THE ZENO CONTEST 2021

All Roanoke College students are invited to compete in the 27th annual Zeno Contest, a critical thinking competition sponsored by the Religion and Philosophy Department.

A modest cash prize and a magnificent trophy will be awarded to the student with the best solution to the following paradox:

**THE IDLENESS ARGUMENT**

**Suppose you find yourself in this predicament: the semester is wearing on, and it’s going to be a struggle to finish everything you need to do. Suddenly a brilliant argument occurs to you:**

**Any statement is either true or false, so either it’s true that you do well in your courses or it’s false. If it’s true that you will do well, then there’s no need to work hard, since if a statement is true then there’s nothing you can do that will alter its truth. But if it’s false that you will do well then once again there’s no reason to work hard, since no effort on your part can change the falsity of the statement. Either way there’s nothing you can do to change whether you do well or not. So why put any work into your courses?**

**Is this good reasoning, and why or why not?**

**Successful entries should explain as clearly as possible the reasoning that generates the paradox itself and the reasoning behind its resolution.**

Entries should be brief: anywhere from 1-3 pages, typed and double-spaced. A panel of distinguished Philosophy faculty will judge all entries on the clarity and rigor of their analysis.

Entries should be submitted to Dr. Hans Zorn, Religion and Philosophy Department (zorn@roanoke.edu).

**The deadline for submissions is Friday, November 19.** **Good luck!**

