

## Short paper #4

PHIL 10106

*due: April 9*

*have a rough draft ready for discussion on April 2*

This paper will have three parts, which should be clearly numbered and separated:

- (1) Imagine that you think that the considerations which count in favor of God's existence are roughly equal in strength to the considerations which count against God's existence. Should you (i) believe that God exists, (ii) believe that God does not exist, or (iii) withhold belief in either claim? You may either answer this question by simply endorsing one of (i)-(iii), or, if you think that which of these is correct depends on further facts about the situation of the believer in question, explain what these further facts are.
- (2) Justify your choice in part (1) by explaining what rule of belief you think makes this the correct choice. The rule of belief can be one which we discussed in class, or one of your own devising.
- (3) Explain what you take to be the strongest argument, based on a rule of belief, against the view you state in part (1). (Again, this can be a rule we discussed in class, or one of your own devising.) Say why in the end you think that this rule of belief is not one which we should follow.

While you can write more or less as needed, a rough guideline is between 0.5 page and 2.5 pages for each of parts (2) and (3). In some cases part (1) need only be one sentence long; in others it might take 1-2 paragraphs. The paper should be handed in as an email attachment to your TA. There will be five short paper assignments in this class, and every student must complete four of them.

### *Grading rubric*

Papers will be judged according to the following seven criteria:

- (i) in (1), clearly states a view;
- (ii) in (2), explains an argument for the position stated in (1) clearly, making explicit all relevant premises as well as the logical relations between them;
- (iii) in (2), explains why the premises of that argument are plausible;
- (iv) in (3), explains an argument against the position stated in (1) clearly, making explicit all relevant premises as well as the logical relations between them;
- (v) in (3), explains why that argument is not convincing;

- (vi) in accomplishing one or more of the above, makes substantial original points which go beyond material discussed in lecture and discussion sections; and
- (vii) is free of grammatical and spelling errors.

An A paper accomplishes all 7. A typical A- paper would accomplish (i)-(v) and (vii), but not (vi); but in general an A- paper is one which fails to meet one of the above criteria. A B+ paper is typically one which fails to meet two of the above criteria, or egregiously fails to meet one. A B paper is one which fails to meet three of the above criteria, or fails to meet two, one of which it egregiously fails to meet. And so on. Obviously, meeting or failing to meet these criteria is a matter of degree, and we will take that into account.