Phil. 114 Midterm

**Logistics:** The midterm will be taken at our next meeting, Wednesday, Nov. 24, at our regular classroom (well, unless we again find we have to move, I suppose!), at our regular time (11:35-12:25). What you need to bring is a working pen (or a pencil, I guess, if that’s how you roll) and readiness to answer the below questions. I’ll bring bluebooks. You’ll write your answers in the bluebooks, from memory (i.e., without the help of books or notes as you write your answers, though, of course, you allowed to, and encouraged to, use those tools beforehand in preparing for the test).

**Questions:** Thinking over likely questions, it seemed to me the way to go on this test is to ask you to answer two questions, and to give them to you ahead of time (so, now). So, at the midterm, you will answer both of the below questions (and no others). Note that, especially with respect to Hick in question 1, you will be explaining material in ways that go beyond what we have talked about in class. I find it helpful for these tests to do some integrating of material we’ve discussed with material you’ve worked through on your own. In preparing to answer these questions, keep in mind that you will have only 50 minutes to answer both of them, so you will have to get right to the most important points.

**1.** Explain briefly what the Problem of Horrendous Evil” is (as a form of the more general “Problem of Evil”), and then explain the answer to that problem proposed by Marilyn Adams in our reading #6 (“Horrendous Evils and the Goodness of God) and by John Hick in especially sections 4 (pp. 180-184) and 6 (pp. 185-188) of our reading #1 (“Soul-Making and Suffering”).\* Then critically assess these responses. How successful do you think they are in providing relief from the Problem of Horrendous Evil?

\*Though we’re using Adams’s label of “horrendous” evils, I take it this is at least roughly the same category of evils as Hick is addressing (in the title of section 4) as “excessive or dysteleological suffering.”

**2.** Explain the basic idea of the Free Will Defense (to the Problem of Evil), and then what we have called the “Compatibilist Objection” to that defense, and finally the one or two other objections to the Free Will Defense (whether from our reading #3, or from our classroom discussion, or perhaps of your own devising) that you find the most pressing. Then critically assess the success of the Free Will Defense in light of these objections and what you take to be the best possible responses to them.

**Note:** I’ll be keeping an eye out for emails, in case you have any questions. Put something like “Phil. 114 midterm” in the subject line, so I’ll know to get right to your message. Unless you write during my seminar this evening (7-9 pm on Monday), or in the middle of the night, I suppose, I should be able to get back to you fairly quickly. Note, however, that I won’t answer many possible questions, where it will seem that you’re asking me something that you should be thinking through for yourself (like anything in the vicinity of “What’s the answer to question 1?”). I’m mostly looking to clarify any confusions about what I’m asking, rather than getting into the matter of what a good answer is.