Daniel Immerman
Introduction to Philosophy

Listening Questions for November 14

These questions cover excerpts from an interview by Stephen Law on the Problem of Evil. The answers do not have to be turned in. You only have to listen to the first 11 minutes to answer the questions.

*Background*:

In this interview, Law is discussing one of the most famous and influential types of arguments against the existence of God. Law thinks there is a version of this type of argument that is pretty successful. Next class, we'll be looking at a different philosopher who thinks the argument is less successful.

*Questions:*

1. What are the two different problems of evil? Reconstruct them as two different arguments for the conclusion that God does not exist.

2. How does Law understand "evil"? Do you think this way of understanding "evil" makes the two arguments stronger or weaker?

3. Law thinks one of the two problems is relatively easy to solve. Which one? How does he try to solve it? Does his solution make sense?

4. Law distinguishes reasonableness and proof. What is the difference between these supposed to be? How is this important for the question about whether or not God exists?

5. Law thinks that belief in God is not reasonable. What are the two reasons he thinks this? Are his reasons good reasons, or are they problematic?

6. What is meant by a "theodicy"? What is the free will explanation of suffering? What does Law think is wrong with this explanation? Is he right?