

Paper assignment # 1

PHIL 13195
Jeff Speaks

Due: Thursday, October 12

Below are three topics for your first (real) 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.

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1. van Inwagen discusses and criticizes three versions of the cosmological argument. Say which version you think is the most plausible, and explain and reply to van Inwagen's criticisms.
2. Does evidence for fine-tuning provide evidence for the existence of God, and/or the existence of multiple universes? Say why or why not.
3. Explain the argument Hume gives in the following passage:

“How, therefore, shall we satisfy ourselves concerning the cause of that Being whom you suppose the Author of Nature, or, according to your system of anthropomorphism, the Ideal World into which you trace the material? Have we not the same reason to trace that ideal world into another ideal world or new intelligent principle? But if we stop and go no farther, why go so far? Why not stop at the material world? How can we satisfy ourselves without going on ad infinitum?”

Is this an effective criticism of every version of the teleological argument? What is the best response that a defender of (some version of) the teleological argument can give? Is the response convincing?