

Paper #3

PHIL 10106

due: Friday, December 13

Choose one of the following three questions:

- (A) 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? 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.
- (B) Is moral realism, moral nihilism, or moral relativism true?
- (C) What is the best life?

In your paper you should do the following:

- (1) Answer the question.
- (2) Give what you think is the strongest argument in favor of your answer.
- (3) Consider and respond to what you think is the strongest objection to that argument.
- (4) State what you think is the strongest argument against your answer to the question. Say why in the end you do not find that argument convincing.

The paper should be handed in as an email attachment to your TA. You may submit a rough draft to your TA, but that must be handed in 7 days before the paper is due.

Grading rubric

Papers will be judged according to the following eight criteria. Your paper should:

- (i) answer the initial question;
- (ii) explain an argument for that view clearly, making explicit all relevant premises as well as the logical relations between them;
- (iii) make a good case that the premises of that argument are plausible;
- (iv) explain an objection to the argument and makes a good case that it is not persuasive;
- (v) explain an argument against your answer to the initial question clearly, making explicit all relevant premises as well as the logical relations between them;
- (vi) make a good case that this argument is unsound;

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

An A paper accomplishes all 8. A typical A- paper would accomplish (i)-(vi) and (viii), but not (vii); 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; but this should give you an idea of how you will be evaluated.