

Phil 23 Study Questions in Preparation for Exam 3
Taliaferro and Miller

1. Give the strongest versions of each of the 4 arguments for the existence of God given in Taliaferro, then the strongest objections you can find or develop to each.
2. What is the problem of evil? What are the best arguments for solving this problem presented in Taliaferro and what are the strongest objections given or that you can develop?
3. What does Miller think of such arguments (and why)? What does he say about our ordinary beliefs in God? Why is *that* God “dead” and in fact, never could have been? How is this connected to the implausibility or rather even complete irrelevance of the arguments you just laid out in questions 1 and 2? What presuppositions do the traditional conceptions and arguments about God and the traditional ordinary beliefs in God share in common that make them beside the point such that even the most brilliant arguments are superfluous and the ordinary beliefs in God are counter-productive escapes and lead AWAY from the sacred and not toward it? (I realize this is a loaded question, but your task here is to show why speculative arguments cannot get off the ground without and are parasitic on an experience of the sacred that does not reduce to merely personal subjective states. With Russon we have a convincing view that there is something inherent to human experience in general that provides a basis for ethics and possibly for Miller’s and Guerriere’s claims about the sacred and salvational power.)
4. Having arrived at this point in the semester, what do you think is at the core of religious experience that survives the reductionist sociological and psychological accounts of traditional religion? In what way do the speculative arguments support and/or undermine this? If nothing, support this with good reasoning (this would entail showing that Eliade, Miller, and Guerriere are completely wrong)
5. What are some of the arguments of the “New Atheists” against religion? In what way are they useful? In what way, if any, do they miss the mark? Some of them aim at all religions, not just religions that are God centered. Do their arguments work equally well for theistic and non-theistic religions?