

Reading Questions for November 13

These questions cover two readings. One is by Peter C. Brown, Henry L. Roediger III, and Mark A. McDaniel, and is an excerpt from a book called *Make It Stick*. The other is an encyclopedia article by Kenneth Einar Himma and is called “Anselm: Ontological Argument for God’s Existence.” The answers do not have to be turned in.

*Background:*

At times in this half of the semester we’re going to look at some tips about how to improve some skill we’re practicing in this class. For today, the tips will be about remembering information you’ve learned. After we discuss these, we’ll switch back to the question for this week and discuss why there is something rather than nothing. Today we’ll be looking at some religious responses to this question. In particular, a popular religious answer to the question: why is there something rather than nothing is: God created the world. But this just yields a further question: why does God exist, as opposed to not existing. A popular answer to that is: it’s deducible from something about the nature of God that God has to exist. Arguments along these lines are known as ontological arguments. We’ll look at one of these arguments and see if it’s any good.

*Questions:*

1. I’ve given you a book chapter that talks about how to retain information. Here are some questions to think about when reading it: What tips that you read do you think are most important? Which ones were most surprising? Are there any that you disagree with?
2. One ontological argument, which comes from a historical philosopher named Anselm, can be found in the encyclopedia article immediately after the line “The argument in this difficult passage can accurately be summarized in standard form:” Is this argument sound? Why?