

# THE ZENO CONTEST

## 2014

All Roanoke College students are invited to compete in the 18th annual Zeno Contest, a critical thinking competition sponsored by the Religion and Philosophy Department.

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

### NEWCOMB'S PARADOX

Imagine a person (the Predictor) who has a well-deserved reputation for being able to predict the future with a high degree of accuracy. The Predictor offers you a choice involving two boxes, A and B: specifically, he will let you choose **either** Boxes A and B together, **or** Box B by itself. Box A is transparent and contains \$1000. Box B is opaque, but while you can't see whether it has any money in it, in fact the amount of money in Box B will vary in the following way:

If the Predictor decides that you will choose both boxes, he will leave the opaque box (Box B) empty, and you will end up with \$1000.

If the Predictor decides that you will choose the opaque box (Box B) by itself, he will put \$1,000,000 in it, which you will keep.

The Predictor is not lying, and will not change his mind once he makes his prediction.

**Which box or boxes would you choose, and why?**

Papers should be 1-3 pages, typed and double-spaced, written in standard English with a minimum of errors in spelling or grammar. The usual rules regarding academic integrity apply.

**Successful papers should explain as clearly as possible the reasoning that generates the paradox itself and its resolution. Submit entries to Hans Zorn, Religion and Philosophy Department, at [zorn@roanoke.edu](mailto:zorn@roanoke.edu).**

**The Deadline for submissions is Friday, February 28. Good luck!**