

**PHYS 395, SOCI 395, THEO 375**  
**God, Physics and the Human Prospect**  
**Winter 2017**

**Term assignment: due March 29, 6:30 PM**

**If God, why?**

Read McGrath, chapters 14 and 18.

Everyone (including the “New [or ‘Scientific’] Atheists” such as Dawkins) has some kind of understanding of and conviction about God/god/gods/no-god/no-gods. For example, it is reasonable to ask which or which kind of god it is that Dawkins thinks does not exist, and why he thinks it is reasonable to hold such a conviction. Of course, Dawkins would like to say that it isn’t a “conviction” at all, but just the simple and direct truth arrived at rationally by sticking rigidly to the principles and practices of science. Still, if Dawkins writes or utters the word “god,” he is assuming that his audience can in some sense—even if vague or variable—grasp what the word is trying to get at, if only to deny that it gets at anything at all.

**The question(s): How is your “faith” rational?**

What is your conviction about God/god/no-god? Is it “thin”—such as a “higher power,” transcendent being, source of all things? Or is it “thick”—such as “One God in three divine persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit? Or somewhere in between? (Be as self-aware as you can about this.) Assuming this conviction is *operative for you* (i.e. it “makes a difference” and you thus show you take it as true), what reasons *come with* that conviction? (Note: this is not asking what reasons you can give *for* that conviction.) What rational aspects of that conviction *constitute and enable* your rationally engaged participation in the world, that is, make your participation as a rational being in the world possible? What does it bring to your work as a scientist (if you consider yourself one)? What aspects of the world (especially as understood scientifically) give a positive return on your convictional investment? What aspects of the world (especially as scientifically understood) give negative returns? How do you cope with these negative returns? Do you adjust your science in light of your conviction, or the reverse? Why? Would it help to adjust to a “thicker” or “thinner” understanding of God? Why?

In a brief essay (~**450-500 words**) respond to these questions.