Study Guide for Exam #1
Phil 1000, Fall 2008

For Exam #1, and all proceeding exams, you will be expected to know all the readings and be able to discuss intelligently the issues, arguments, and criticisms involved on the topics covered. As a suggestion for preparing for this exam, review all the points discussed in class and in the readings. You are expected to have familiarity with the different argument forms and fallacies in the Logic Handout, especially those discussed in the readings or lectures. Below are some of the issues worth highlighting for a more detailed review. You

Authors: Aquinas, Rowe, Paley, Hume, Doestoevsky, Mackie, Clifford, and Clark.
Definitions of Philosophy and its subject areas.
Opinion vs. Argument
Two Criteria for a Good Argument
Components of Argument & Standard Form
Deductive Validity
Inductive Strength
Inductive Generalization
Argument by Analogy
Reductio ad absurdum Arguments
Abductive Argument
Fallacy of False Dilemma
Fallacy of Hasty Generalization
Fallacy of Equivocation

Essay Questions: The following are five possible questions that will be asked on Exam #1. Of these five, three will be selected to be on the exam; and of those three you will have to write on two of your choice. Each question should be answered as completely and thoroughly given the limits of space and time for the exam. Notice that each question is composed of a number of sub-questions you will need to address. I recommend at least one paragraph for each of these sub-questions. Your goal should be to demonstrate to me that you have a competent grasp of what the issue is and the various positions for and against the variety of views discussed in each issue.

A. William Rowe explains that the “principle of sufficient reason” (PSR) is essential to the cosmological argument. Explain what this principle is, and why it is essential to the cosmological argument. Then critically evaluate at least one problem with PSR and explain whether the cosmological argument is a good argument.

B. In his “argument from design” William Paley appeals to the following principle: “There cannot be design without a designer; contrivance without a contriver; order without choice…” Explain how this principle is supposed to support the conclusion that there exists an intelligent designer of the universe, namely God. Then critically evaluate at least one problem with this principle and explain whether Paley’s argument is a good argument.

C. Explain exactly what the “problem of evil” is and how it threatens the existence of God. Then explain how human freewill is suppose to be a solution to this problem. Lastly, evaluate how successful the freewill defense is at answering the problem of evil.

D. According to Clifford, we should not believe something without adequate reason or evidence in support of that belief. The implication is that religious faith in the existence of God is irresponsible or even irrational and thus dangerous. Briefly explain Clifford’s single strongest reason for this view. Then identify at least one criticism of Clifford’s view based on Clark’s arguments. Who do you think has the better argument on this point. Explain.

E. Do any of the arguments discussed thus far show, beyond a reasonable doubt, the existence (or non-existence) of a supreme being or deity? Explain your reasons and then evaluate at least one objection to your argument. In the end, do you think belief in God should rely more on faith or reason? (Explain your view.)