

Phil 383 || Exam 2 Study Guide

The exam will consist of five multiple choice questions (worth 20% of the exam) and five short essay questions, of which you can choose four to answer (worth 80%). There may be an extra credit question. The short essay questions will look like this: (They will likely be slightly changed, and at least one of them does not appear here.)

1. Present a version of the cosmological argument based on the idea of explanation. How is the argument from explanation an improvement over the argument from causation? What is the principle of sufficient reason and why is it important to the argument from explanation?
2. What is Paley's argument for God's existence? In what ways is the human eye similar to a watch, and how do these similarities affect his argument? In what ways are they different, and how does this hurt his argument? What bearing does the theory of evolution have on the argument?
3. What is Betty and Cordell's argument for God's existence? How do they respond to the charge that any given value for a physical constant is as likely as any other value? How do they respond to the charge that evolution explains the origins of life?
4. What is the problem of evil? Why does Mackie think that it proves that God does not exist? How does Mackie respond to the charge that evil is logically necessary for the existence of good? How does he respond to the charge that evil allows for greater goods such as virtue and heroism?
5. Plantinga thinks that the existence of evil can be explained by free will. How does free will aid in the explanation of the existence of moral evil? According to Plantinga, why couldn't God create a world where his creatures only perform good actions?
6. Rowe thinks that we cannot prove that unjustified evils (that is, evils that are not necessary for some greater good, or do not prevent worse evils from occurring) exist. What impact does he think this has on the problem of evil? What is the "Moore Shift" that Rowe talks about? Do you think this is an effective response? Why or why not?