

### First Paper Assignment

#### General Guidelines

1. The first paper is **due on Tuesday, September 11**. Late papers will be penalized.
2. All papers must be double spaced, **three to five pages** in a reasonable font (12 point Times, for example). This means approximately 750 to 1500 words.
3. Do not right-justify your paper.
4. I expect you to observe basic rules of grammar and spelling. Proofread your paper. Asking a good writer to read and comment on your paper can be helpful. See below for a few specifics.
5. You may use quotes from the readings in our books by merely noting the author and page number. For example: "'Being' is obviously not a real predicate" (Kant 28). You may quote your class notes, though if you wish to quote one of the philosophers we are studying, quote him or her directly. You may use my versions of the arguments we have studied, but you need not do so. Cite class notes: "Blah blah blah" (Marcus, class notes, 8/28/07). **There is no need to use other sources.** If you do use another source, you must include a proper bibliographical reference, including author, title, and publishing information, or current URL. I must be able to trace the source.
6. Violations of academic integrity, like plagiarism, can and will lead to failing grades. The Hamilton College Honor Code will be enforced. I am interested in what you have to say, but I do not expect you to generate 1500 words of original scholarship. Your main task here is to be clear about what others have said, and to present it in your own way. Sometimes, for brief passages, some one else will just say it better than you can. Quote it. Cite any ideas that are not your own. (E.g. "Aquinas argues that..."; "According to Kant,...".) Remember to acknowledge any assistance you have had on your paper, including assistance from the writing center.

#### How to Write Your Paper

1. Pick a topic from the list below.
2. Introduce your paper by briefly stating your thesis, the conclusion you will defend. Be specific.  
Your paper should be an extended argument supporting your thesis. Often, it is easiest to write the introduction after you have finished writing the body of the paper.
3. Argue for your thesis. Each paragraph, each sentence, should directly relate to your specific thesis.
4. Consider possible objections. Do not blindly accept what any philosopher says. Argue your own point of view, but through the writings of the philosophers.
5. Conclude your essay by summarizing what you intended to say in the paper.
6. Make sure to cover each point in the topic you choose.

## Paper Topics\*

1. Anselm and Gaunilo: Does the ontological argument for God's existence succeed? Present Anselm's ontological argument. Consider Gaunilo's response concerning the most perfect island. Is there a flaw in Anselm's reasoning? If so, specify the problem. If not, consider how Anselm could respond to Gaunilo.
2. Anselm, Kant, and Moore: Is existence a predicate? Present Anselm's ontological argument. How does Kant criticize the argument? How does Kant support his claim that existence is not a predicate? How does Moore support the claim that existence is not a predicate? How might Anselm respond?
3. Anselm and Aquinas: Which is more convincing, the ontological argument or the cosmological argument? Present Anselm's ontological argument and at least one of Aquinas's five ways. Contrast the two approaches. Why is Anselm's argument called a priori while Aquinas's arguments are called a posteriori? Which approach is more convincing, and why?
4. Aquinas's five ways. Are there important differences among Aquinas's five ways of demonstrating the existence of God? Present at least three different ways. What flaws in those ways does Martin find? Do some ways avoid flaws present in other ways?
5. Is the argument from design successful? Present the argument from design, as voiced by Cleanthes in Hume's *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*. What supporting evidence does Cleanthes present? Describe Philo's objections to the argument. Defend either Philo or Cleanthes.

\* Any topics other than the ones listed here must be cleared with me *in advance*.