

Paper #1 (rough draft)

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PHIL 10100

due: before the start of class on Thursday, 2/5

This (partial) rough draft will have four parts, which you should clearly separate:

- (1) Of the arguments we have discussed for the existence of God, say which one you think is the strongest argument – i.e., which one you think is both valid and has the most plausible premises. This should not be more than one sentence.
 - (2) In your own words, state that argument. In many cases, I have given you premise/conclusion versions of arguments. I would like you to state the argument in ordinary prose in a way which makes clear both the premises and the logical structure of the argument (i.e., what is supposed to follow from what). This should take at most one or two paragraphs.
 - (3) Say which premise of the above argument you think is the weakest – i.e., the most likely to be false. This should take one sentence.
 - (4) State what you think is the strongest argument against that premise. This should take at most one or two paragraphs.
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F.A.Q.

1. How do I turn the paper in?

By email attachment to your TA.

2. Should I have an introductory and concluding paragraph?

No. The reason is that they are irrelevant. What I care about is the quality of your thinking about these topics, and your ability to clearly express that thinking in the form of argument. Intro and concluding paragraphs are, in short papers, fillers.

3. Is there a special way of writing philosophy papers?

Yes and no. Yes, in the sense that you should forget some of the ‘rules of writing’ you may have unfortunately acquired in your academic career. (E.g.: Never use first person pronouns; don’t repeat terms; begin with a general ‘funnel’ introduction; make

learned references where possible.) No, in the sense that there are no tricks. I want you to write as simply and clearly as possible about what you think and why you think it.

4. Should I do any research?

No – spend your time thinking, not reading outside sources. But if you disregard this advice and do look at outside sources (whether on the internet or not), any you look at must be listed in a bibliography. If you do not look at outside sources, a bibliography is not required.

5. How will I be graded?

The rough draft is ungraded.

6. OK. How will I be graded on the final versions of papers?

Good question. I'll give you more details about this when I give you the final paper assignment (which will go beyond what you are being asked to do in this rough draft). But the short answer is that your paper will be evaluated on the basis of the clarity of your writing, the clarity and cogency of your argument, and (in the best case) your ability to contribute something substantial to the argument of the paper which goes beyond the readings and class lectures and discussions.