

Second Paper Topics: God or Mind

06:16:03

Argument Schema Due:

Paper Due: 06:19:03

For your first paper you were to schematize, reproduce, and judge a particular argument of one philosopher, Plato. For your second, you will schematize, reproduce, and judge the arguments of two philosophers of your own choosing. You may also choose one of two topics: God or the mind. This second paper should be not less than five pages, double-spaced. It will take at least that much writing to accomplish the assignment, which asks you to engage critically with the ideas of two philosophers.

1. God.

From the readings we have examined in this class, present what you consider to be the best argument for God's existence. From these same readings, present the best argument against God's existence. Evaluate these arguments, and, where possible, pit them against one another. You should develop your own objections and replies to each, but only once you have fully understood the arguments of the two philosophers you have chosen (from among Anselm, Aquinas, Descartes, Pascal, Russell, or Mackie). Likewise, any connections you can make with Plato on this subject will be very interesting to me, and demonstrate your ability to synthesize what you have learned in this course, but they will not be required. You should avoid making such connections until you have mastered the arguments of the two other philosophers you have chosen. Your paper should begin with one of these two sentences: either, "God does exist," or "God does not exist."

2. Mind

From the readings we have examined in this class, present what you consider to be the best argument that the mind is distinct from the body. From these same readings, present the best argument that the mind is not distinct from the body. Evaluate these arguments, and, where possible, pit them against one another. You should develop your own objections and replies to each, but only once you have fully understood the arguments of the philosophers you have chosen (from Descartes, Ryle, Churchland, Searle, Nagel, or Russell). Likewise, any connections you can make with Plato on this subject will be very interesting to me, and demonstrate your ability to synthesize what you have learned in this course, but they will not be required. You should avoid making such connections until you have mastered the arguments of the two other philosophers you have chosen. Your paper should begin with one of these two sentences: either, "The mind is distinct from the body," or "The mind is not distinct from the body."