

Difficult Dialogues concerning Religious Beliefs (CLWR 221)  
Syllabus  
Winter 2008-9

Class #	Day	Date	Topic	Assignment to be completed <i>prior</i> to class. Always check Blackboard for a <i>quiz</i> prior to class based on these readings. The quiz becomes unavailable 30 minutes before class.
1	M	Jan 5	Intro. Academics and Religious <i>Beliefs</i> . The acid bath of Socratic inquiry.	
2	W	Jan 7	Dawkins' scientific view and its critique of religion.	<u>Read</u> : <i>The God Delusion</i> , Preface and chapters 2, 6-8, 10.
3	M	Jan 12	Meaning, metaphysics, and beliefs: The <i>humanist</i> concerns of "religion."	Online survey due: see assignments in Blackboard.  <u>Read</u> : Dawkins, <i>Selfish Genes</i> . Kauffman, <i>Beyond Reductionism</i> .  Optional: <u>Watch</u> these videos to get a sense of Dawkins and the intelligence of his views. 1) Dawkins <a href="#">on the queer universe</a> ; 2) Dawkins, <a href="#">The Big Question: Why are we here?</a> (There are three short segments to this video.)
4	W	Jan 14	God and matter in post-Platonic Greek philosophy: Epicureanism and Stoicism.	Cleanthes' <i>Hymn to Zeus</i> (Stoic); Epicurus, <i>Principle Doctrines</i> . (Links in Course Documents folder.)
5	M	Jan 19	MLK Day. No class.	
6	W	Jan 21	Common traditional assumptions about how wonderful the <i>Bible</i> is: unity, authority, and inerrancy.	Bible time line. <i>Genesis 36:31; Exodus 20-21; Leviticus 15-20; Ezra 9-10; Acts 15</i> .
7	M	Jan 26	Common anti-traditional assumptions about how terrible the <i>Bible</i> is: superstition, oppression, vapidty.	<i>Genesis 1-3; Jonah; Matthew 5-9; Romans 14-15</i> .
8	W	Jan 28	OU closed due to ice storm	
9	M	Feb 2	Authoritarian vs. "questing" approaches to religious questions.	<a href="#">Apostle's creed</a> ; <a href="#">Athens Bible Church statement of faith</a> ; <a href="#">Book of Mormon</a> , title page through First Nephi, chapter 1; Plato, <i>Apology</i> .
10	W	Feb 4	Critical thinking about <i>religion</i> and <i>religious</i> people.	Plato, <i>Euthyphro</i>
11	M	Feb 9	Religion before science. The philosophers' <i>God</i> : Justice, Truth, Beauty.	Hesiod, <i>Succession Myth</i> (.pdf in Course Documents) Plato, <i>Theaetetus</i> 172a-177c (Stephanus pages; in the margins).
12	W	Feb 11	<b>Mid-term Exam</b>	
13	M	Feb 16	The soul and its health.	Plato, <i>Gorgias</i> 464a-481b.
14	W	Feb 18		Plato, <i>Gorgias</i> 517b-fin.

