Metaphysics
Problem Set 1
September 10th, 2002.
Due date: September 15th.

Please type and staple your answers.
NB: Use your own words: no quotation, no paraphrase.

1. In the handout distributed in class on September 8th, I presented the following reconstruction of Clarke's argument for the existence of a necessary being:

  Let S be the series of all contingent beings.

  P1. The fact that S exists has an explanation.
  P2. An explanation of the fact that S exists cannot itself be a fact about contingent beings.
  P3. But an explanation of the fact that S exists must be a fact about some being or other.
  C. Therefore, there is at least one necessary being.

For each of the three premises of this argument, briefly explain one reason why someone might believe the premise, and one reason why someone might doubt it.

2. 'Whatever is understood, exists in the understanding' (Anselm, *Proslogium*, p. 54) Explain as clearly as you can what this premise means and what role it plays in St. Anselm's argument for the existence of God. Is the premise true? Briefly defend your answer.

3. In Part 9 of the *Dialogues concerning Natural Religion*, Hume argues that there can be no *a priori* proof of the existence of a God, or for that matter of anything else:

  Nothing is demonstrable unless the contrary implies a contradiction. Nothing that is distinctly conceivable implies a contradiction. Whatever we conceive as existent, we can also conceive as non-existent. There is no being, therefore, whose non-existence implies a contradiction. Consequently there is no being whose existence is demonstrable.

Is this a good argument? Defend your answer.