

## Group Presentation Assignment

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** Groups are encouraged to meet with me well before the presentations to discuss *any* questions or concerns.

### *Dates for Presentations*

Presentations will begin on Friday, May 1 and continue through Friday, May 8. For more details, see the list of articles at the end of this document.

### *Size of Groups*

There will be 12 groups with each group containing at least 4 members (two groups will potentially have 5 members).

### *Assignment of Groups*

The 12 articles, and brief descriptions of them are listed at the end of this document. You should look at these articles and see which article you would like to do your presentation on. There is a sign-up sheet outside my office door. You need to sign-up for whichever article you have chosen. It would be good to have a back-up article since sign-ups are first come, first serve. If you have not signed up by the end of week 2 (February 6), I will randomly assign you to a group. It is your responsibility to figure out what group you are in.

### *Length of Presentations*

Each presentation will be *strictly* limited to 15 minutes. The group should present their article for 10 minutes, with 5 minutes for questions.

### *Content of Presentations*

In each of the 12 articles, the author is either giving an argument or responding to an argument.

If in your article the author is giving an argument, then your group must:

- (1) Clearly and thoroughly identify the conclusion for which the author is arguing.
- (2) Identify the author's reason for thinking that the conclusion is true.
- (3) Put these reasons and conclusion together into an argument that can plausibly be attributed to the author.
- (4) Give support for the premises of this argument.
- (5) Define any technical terms that are necessary to understand the argument.
- (6) Place the argument in context, explaining why it is important.
- (7) Raise at least one objection for the argument.

If in your article the author is responding to an argument, then your group must:

- (1) Clearly identify and present the argument to which the author is responding.
- (2) Explain what premise of the argument the author objects to.
- (3) Identify the reasons that the author has for objecting to that premise of the argument.
- (4) Give support for these reasons.
- (5) Define any technical terms that are necessary to understand the argument or the response.
- (6) Place the argument and the response in context, explaining why it is important.

(7) Raise at least one objection to the response.

\*While presenting these things, it is the responsibility of each group to demonstrate that what they are presenting is faithful to the article.

#### *Handout for Presentation*

Each group is required to produce a handout for their presentation that can be distributed to the class. The handout should at least contain the argument to be addressed, definitions of technical terms, and any other information helpful for the presentation. Though not required, groups are encouraged to make use of other visual aids (e.g., a poster, a PowerPoint presentation) to facilitate the presentation.

#### *Distribution of Work*

It is expected that groups will work together in preparing and giving the presentation. During the presentation, one person is responsible for introducing the topic, and placing the article in context, a different person is responsible for presenting the argument, and giving support for the premises, and a third person is responsible for presenting the objection. A fourth person is responsible for producing the handout. Though different members are responsible for these different parts of the presentation, groups are expected to work together to *prepare* the presentation (e.g., if Tom is responsible for presenting the argument, it is *not* true that Tom is solely responsible for figuring out what the argument is—the preparation is a group task). If any member of any group is concerned that work is not being distributed evenly, that person should contact me immediately.

#### *Grading of Presentations*

Unless there are unusual circumstances, all members of a group will receive the same grade for their presentation.

#### *Logistics of Presentations*

Groups must submit to me their handout **2 class meetings** before their presentation. For example, if your presentation is on Friday, May 8, you must submit me a copy of your handout by Monday, May 4; if your presentation is on Monday, May 4, you must submit me a copy of your handout by Wednesday, April 29; etc. This gives me a chance to look over the handout for any small corrections. It also gives me enough time to make copies of your handout for the rest of the class. If your group is using PowerPoint, you need to meet with me **before the day of your presentation** to discuss how to best set that up.

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## List of Articles

(\*denotes article not available in our book)

### **1. Beyer, “Physicalism and Omniscience”\* (May 1)**

[There seems to be a problem in making God’s omniscience consistent with his other divine attributes. For example, it seems as though God couldn’t know what it is like to do gymnastics, or to experience lust, since he is essentially good and disembodied. Beyer thinks he has a response to this problem. Focus on explaining the problem and Beyer’s response. To do this, you will need to figure out what *token physicalism* is.]

### **2. Nagasawa, “Response to Beyer”\* (May 1)**

[Nagasawa argues that Beyer’s solution doesn’t work. Focus on explaining Beyer’s response and Nagasawa’s criticism.]

### **3. Hick, “An Irenaean Theodicy” (May 1)**

[Hick gives a different response to the problem of evil than, for instance, the response that we saw Van Inwagen give. Focus on explaining how his response to the problem of evil works, and why it is different than the others we encountered.]

### **4. Swinburne, “Natural Evil and the Possibility of Knowledge” (excerpt: pp. 213-220) (May 4)**

[Swinburne attempts to explain how God could create a world with so-called *natural evil*. Focus on explaining what natural evil is, and why Swinburne thinks that natural evil is required to make this world morally worthwhile..]

### **5. Murray, “Coercion and the Hiddenness of God” (May 4)**

[If it is critically important that humans believe in God, as many religions hold, then it is something of a puzzle for theists why God does not clearly reveal himself making his existence undoubtedly known. Murray considers this puzzle and offers a theistic response, arguing that if God revealed himself too much, this would limit human freedom. Focus on carefully and fully explaining this response.]

### **6. McKim, “The Hiddenness of God”\* (May 4)**

[In this paper, McKim addresses the same puzzle that occupies Murray. However, McKim thinks that this is a problem for the theist. Focus on explaining why he thinks that a free-will style defense of God’s hiddenness is unsatisfactory, and what we should conclude, given that God is hidden.]

### **7. Nowell-Smith, “Morality: Religious and Secular” (May 6)**

[In this paper Nowell-Smith criticizes religious morality. Focus on the main argument that he says he will give in the first paragraph. This argument gets developed primarily in sections 2-4.]

### **8. Gould, “Two Separate Domains”\* (May 6)**

[In this paper, Gould argues that religion and science are not in conflict because they deal with two different subject matters. Focus on carefully understanding Gould’s claim and why, if true, religion and science do not conflict. Be sure to offer a definition of both ‘science’ and ‘religion’. Think about how Gould would respond to Dawkins.]

### **9. Dawkins, “Science Discredits Religion”\* (May 6)**

[Dawkins argues, contrary to Gould, that science and religion are in conflict, and that science discredits religious claims. Focus on explaining his argument for why this is

so. Be sure to offer a definition of both ‘science’ and ‘religion’. Think about how Dawkins would respond to Gould.]

**10. Taylor, “Faith”\* & Scriven, “Faith & Reason”\* (May 8)**

[In this series of short articles, Taylor and Scriven take different views about believing something based on faith. Focus on giving a clear statement of Taylor’s view about what faith *is*, and that Christians should believe based on faith. Then, explain Scriven’s argument against this view.]

**11. Scriven, “The Presumption of Atheism”\* (excerpt: pp. 347-352) (May 8)**

[In this excerpt, Scriven argues that if there is no evidence for theism, then atheism is the default position. In this way he can be seen as arguing that agnosticism – neither believing nor disbelieving in God’s existence – is an untenable position. Focus on clearly explaining why he thinks this is the case. Why, if there is a lack of evidence for theism, ought one be committed to atheism?]

**12. Keeley, “God as the Ultimate Conspiracy Theory”\* (excerpt) (May 8)**

[In this paper, Keeley argues against Scriven that agnosticism – neither believing nor disbelieving in God’s existence – can be a sensible position. He does this by drawing an analogy between God’s interaction with the world and conspiracy theories. Focus on why God’s interaction with the world is like a conspiracy theory, and how this makes agnosticism a defensible position.]