First 5-7 page paper

PHIL 13195
Due: in class, Thursday, October 16 (the Friday before fall break)

Below are four topics for your first paper. You are welcome to come up with your own topic, though you must get myapproval by email first. If you do this, the question that your 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.

Plagiarism is a serious and growing problem at Notre Dame and other universities. It is your responsibility to acquaint yourselves with the University's honor code, as well as with the philosophy department's guidelines regarding plagiarism. Both are linked from the course description, which is available on the course web site.

---

1. Is it possible to survive teletransportation of the sort discussed in class? Suppose that you woke up on Mars in the teletransportation machine. Could you know whether or not you were the same person as got into the teletransporter on earth? Defend your answers, and explain how the issue is related to different views of the nature of persons. Which view or views of the nature of persons is supported by reflection on these examples?

2. Explain what you take to be the most convincing argument discussed in this class for the existence of God. Say, in the end, whether you think that it is a good argument, and why. Be sure to consider some objections to the argument, as well as ways in which a proponent of the argument might respond to these objections.

3. John Mackie argues that the existence of evil in the world shows that God does not exist. Explain why he thinks this, and consider a few objections to Mackie's argument. Say how you think that Mackie should respond to these objections, and whether these responses are convincing. In the end, do you think that there is a good argument against the existence of God of the sort that Mackie gives? Why or why not?

4. Must a physicalist believe that there is some percentage of cells which is such that persons can survive replacement of that percentage of their cells, but no more? Why or why not? If there is such a percentage, what should the physicalist say that it is? If there is not such a percentage, what should the physicalist say about the conditions for persons to continue to exist? According to the version of physicalism which you think is best, is it possible in principle to survive brain replacement surgery? Why or why not? Does this sort of example pose problems for the physicalist?