

Philosophy 1140: Philosophy of Religion

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Practice Midterm Exam Questions

1. Explain what is meant by a 'dependent' being, and a 'self-existent' being. Give one or more arguments (e.g. by analogy) to support the claim that a collection of dependent beings is itself a dependent being. On the basis of this, how can one argue for the existence of a self-existent being?
2. Supposing a self-existent has been proved to exist, is there any reason to say that it would be a necessary being? (Explain what a 'logically necessary being' is, and give the best argument you can for the self-existent being existing necessarily. Then evaluate the argument.)
3. Summarise St. Anselm's version of the ontological argument, and discuss one or two objections to it.
4. Paley's design argument involves an analogy between a watch a component of a living organism. Despite this, Paley is not making a traditional argument from analogy. Say why this is, and summarise the argument that Paley is making.
5. Give two or more of David Hume's objections to the argument from design. Are they reasonable? Justify your answer.
6. How does Paley respond to the objection that, since biological organisms contain many 'design flaws', they were not designed, or at least not designed by a being such as God? Is Paley's response satisfying? Evaluate his response, or perhaps suggest how it might be improved.
7. Explain what is meant by the claim that our universe is "fine-tuned" for life, and summarise an argument for design on that basis. Also state one or two objections to this argument.
8. Darwin's *Origin* makes a number of claims, most of which were not considered relevant to the issue of design in the natural world. Darwin's theory of natural selection, on the other hand, did pose a threat to design. Explain why this is so (with reference to Paley's argument).