

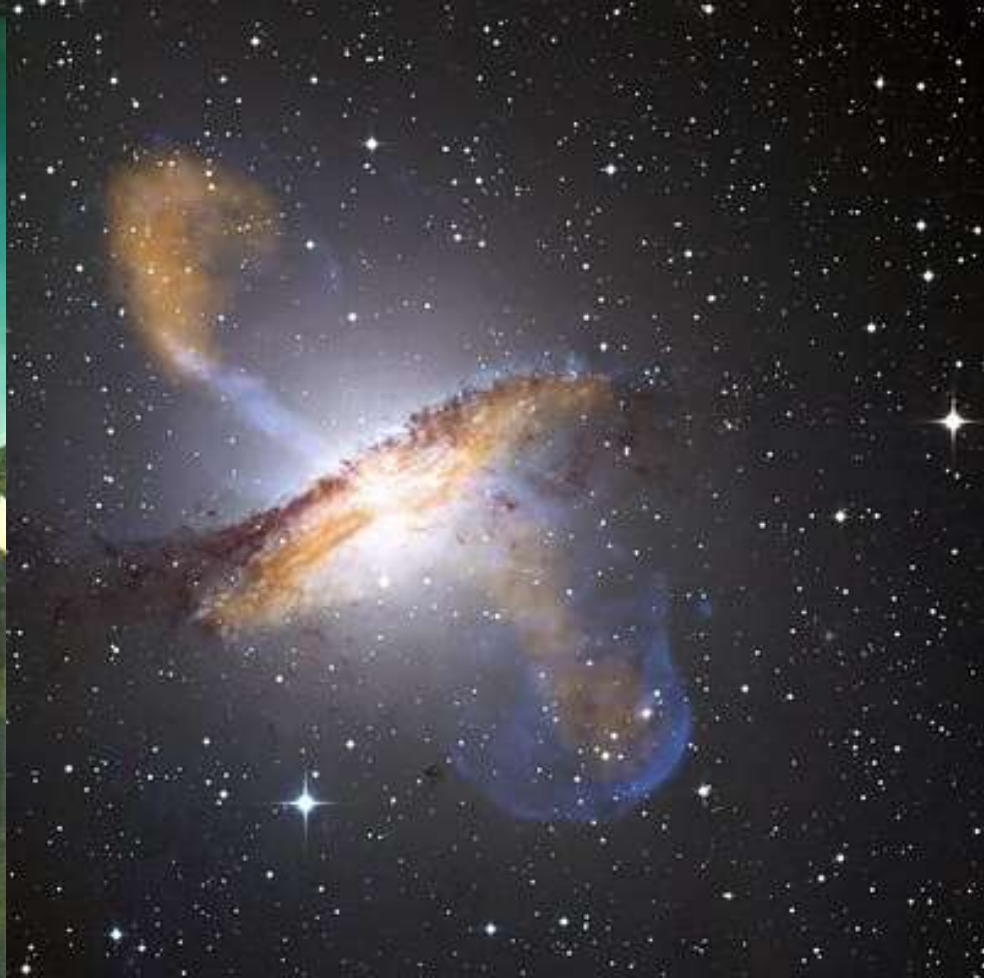
PHILOSOPHY FOR BEGINNERS

THE MEANINGS OF LIFE



Reason vs Faith: Course Introduction
Week 1. 25th April 2018







...and that was the Archers omnibus....

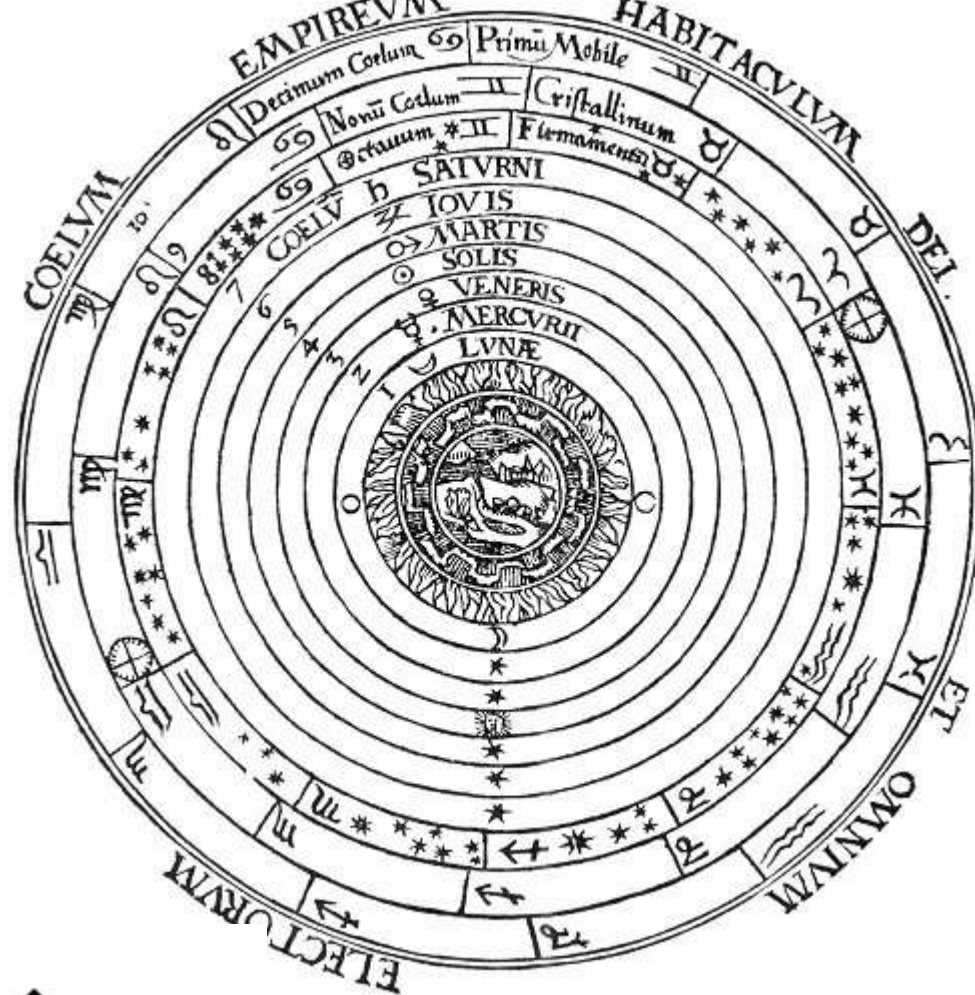
What's going on down there? ...Whoops

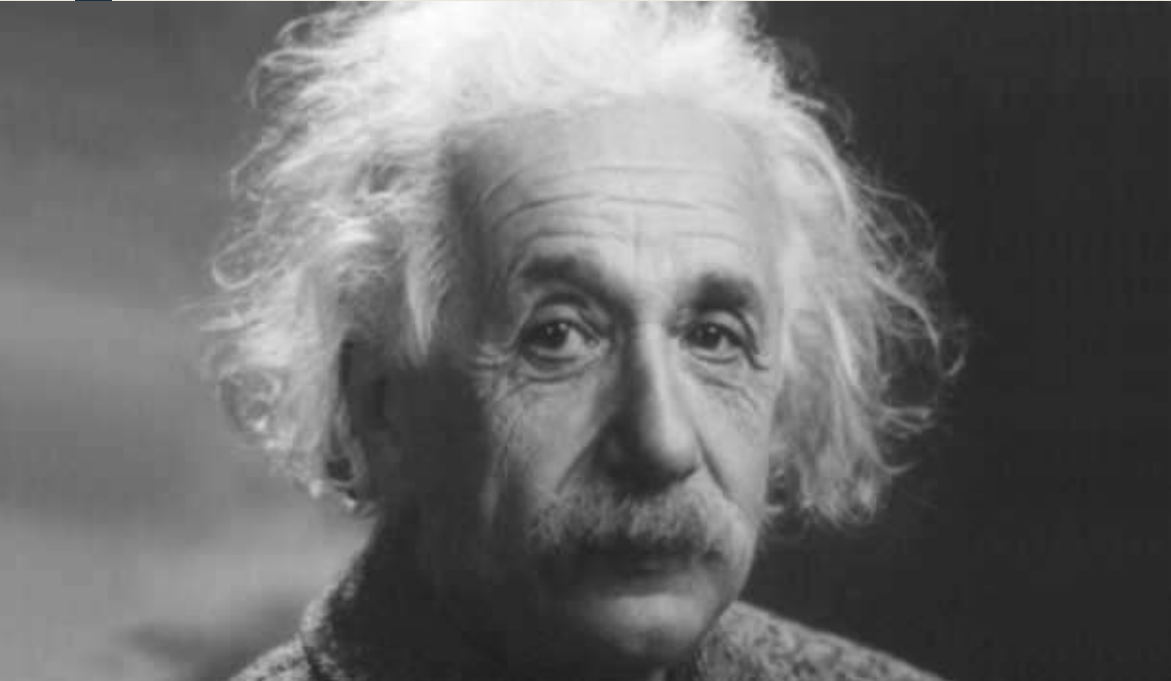
Disease

World

Moral Evil

Natural Evil





1																18	
1 H 1.008	2																2 He 4.0026
3 Li 6.94	4 Be 9.0122											5 B 10.81	6 C 12.011	7 N 14.007	8 O 15.999	9 F 18.998	10 Ne 20.180
11 Na 22.990	12 Mg 24.305	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13 Al 26.982	14 Si 28.085	15 P 30.974	16 S 32.06	17 Cl 35.45	18 Ar 39.948
19 K 39.098	20 Ca 40.078	21 Sc 44.956	22 Ti 47.867	23 V 50.942	24 Cr 51.996	25 Mn 54.938	26 Fe 55.845	27 Co 58.933	28 Ni 58.693	29 Cu 63.546	30 Zn 65.38	31 Ga 69.723	32 Ge 72.630	33 As 74.922	34 Se 78.97	35 Br 79.904	36 Kr 83.798
37 Rb 85.468	38 Sr 87.62	39 Y 88.906	40 Zr 91.224	41 Nb 92.906	42 Mo 95.95	43 Tc (98)	44 Ru 101.07	45 Rh 102.91	46 Pd 106.42	47 Ag 107.87	48 Cd 112.41	49 In 114.82	50 Sn 118.71	51 Sb 121.76	52 Te 127.60	53 I 126.90	54 Xe 131.29
55 Cs 132.91	56 Ba 137.33	57-71 *	72 Hf 178.49	73 Ta 180.95	74 W 183.84	75 Re 186.21	76 Os 190.23	77 Ir 192.22	78 Pt 195.08	79 Au 196.97	80 Hg 200.59	81 Tl 204.38	82 Pb 207.2	83 Bi 208.98	84 Po (209)	85 At (210)	86 Rn (222)
87 Fr (223)	88 Ra (226)	89-103 #	104 Rf (265)	105 Db (268)	106 Sg (271)	107 Bh (270)	108 Hs (277)	109 Mt (276)	110 Ds (281)	111 Rg (280)	112 Cn (285)	113 Nh (286)	114 Fl (289)	115 Mc (289)	116 Lv (293)	117 Ts (294)	118 Og (294)

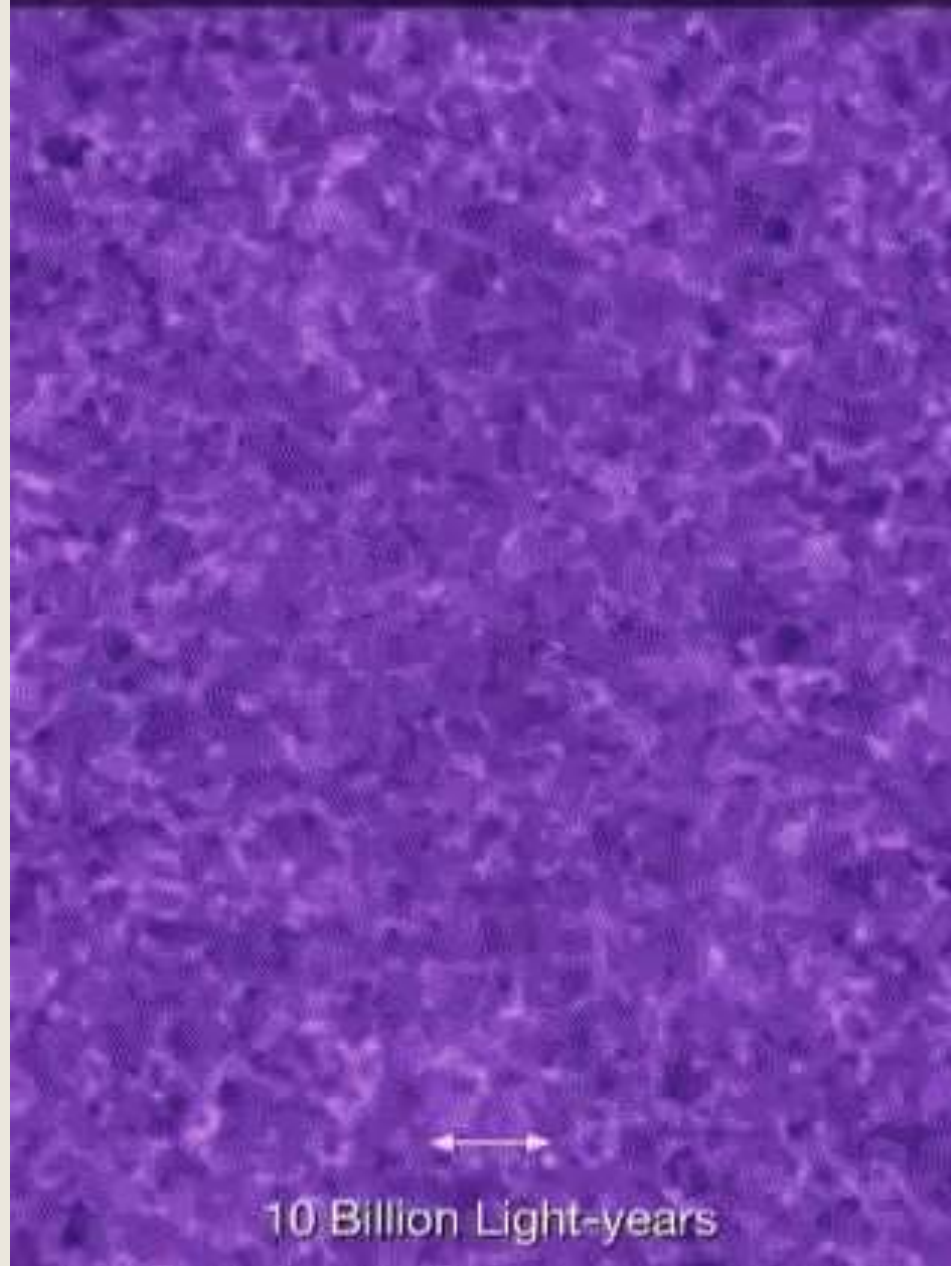
* Lanthanide series

57 La 138.91	58 Ce 140.12	59 Pr 140.91	60 Nd 144.24	61 Pm (145)	62 Sm 150.36	63 Eu 151.96	64 Gd 157.25	65 Tb 158.93	66 Dy 162.50	67 Ho 164.93	68 Er 167.26	69 Tm 168.93	70 Yb 173.05	71 Lu 174.97
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Actinide series

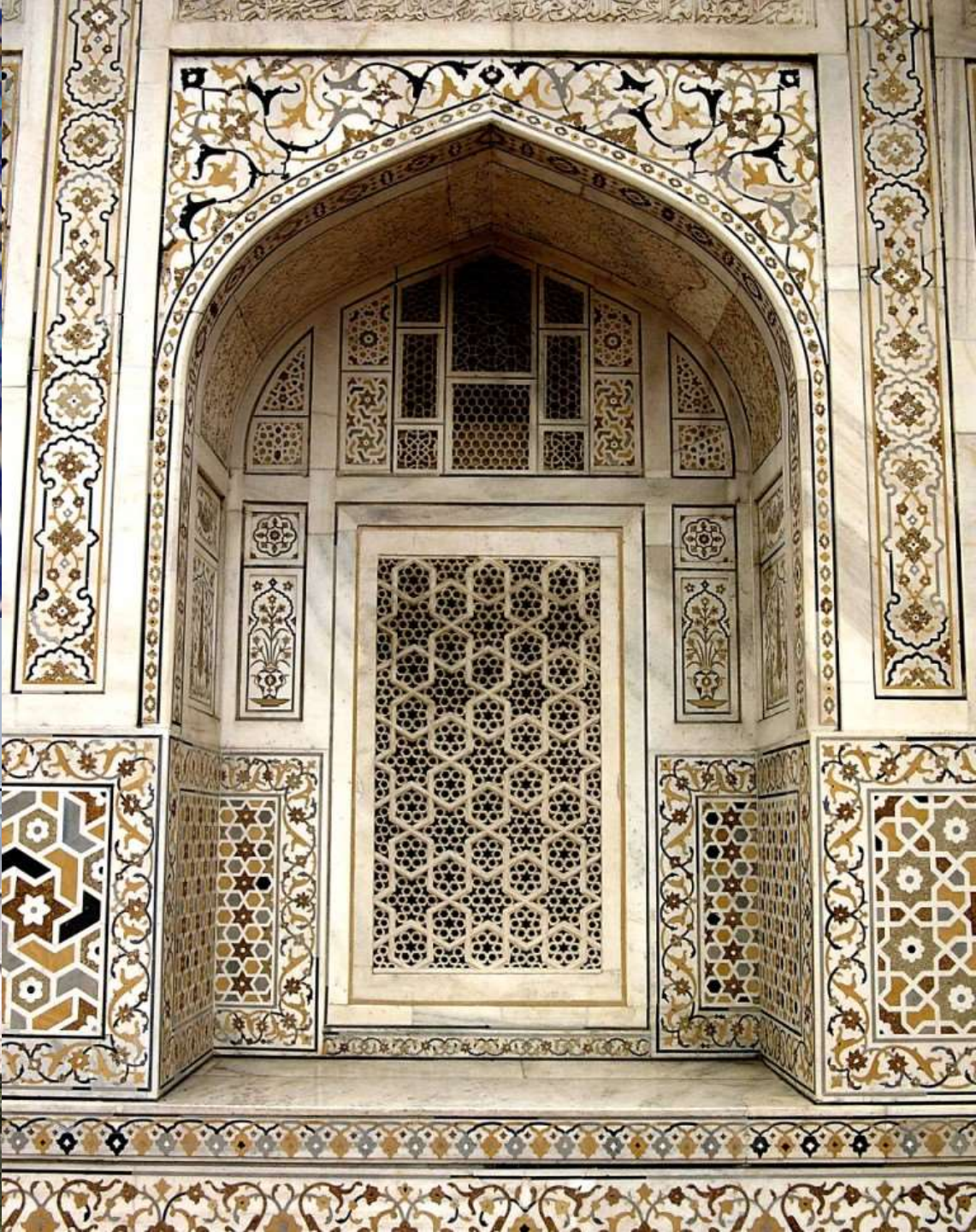
89 Ac (227)	90 Th 232.04	91 Pa 231.04	92 U 238.03	93 Np (237)	94 Pu (244)	95 Am (243)	96 Cm (247)	97 Bk (247)	98 Cf (251)	99 Es (252)	100 Fm (257)	101 Md (258)	102 No (259)	103 Lr (262)
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Uniform Universe









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Getting started...

- What is the difference between Reason and Faith?
- Are there times when it is OK to accept things on Faith?
- Can the two exist side by side?

Reason

'ri:z(ə)n/

noun

1. A cause, explanation, or justification for an action or event.
"she asked him to return, but didn't give a reason"

2. The power of the mind to think, understand, and form judgements logically.
"there is a close connection between reason and emotion"

Verb

1. Think, understand, and form judgements logically.
"humans do not reason entirely from facts"

Faith

feɪθ/

noun

1. Complete trust or confidence in someone or something.
"this restores one's faith in politicians"

2. Strong belief in the doctrines of a religion, based on spiritual conviction rather than proof.
"bereaved people who have shown supreme faith"

Reason

'ri:z(ə)n/

‘To argue with a person who has renounced the use of reason is like administering medicine to the dead.’

– Thomas Paine

Faith

feɪθ/

‘Reason is the greatest enemy that faith has: it never comes to the aid of spiritual things, but – more frequently than not – struggles against the divine Word, treating with contempt all that emanates from God.’

– Martin Luther

‘the starry skies above and
the moral law within’

‘I had to deny knowledge in
order to make room for faith’

- Immanuel Kant





‘If God did not exist, it would be necessary to invent him’
– Voltaire



‘God is for man the commonplace book where he registers his highest feelings and thoughts, the genealogical album into which he enters the names of the things most dear and sacred to him.’
- Ludwig Feuerbach

Course themes

- What is the relationship between reason and faith?
- Is there a God (or gods)?
- How should one live and act, if one does not believe in a supernatural being?
- Can we make meaning for ourselves in a meaningless world?

1. Reason vs Faith:
course introduction
2. Is there *more*?
Arguments about God
3. Spinoza and Ibn Sina
on God & emanation
4. Montaigne, Pascal
and Al-Ghazali on
Obedience
5. Kierkegaard and
Faith
6. Nietzsche and the
Death of God



7. Kafka, Dostoevsky
and Nihilism

8. Camus (and
Seneca) on the Absurd

9. Sartre on Freedom
and Choice

10. De Beauvoir's
Existentialist Ethics

11. Arendt on the Active
& Contemplative Life

12. Living a Meaningful
Life: Round-up



Over to you

- Do you have a religious belief of some form?
- Would you describe yourself as a *theist* (a religious believer), *agnostic* (someone who is really unsure about religious belief) or *atheist* (someone who is very clear that there are no good grounds for religious belief and therefore rejects this)?
- How strongly would you say you hold your view?

(1) Rationalist Theism

- There are good, rational grounds for religious belief so there is no conflict between faith and reason
- In fact rational people *should* be theists
- Possible arguments and evidence for the existence of a Deity?

Arguments for God

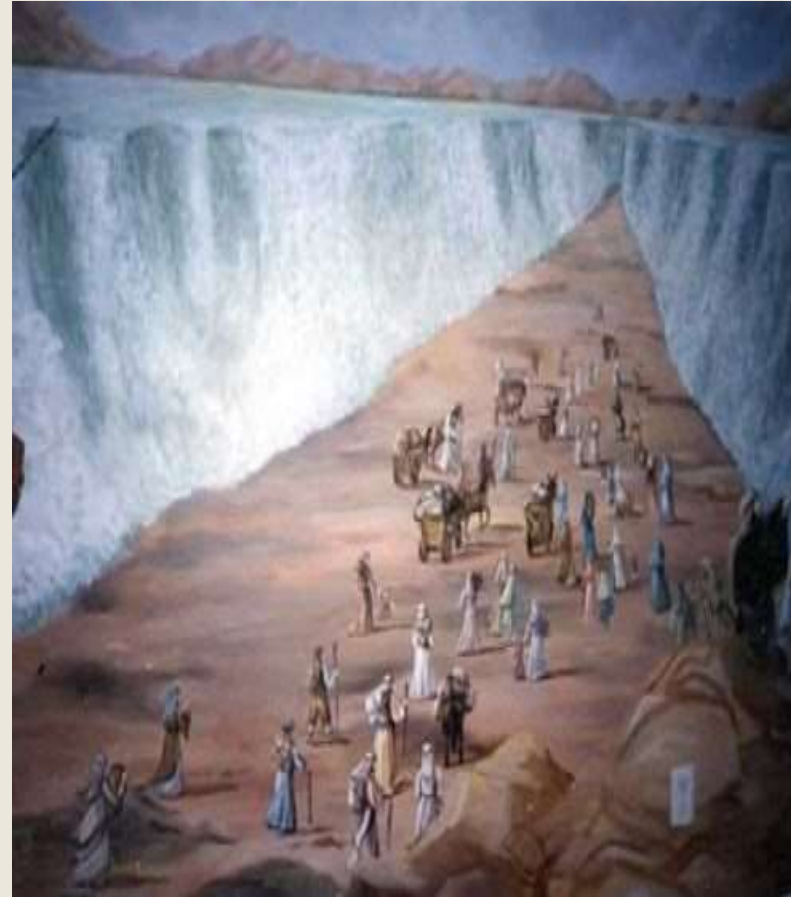
- *Cosmological* arguments – what created/started the universe in the first place? (e.g. Thomas Aquinas arguments about causes)
- *Teleological* arguments – the universe exhibits order, implying a designer (e.g. William Paley)
- Both of the above are *a posteriori* arguments – that is, they appeal to some empirical evidence available in experience to justify their claims

Arguments for God

- *Ontological* argument – when we properly reflect in the concepts involved in thinking about a Deity, we can see that one must exist by rational necessity (E.g. Anselm, Descartes)
- This is an *a priori* argument – it does not appeal to experience but to concepts alone
- *Moral* arguments – that there is an underlying universal morality we can observe in ourselves, and this indicates the existence of the immortal soul, free will and God

Other evidence...

- Religious experience
- Miracles
- Testimony
- Historical/textual evidence
- Others?



(2) Modified rationalist theism

- Religious belief cannot be rationally *demonstrated or proven*, but that does not mean religious faith is irrational, because:
- Religious belief can be justified on other, non-demonstrative grounds (e.g. Desirability, social utility – for example, Pascal's wager)
- In fact, asking for demonstration or proof sets the bar too high for most of our beliefs and so is not a realistic or reasonable standard to use
- On a modified conception of Reason, religious belief is still rational

Existential Theism

- It is a mistake to ask for a rational justification for religious beliefs, since these are really questions about the meaning of existence – not an abstract, intellectual enquiry into some factual state of affairs
- We typically do not make fundamental choices of this sort with regard to the standards of ‘reason’ (e.g. Kierkegaard and Dostoevsky)
- Faith is something distinctively different from reason – a commitment, not a weak form of belief

‘in spite of or in defiance of the whole of existence he wills to be himself with it, to take it along, almost defying his torment. For to hope in the possibility of help, not to speak of help by virtue of the absurd, that for God all things are possible – no, that he will not do. And as for seeking help from any other – no, that he will not do for all the world; rather than seek help he would prefer to be himself – with all the tortures of hell, if so it must be.’
– Kierkegaard, *The Sickness Unto Death*



Atheist Existentialism

- There are no grounds for religious belief but we need to appreciate the enormous significance of this – we need to find some other grounds to make our existence meaningful
- Nietzsche
- Camus
- Sartre and De Beauvoir

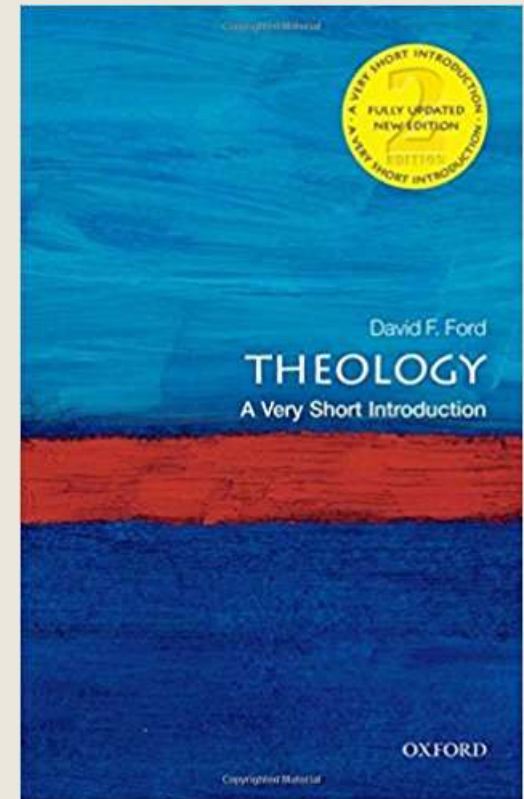
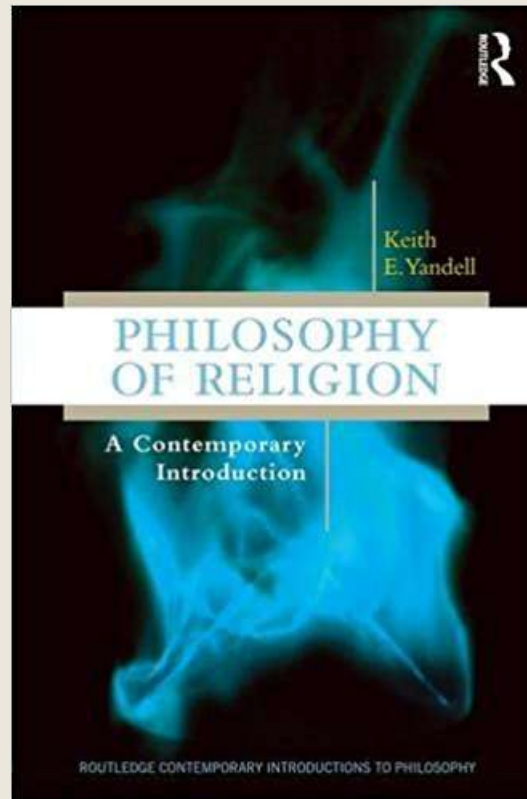
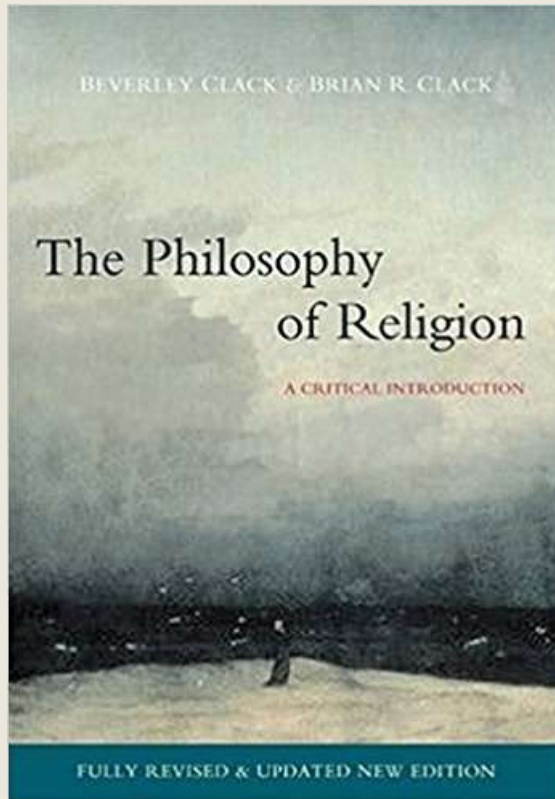
Camus



‘At this point of his effort man stands face to face with the irrational. He feels within him his longing for happiness and for reason. The absurd is born of this confrontation between the human need and the unreasonable silence of the world. This must not be forgotten. This must be clung to because the whole consequence of a life can depend on it. The irrational, the human nostalgia, and the absurd that is born of their encounter — these are the three characters in the drama that must necessarily end with all the logic of which an existence is capable.’

- *The Myth of Sisyphus*

Some initial course reading...



Next week...

- We will examine and debate arguments for the existence of God
- Please look into the *ontological argument*, the *teleological argument*, and the *cosmological argument*, and jot down your own thoughts as you go along
- Please also complete the RARPA forms
- Any questions, do email me
Dan.taylor@marywardcentre.ac.uk