

# **Skeptics and Believers, *Part II*: Religious Debate in the Western Intellectual Tradition**

Osher Lifelong Learning Institute, University of Delaware, Spring 2023

Instructor: James J. Moser

[jamesmoserj@gmail.com](mailto:jamesmoserj@gmail.com) & [jjmoser@udel.edu](mailto:jjmoser@udel.edu)

Prerequisites: None      Materials required: None

---

What are we doing when we profess belief in God? How can we know that God exists? Can reason defend any assertions about God and the world claimed by our religious traditions? Is religion a force for good in human life, or is it something that belongs to a past age, a symptom of the childhood of humanity? The objectives of this course are to stimulate an environment of thoughtful quest and to provide an arena for open, respectful dialogue among participants.

This course will examine the evolving relationships between faith and reason, revelation and evidence, believing and thinking. Building on *Part I* (Fall 2022), this course, *Part II* (Spring 2023), will consider issues from the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century to the present. (*Part I* is not a pre-requisite for this course.)

Class sessions will include brief presentations by the instructor, viewing a DVD, and hearty discussion. The DVD presentations are from a Great Courses series by Professor Tyler Roberts.

## COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1, Kierkegaard's Faith

Week 2, Kierkegaard's Paradox

Week 3, 19<sup>th</sup> Century Suspicion and Feuerbach

Week 4, Marx – Religion as False Consciousness

Week 5, Nietzsche – Genealogy of Morals

Week 6, Nietzsche – Religion and the Ascetic Ideal

Week 7, Freud – Religion as Neurosis

Week 8, Theology and Suspicion

Week 9, Protestant Theology After Barth: Tillich & Henry

Week 10, Post-Holocaust Theology

Week 11, New Atheisms – Harris & Dennett

Week 12, Religion and Rationality

Week 13, Pluralisms – Religious and Secular

Week 14, Faith, Suspicion, and Modernity