

Second Paper Topics
Philosophy 1
Spring, 2017

Due: May 30, 2017, in class

Write an essay of roughly 5 pages on either topic (but not both topics). Use the original writings of the philosophers as found in the text as the basis of your work. Be sure to quote the text whenever you attribute a claim to one of the philosophers. Papers not turned in on the day due will be penalized progressively, with the penalties increasing each two working days overdue. Papers should be double-spaced (3 lines per inch) with ample room in the margins for comments.

Topic 1

Thomas Aquinas in the *Summa Theologicæ* gave five arguments for the existence of God.

You are to give an exposition of any one of the five arguments. First, explain in a general way what the conclusion is and how the argument is supposed to proceed. Then show in a step-wise format how the premises support the conclusion. Next, comment on the plausibility of each of the premises contained in the argument. Raise at least one criticism of at least one of the premises, even if you think that the criticism fails and the premise is true. Comment on the plausibility of each criticism you raise. Finally, state your position with respect to the success of the argument, choosing from one of the following options and explaining why you choose the one you do:

- Accept the argument as being both valid and sound,
- Accept that the argument is valid but deny that it is sound,
- Deny that the argument is valid and that the argument is sound.

Reminder: An argument is valid just in case the conclusion must be true if the premises are true. An argument is sound just in case it is valid and the premises are all true.

Topic 2

Explain Anselm's argument for the existence of God in Chapters 2 through 4 of the *Proslogion*. Compare this to the account of the argument given by Aquinas in Obj. 2, of Question II, First Article (p. 450). Then explain Aquinas's Reply Obj. 2 (p. 451), in which he attacks the argument. What might Anselm say in response to this argument? Which philosopher do you think has the stronger position, Anselm or Aquinas, and why do you think so?