

## Comments on second drafts of minipapers

PHIL 13195

Again, overall, I thought that the papers were very good. Some common problems:

- Be more careful about how you state your objections. For example, if you say that you have shown that an argument is unsound, then you better have shown that a premise is false. Don't argue that there is no reason to believe a premise, and then say that you have argued that the argument is unsound; instead, say that you have shown that there is no reason to believe that the argument is sound. These are importantly different.
- Avoid "scattergun" arguments, in which you quickly throw out several reasons why one might doubt a premise in the hopes that one of them is convincing. Quality is better than quantity. Think about what your single best objection is, and state it clearly.
- Similarly, just focus your objections on a single premise. In a full-length paper, you will often discuss several premises, but for this, one is enough.
- Make sure that the premise to which you object is an independent premise — not one which, you claim, follows from other premises. If the latter is the case, then one or more of the premises from which that premise follows must be false, and you should focus your objections there.
- Don't criticize the argument for being invalid. It was part of your assignment to make the argument valid.
- If you criticize a premise for contradicting the intended conclusion, you had better be sure that that really is a premise of Aquinas' argument and not your mistaken formulation of a premise of the argument.