

December 2, 2024 - First Monday Epicurean Philosophy Zoom Discussion - Agenda

Post by “Kalosyni” of November 26, 2024 at 3:14 PM



December 2, 2024

8pm ET

First Monday Epicurean Philosophy Hour



This month's topic:
"The Universe is Infinite in
Size and Eternal in Time,
and has no Gods over it."

<https://www.epicureanfriends.com/thread/4139-december-2-2024-first-monday-epicurean-philosophy-zoom-discussion-agenda/>

Meet-and-greet and discussion open to all forum members

Coming up next Monday evening is our First Monday!

Agenda: Welcome and introductions, discuss current popular forum threads, discussion on topic, and time for questions.

The topic of discussion is the second major doctrine of Epicurean philosophy and here is a description as it is presented on our front page:

Once Epicurus determined that the universe results from atoms moving naturally through void, he reasoned that the universe could not exist if the atoms were infinite in number but space were limited in size. If that were so, everything would be close-packed and nothing could move. Likewise, the universe could not exist if the atoms were limited in number but space were unlimited in size, If that were so, the atoms would never combine into bodies, any more that debris floating on a vast ocean could ever come together to form solid objects. Epicurus therefore deduced that universe is infinite in size - both the number of atoms and the extent of space are infinite.

From this Epicurus concluded that there can be nothing "outside" the universe as a whole, and so everything that exists is a part of the universe if it exists at all. This conclusion eliminates the possibility of supernatural forces existing "over" or "outside" the universe, and it focuses our attention on the tremendous implications of infinity. Given the infinity of atoms and space, all combinations of atoms which are possible can be expected to come into existence an infinite number of times and places. This does not mean that "anything" is possible, because some combinations of atoms are physically impossible. We know, for example, that there are no "Centaur's," or "Supernatural Gods," because it is Nature itself which sets the limits between what is possible and what is impossible.

As Epicurus wrote to Herodotus: "These brief sayings, if all these points are borne in mind, afford a sufficient outline for our understanding of the nature of existing things. Furthermore, there are infinite worlds both like and unlike this world of ours. For the atoms being infinite in number, as was proved already, are borne on far out into space. For those atoms, which are of such nature that a world could be created out of them or made by them, have not been used up either on one world or on a limited number of worlds, nor again on all the worlds which are alike, or on those which are different from these. So that there nowhere exists an obstacle to the infinite number of the worlds." (Bailey, at 45).

Read about more about the topic in our forums [here](#).

If you are interested but have not previously attended a First Monday, let us know so we can get the link to you. All others will receive link reminder as usual.

Also, any previous attendees who have been absent from the forum for some time or have not attended within the last 6 months, please send private message to be added back into the link

conversation.

Post by “Cassius” of November 27, 2024 at 4:33 PM

I have prepared an outline for the discussion of the universe being infinite and eternal and without gods over it.

Feel free to make suggestions for additions, etc:

[The Universe Is Infinite And Eternal And Has No Gods Over It](#)

Post by “Pacatus” of November 27, 2024 at 6:40 PM

I had a chess acquaintance some years back (I recall he was a mathematician) who argued that the universe is *finite but unbounded*: unbounded because there isn't anything else (including space) – hence the notion of a boundary is incoherent; finite because its expanding means that, at any moment, it is of a certain “size” (dimensionality?).

I might not be putting that well – and I have no competence re physics/cosmology. It might just reflect an overly pedantic parsing. I just thought it was interesting.

I don't recall anything about eternality, but definitely there was no notion of *genesis ex nihilo* (which I also think is incoherent).

Post by “Don” of November 27, 2024 at 6:50 PM

[Quote from Pacatus](#)

genesis ex nihilo (which I also think is incoherent).

And not even biblical

Post by “TauPhi” of November 27, 2024 at 6:52 PM

Thanks, [Cassius](#) . Great outline that can lead to an interesting discussion. I'm looking forward to it.

One thing that probably needs correction so it doesn't misrepresent the current science:

"3.1. Some argue that current science indicates that the entire universe is expanding from a center, and that this indicates a beginning point in both time and space."

I'm assuming you're talking about the big bang theory here. According to the theory, there wasn't a beginning point and the universe doesn't expand from the centre. The big bang gave rise to both the matter AND space as we know it and over time the space expanded to astronomical size as we get to experience it now. So the big bang happened everywhere at the same time. At the big bang moment 'here' and 'everywhere' were the same thing. 'The beginning point' was the whole universe. It's just got rather big over time and it expands everywhere, not from the central point.

I might be wrong, I'm not a physicist so maybe [Martin](#) can double check this.

Post by “Cassius” of November 27, 2024 at 7:47 PM

Thanks Tau Phi - Corrected to make it more generic. This one is going to be a long work in progress.

Post by “Martin” of November 27, 2024 at 8:29 PM

TauPhi's comment on the big bang theory is correct.