# PHIL 3600 - Philosophy of Religion

Tentative Course Outline

1. The Nature of God
2. Problems Concerning Omnipotence
3. God and Morality
4. The Dilemma of Freedom and Foreknowledge
5. Arguments for the Existence of God
   a. Pascal's Wager
   b. The Ontological Argument
   c. The Design Argument
6. Arguments Against the Existence of God  (?)
   a. No Evidence Arguments
   b. The Problem of Evil
7. Life After Death  (?)
8. God, Death, and the Meaning of Life

# 1. The Nature of God

*Why do we need a definition of 'God'?*

<u>The "God is Love" Argument</u>
P1. I love my boys.
P2. If I love my boys, then love exists.
C1. Therefore, love exists.  (from P1 and P2)
P3. God is love.
C2. Therefore, God exists  (from C1 and P3)

*What we want is a conception of God that adequately captures the debate between those who say they are atheists and those who say they believe in God.*

# 1. The Nature of God

Richard Dawkins in his book *The God Delusion* (2006, p. 36):

"One of Einstein's most eagerly quoted remarks is 'Science without religion is lame, religion without science is blind.' But Einstein also said,

> 'It was, of course, a lie what you read about my religious convictions, a lie which is being systematically repeated. I do not believe in a personal God and I have never denied this but have expressed it clearly. If something is in me which can be called religious then it is the unbounded admiration for the structure of the world so far as our science can reveal it.'
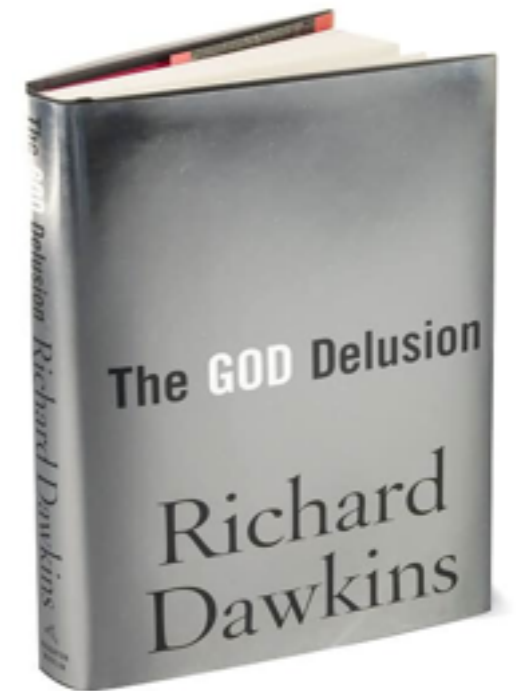
# 1. The Nature of God

A *guiding principle* that we can use to construct a unified, non-arbitrary list of divine attributes:

> ## God as the supreme being.

In other words:

> God as the greatest possible being.
>
> God as a being that is perfect in every respect (i.e., has all of the "perfections").

and therefore:

> God as a being maximally worthy of worship.

A **perfection** is the highest degree of a property that (a) comes in degrees, and (b) is admirable to have or helps to make one a good or great or excellent being.

# 1. The Nature of God

**<u>Some perfections</u>:**

a.   maximal power / omnipotence

b.   maximal knowledge / omniscience

c.   maximal goodness / omnibenevolence

} these are the "big three"

# 1. The Nature of God

## **Essentiality vs. Accidentalness**

A thing has a property **essentially** just in case it could not exist without having that property.

For example:
- this pen is essentially *extended in space*
- perhaps a statue of Bart Simpson is essentially *Bart-shaped*

A thing has a property **accidentally** just in case it is possible for it to exist without having that property.

For example:
- this pen is accidentally *owned by Heathwood*
- that statue of Bart Simpson is accidentally *clay colored*.

# 1. The Nature of God

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# 1. The Nature of God

**Some perfections:**

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b. essential maximal knowledge / omniscience

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# 1. The Nature of God

**Some perfections:**

a. essential omnipotence

b. essential omniscience

c. essential omnibenevolence

d. necessary existence

e. essential eternality

f. essentially the creator of everything

g. incorporeality

# 1. The Nature of God

**Some perfections:**
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b. essential omniscience
c. essential omnibenevolence
d. necessary existence
e. essential eternality
f. essentially the creator of everything
g. incorporeality

**Our definition of 'God':** **to be God is to be the essentially omnipotent, essentially omniscient, essentially omnibenevolent, necessarily existent, essentially eternal, incorporeal, creator of the universe and everything else.**