# Intro to Philosophy

## January 31, 2013

## Decartes’

* **Definitions**
  + **Arguments** – An argument is a set of claims (called “premises”) offered in support of a conclusion.
  + **Valid** – If the premises are true, so is the conclusion
  + **Sound** – Premises are actually true
  + **Indubitable** – Premises and validity are certain beyond doubt
* **Deductively Valid Argument**
  + If all the premises are true, then the conclusion must be true.
* **Test # 1 for Invalidity**
* **Test # 2 for Invalidity**
  + Pick a name/adjective in the argument and substitute in some new name/adjective everywhere it appeared
* **Deductive Arguments Can Be Useful**
  + Once somebody puts forward an argument like this, we have just three choices
    - Say the argument is **not** valid
    - Reject one (or more) of the premises, or
    - Accept the conclusion
  + If we accept that it is valid and has true premises that would guarantee its conclusion is true
* **Limitations on Valid Arguments**
  + A valid argument typically cannot include any concepts in the conclusion that aren’t in the premises
  + Suppose that we want to convince someone that electrons exist
    - Skeptics about electrons probably won’t accept any premises about electrons
    - But without premises about electrons, a valid argument cannot yield conclusions about electrons
    - **This limitation poses a problem for Descartes (he wants indubitable arguments)**
* **Descartes’ Argument for God**
  + I have an idea of a perfect God
  + Each idea must be caused by something at least as perfect as what it’s an idea of.
  + Hence, God exists.
* The Cartesian Circle
  + Circular argument
  + I can trust my fancy argument -> my fancy argument shows me so -> god exists -> I can trust my fancy argument