

## PHIL 20229: Final paper topics

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Due on the last day of class, April 29

Below are some topics for your final 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 topic that I approve should be on the first page of your essay. The paper should be double-spaced with reasonable margins and font. There is no minimum or maximum length, though 8-10 pages would be a good guideline. The topics below will give you an idea of the sort of topic which would be appropriate. You needn't do any research beyond the readings assigned for the course, though in the case of some topics you might be interested in pursuing, I can recommend further readings to you which might be helpful.

A late penalty of 3 points per day, including weekends, will be assessed for any papers which are handed in late. **All papers must be sent to me as e-mail attachments at jspeaks@nd.edu.**

I'm very happy to give you comments on your final papers. However, I'm not happy to write comments if you are not going to look at them. Therefore, if you would like comments, you must include in your email an address to which I can mail the paper with comments over the summer.

If you have any questions about what is or is not permitted under the honor code, please contact me.

1. Explain Zeno's four paradoxes, and explain what you take to be the best response to those paradoxes. Take into account Sainsbury's analysis.
2. Explain McTaggart's argument for the unreality of time. What does the argument aim to show? Is it successful? Why or

why not? Take into account van Inwagen's discussion of the argument (included as an optional reading on the course web site).

3. What is a person? Suppose that a person  $x$  exists at a time  $t$ , and a person  $y$  exists at some time later than  $t$ . What does it take for  $x$  and  $y$  to be the same person? How does your view handle examples of teletransportation, body switching, and partial body replacement?
4. Explain the problem of evil. Does free will help to solve the problem? If so, how? Does it solve the entire problem? If not, what should the believer in God say about the sort of evil which is not explained by free will? Take into account the sorts of responses to the problem discussed in class.
5. In class, we considered several ways of resolving the apparent conflict between human free will and divine foreknowledge of human actions. What is the correct response to this conflict? Why? Include in your discussion some of your reasons for rejecting other solutions to the problem.
6. Taking into account the paradoxes of confirmation and the new riddle of induction, explain what the relationship between an observation and a theory must be for the former to confirm the latter.
7. Explain the sorites paradox, and say what you think the best solution to it is. Consider several of the responses to the paradox discussed by Sainsbury.