

## Paper Topics 1

Write a 6–8 page paper on any ONE of the following topics. Due date: Thursday March 21st, in class.

1. ‘A purpose, an intention, a design strikes everywhere the most careless, the most stupid thinker; and no man can be so hardened in absurd systems as at all times to reject it.’  
Discuss this assessment of the argument from design, offered by Philo in part 12 of the *Dialogues concerning Natural Religion* (p. 77). In your discussion, you may (i) consider the question whether one would really have to be ‘hardened in absurd systems’ in order to reject the argument from design, with reference to some of the arguments presented in parts 2–8 of the *Dialogues*, and/or (ii) consider the question what Hume and/or Philo may have thought about this issue, with special reference to part 12 of the *Dialogues*.
2. Explain and comment critically on the theory of abstract ideas which Hume defends in *Treatise* I.i.vii, and on at least one of Hume’s arguments for that theory.
3. ‘Hume’s own positive teaching, that space and time consist of physical points is, I think we must agree, one of the least satisfactory parts of his philosophy.’ (Norman Kemp Smith, *The Philosophy of David Hume*, p. 287). Discuss.
4. ‘When the mind, therefore, passes from the idea or impression of one object to the idea or belief of another, it is not determin’d by reason. . . .’ (*Treatise* I.iii.vi, p. 92)  
What does Hume mean by this claim, and how does he argue for it? Is the argument successful?
5. If you want to write about some other aspect of Hume’s views, you may do so. However, if you want to take this option, you must first send me an email with a brief description of your plan, by Friday March 15th at the latest.