

Paper assignment # 2

PHIL 13185
Jeff Speaks

Due: Thursday, April 12

Below are three topics for your second full-length paper. You are welcome to come up with your own topic, though you must get my approval by e-mail first. If you do this, the question that I approve should be on the first page of your essay. The papers should be at most 5-7 pages in length, double-spaced and with reasonable margins and font.

A late penalty of 3 points per day, including weekends, will be assessed for any papers which are handed in late. Papers should be handed in either in class or to my office at 205 Malloy Hall.

If you have any questions about what is or is not permitted under the honor code, please contact me, or review the Philosophy Department's guidelines regarding plagiarism, which are linked from the course web site.

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1. Plantinga defends a dualist view of human beings, whereas Peter van Inwagen defends a materialist view. Say which view you think is more plausible, and why. If you think that materialism is more plausible, respond to Plantinga's 'replacement argument.' If you think that dualism is more plausible, respond to what you take to be the most challenging two objections to dualism given by van Inwagen.

2. Parfit defends the view that, in a certain sense, there is no such thing as the continued existence of persons over time. He gives three considerations which he takes to count in favor of this view: split-brain cases, the example of teletransportation, and the possibility of replacement of any percentage of the cells in your body. Explain these three arguments, and say how you think the defender of the reality of personal identity should respond to each. In the end, are Parfit's arguments convincing? Do they tell us anything about the nature of persons?

3. Explain the version of the design argument defended by Robin Collins in 'God, design, and fine-tuning.' Explain the following objection to the argument:

"If the universe is wonderfully designed, surely God is even more wonderfully designed. He must, therefore, have had a designer even more wonderful than He is. If God did not require a designer, then there is no reason why such a relatively less wonderful thing as the universe needed one."

What is the objection, and how should a defender of the fine-tuning argument reply? Does Dawkins offer any good objections to the fine-tuning argument? In the end, is the fine-tuning argument for the existence of God convincing? Why or why not?