts that regard the past,future, and conditional” -michael)	Epistemological “Problem of other minds” God? <i>A concept of God common around here ...</i> Cthulhu Zombie? Different type of zombies?	Human Individual in a permanent coma Oils a rock, a wall Human Corpsets
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The idea of God:

- Creator of the world
- *Essentially* all knowing (know anything *that can be known*? Are there truths about the future? If not, then maybe God wouldn't know the future?)
- omnipotent being = all powerful = initial answer: **can do anything that is logically possible**;
 - Could God make himself *not* exist? Is that *possible*? “He can do all things . . . *possible* and consistent with his other characteristics”
- omnipresent,
- omnibenevolent being (all good, all loving; never does anything wrong; never allows anything wrong to happen . . . unless some greater good comes from it?).
- who is imperceivable because non-physical: a “spiritual” being
- *Necessarily existing being*: if he exists, God must exist (we are *contingent* beings)
- **Is God in time or out of time?**

Theist; atheist; agnostic

Theist: “God exists; it’s reasonable to believe there’s a God because . . . “

1. For every bad thing that happens to us, we are still able to come out alive and living. Any other possibility would include certain death, and the only way for us to survive such an incident is if there is someone watching over us...which in this case would be God. [see reading on miracles]
 - Critical Question: what about all the innocent people who are murdered?
2. The theory that god exists is reasonable because we as humans use religion to explain the unexplainable. Going back to the big bang theory ,there is no logical explanation for how the big bang came about. Therefore by default, the concept of god is reasonable. [this sounds like a *cosmological argument* .. see readings at least on Leibniz]
3. ... the universe did not spawn from nothing. Something caused the big bang and caused all life to exist. [cosmological arguments: see reading about Leibniz and others]
4. Near death experience [see reading on miracles]

5. **[ontological arguments: see readings]** It is impossible for humans to have created this idea of a totally perfect being when we are incapable of being completely perfect
6. Felt the “presence” of God?
7. There are circumstances in the bible that God has said would happen and they did come true and people have died and came back to life due to other people's prayers. [see reading on miracles]
8. Believing in God and being wrong about his existence is a far better outcome than not believing and God does exist. [see “Pascal’s wager”: but, there’s a difference between a belief being true and it being useful, right?]
9. The world is a very complex place: it couldn’t happen by chance. There had a to be a designer, who is God. **[design arguments: see readings on those]**
10. If God didn’t exist, there would nothing that makes actions wrong and not wrong. God’s existence and commands determine morality; since morality exists, God must exist.

Atheist: “God doesn’t exist; it’s not reasonable to believe there’s a God because . .

1. God doesn’t exist because it is a logical impossibility [how so?]
2. God doesn’t exist because there is no [good] evidence for his existence
 - a. Religious texts are imperfect and subject to human manipulation, and should not serve as evidence of a God
 - b. There is no physical record of god that exists today therefore there it could be logically stated that God does not exist.
3. It is not possible to be omnibenevolent and moral while allowing evil things to happen, therefore God does not exist **[see the argument from evil reading]**
4. Almost all religious texts contain contradictory and morally challenging text.
5. All of the systems we deem immoral; racism, sexism, slavery, homophobia are often supported by current ideas of God [true, although secular people and systems aren’t perfect either!]
6. The idea of God was created to supplement incomplete understandings of nature and a lack of established science [why?]
7. God wouldn’t let events like slavery or the holocaust happen [see the argument from evil reading]
8. The church let bad things happen to them(or is actively doing bad things) [see the argument from evil reading, esp if the thought is that God should have prevented the church, or people in the church from doing this]
9. No human
-

Agnostics: “We should suspend on this issue and neither believe nor disbelieve because ...”

1. There are great arguments for and against belief in God.
2. There are terrible arguments for and against belief in God.
3. Advocating for GOd wouldn't make me a better person than not advocating for him
4. God may be flawed
5. We have no decent concept of the infinite
6. It is impossible to judge the existence of God on anything but a case by case basis. Blanket statements about the existence of a God are too assuming
7. There is no hard evidence proving or disproving the existence of god. Therefore it is impossible to determine which view, god exists vs does not exist is more or less reasonable because both parties lack absolute truth in their views. It is just as logical/reasonable to believe in god as it is to not believe in god.

Arguments for God’s existence:

Cosmological .. “first cause” .. empirical / *a posteriori*

1. Stuff exists, and is caused to exist.
2. If something is caused to exist, then it's caused by something else.
3. **There cannot be an infinite series of causes into the past. [why not?]**
4. So therefore there must a first, uncaused cause. **[that's weird!]**
5. **If there's a first cause, then there's a God.** [objection: that cause could be something else!
Some being that's not God; some uncaused event like the Big Bang]
6. Therefore, God exists.

Teleological or design arguments - empirical / *a posteriori* - (fine tuning argument)

1. Stuff exists and that stuff seems to be really complicated: bodies; organs; solar systems; physical laws of the universe. T
2. This complication of the world can be explained either by (a) chance or randomness *or* (b) by an intelligent designer. (False? Because there's other options)
3. Chance or randomness is too unlikely! [????] **How do you know? Might not be true! Just because something is likely or not doesn't mean it's true. False.**
4. Intelligent designer is more likely. [?] [*does the world look designed .. by an all-perfect being?*] ??
5. If there's an intelligent designer, then God exists. [false? Other options! Aliens; designers; **other possibilities besides one God; designer or designers could lack various perfection**]
6. Therefore, God exists.

Analogy [Paley's watch]

- Machines are complex things that are designed. T
- Our world is *like a machine in that it has parts that are working together for a purpose.* (e.g. the eye has parts that work together for a purpose; ***purpose of the whole is less obvious .. and so less like a machine?***)
- *Anything that has parts that are working together for a purpose is probably designed.* False?
- Therefore our world was designed.
- If our world was designed, then there's a designer.
- So there's a designer. [designer or designers wouldn't have to be God] ???
- So God exists.

Ontological

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Arguments from religious experiences:

- Some people *feel* like they've had experiences of God. T
- If people have had such experiences, then probably God exists. ?
 - This could be explained by other things: perhaps we "create" these experiences to fulfill our wishes (FREUD? MARX?) .. wish fulfillment ..
 - You could have these experiences because you are wanting to see them .. and so your mind creates them.
 - "Experiences" can be caused by the real thing but they can also sometimes be caused by things that are made up. ??
- Probably God exists.

Arguments against God's existence:

A simple, simplistic argument for God's non-existence from the existence of evil / very Bad things; the "logical incompatibility" argument:

1. If God exists, then there would be no evil or bad things. F?
2. But there is some evil and bad things. T
3. So therefore, there's not a God.

A more sophisticated argument for God's non-existence from the existence of evil / very Bad things; the "evidential" argument:

1. If there were an all-knowing, all-powerful and all-good being, then if any evil were allowed to happen by that being, then that evil would have to serve some greater good and that could good couldn't have been achieved without that evil.
2. However, it seems that there are evils in the world that don't serve any greater goods AND if any good comes from them, that good could have been achieved [by God] without that evil. (e.g., wars; crimes; murders;
3. Therefore, there's not a God.

Responses to 1?

Responses to 2?

Theodicies: explanations why God would allow evil: "No there are greater goods that come from evil, and these are goods that we couldn't get any other way":

Free will: if evil were prevented, we couldn't have free will; free will is very good, so that's why God allows evil.

Questions: Is free will more important than preventing evil? Can free will explain all evils? Do we even have free will?

"Soul making": God would allow evil because evil allows us to become better people.

Questions: do all evils do that?

Other theodicies? “God would allow these evils to happen because”

Questions about those answers:

- is whatever appealed to all that good, good enough to justify the evils?
- Could that good be achieved without that evil?

Argument from Non-Belief

For Thursday, please read the argument from evil essay at 1000 word philosophy AND the argument from divine hiddenness.

Midterm week:

- Write something, or a video or an audio:
 - **So, what’s philosophy?** [use your own reflections .. what have we been doing?]
 - **How do you do it?** [reflect on what we’ve been doing . and what the readings and materials do . .. you’d probably want to discuss some of the topics we’ve discussed]
 - **Should you do it?** Why? IS WHAT WE ARE DOING VALUABLE? HOW?

At least a page and a half (450 words or so) or so response to these questions and **not use any outside sources**: just use what we’ve used and your own reflections. You might want to use examples from our class to illustrate your answers.

Write or create this for an audience who does not know anything about these topics. Keep their perspective in mind.

Due Sunday PM.