

PHIL1010 Paper assignment #1

This assignment should take roughly 3–4 pages. I strongly recommend use of plain and simple language—the issues can become subtle and complicated, and highfalutin language can make things even more unclear. Format it as follows: double-spaced, 12-point Times New Roman font, normal 1" page margins, stapled.

3 and 4 are
the most
important
sections—
focus on
them

Organization is very important. Your paper should have five sections.

1. Introduce your paper. Briefly explain what you are going to do in the paper.
2. Give a brief and clear explanation of the particular argument you are concerned with.
3. **Lay out an objection people have made to the argument.**
4. **Try show that this objection fails, and (if you can) that possible defenses of the objection also fail.**
5. Briefly summarize what you've done with your paper.

I'd like you to choose either *the teleological argument*, or *the problem of evil*. Here is a reminder of the relevant readings we've covered:

The teleological argument:

- Aquinas's Fifth Way
- Paley's 'watchmaker' argument; he responds to several objections.
- Hume's discussion in his *Dialogues*. Cleanthes advocates the argument, and Philo criticizes it with several objections. Cleanthes responds to some of them.

The problem of evil:

- Hume's discussion in his *Dialogues*. Philo and Demea think it's a problem. Philo presses it against Cleanthes. Demea thinks it can be solved with the afterlife. Cleanthes tries to solve it by denying that things are that bad, and by retreating to a less 'infinite' form of theism.
- Bruce Russell's article; he defends the 'argument from evil' against skeptical theist objections.
- Richard Swinburne's article; he tries to solve the problem of evil by offering theodicies.

You need not (and indeed should not) write about all of these readings. The paper should focus on a *specific* point. Don't write your paper on *the problem of evil*—that topic is too big. Don't even write your paper on *theodicies*—that topic is still too big. Write on a *specific* objection to a fairly *specific* version of argument—something small and manageable. (For example, a particular theodicy. Or one of the objections Paley responds to. Or one of the 'skeptical theist' points that come up in Russell's article.)

Finally, be sure that you're not simply rehashing the material already covered in class. Try to come up with a point that's new—or at least a point that hasn't *explicitly* been spelled out in the lectures or readings. Of course, nobody is expecting pure amazing innovation. But try to advance the discussion at least a small step beyond the lectures and readings. After all, this isn't just a writing assignment, it's also a philosophy assignment.

Due Friday, 11 Oct.