

PHIL 3923H: Honors Colloquium on Free Will  
Prof. Funkhouser  
9/19/06  
Paper Assignment #1

## Paper Assignment #1 (150 points)

You are to write an approximately 4 to 6 page paper on the following topic. Your paper can be a bit shorter or longer, but I will not read past the 8th page (seriously). Do not bother with any background material — simply launch into addressing the assigned topic. No research is necessary, though you are certainly welcome to do some if you desire. The goal is for you to come up with reasoned responses to a particular argument on your own. Make sure your paper is typed, double-spaced, written in proper English, stapled, with the pages numbered.

**Paper Due Date:** Tuesday, October 3rd, 2006

**Topic:** Van Inwagen's different versions of the Consequence Argument all state, in effect, that free will requires that agents possess a certain ability (e.g., to render a proposition false, have access to a possible world, or have a choice about whether something happens) and that determinism rules out such an ability. This observation suggests two strategies for objecting to van Inwagen's arguments for incompatibilism. First, one could deny that free will requires such abilities. Second, one could deny that determinism deprives agents of such abilities.

Your assignment is to focus on one of van Inwagen's three versions of the Consequence Argument, as formulated in Chapter 3. Object to that argument by pursuing at least one of the two strategies provided in the previous paragraph. That is, provide reasons for thinking that free will does not require the ability mentioned in the argument of your choice, and/or provide reasons for thinking that determinism does not deprive agents of this ability. Your objections need not reflect your personal views. (After all, you might think that van Inwagen's three arguments are all perfectly good!)