

# ARGUING FOR GOD

On demand lecture-series for  
students of A Level Religious Studies

With Dr Peter Vardy and Charlotte Vardy

## On-demand Lectures

- 1) The Teleological Argument
- 2) Cosmological Arguments
- 3) The Argument from Religious Experience
- 4) The Ontological Argument

BONUS: Debate: This house believes that there is no way to prove God's existence.



**Dr. Peter Vardy** was Vice Principal of Heythrop College, University of London (1999-2011); he is internationally well-known as a leader in the fields of Religious Studies, Philosophy and Ethics and Values Education. Peter's many books – including the bestselling "Puzzle of" series for HarperCollins – demonstrate his ability to communicate complex ideas with clarity, accuracy and humour. For more than three decades schools and colleges have looked to Peter to provide outstanding conferences, resources and CPD / INSET, both to support their work in RS and Philosophy and more broadly.

**Charlotte Vardy** combines teaching Religious Studies across the age and ability range in an outstanding Church School with her work in planning our events and creating our resources. With 20 years' experience in schools, including in Senior and Middle Leadership, she has worked as an educational consultant and teacher-trainer since 2007, for organisations including examination boards. She has a Masters' Degree with distinction in Philosophy from the University of London, attended the Universities of Oxford (BA Theology) and Cambridge (PGCE Secondary RS), and has written four books for students of A Level Religious Studies.



Candle Conferences on demand lecture series for students of A Level Religious Studies are unique. As always, the lectures are pacy and engaging, designed to provoke deep thought and further discussion and debate. Each lecture is accompanied by detailed student resources, providing an overview of the content, useful scholars and quotations, suggestions for extra reading and learning activities. **Overall, the lecture series offers 4+ hours of video content accompanied by 40+ pages of digital resources.**

### Arguing for God

Exploring content specified by ALL ENGLISH EXAMINATION BOARDS for AS/A Level in Religious Studies, and aiming to develop higher-level AO2 essay skills, these lectures take students on a "deep dive" into the Arguments for the Existence of God.

#### 1) The Teleological Argument

The oldest and still the most persuasive argument for God's existence begins with observations of purpose or teleology in the universe... but are these observations accurate and are they best explained by an intelligent designer, let alone "what everybody calls God"? This introductory lecture begins by considering different types of argument, their relative strengths and weaknesses, and then goes on to explain and evaluate teleological arguments proposed by Aquinas, Paley and Tennant with reference to Hume and Mill.

#### 2) Cosmological Arguments

Cosmological arguments start with observations of causation and conclude that a Prime Mover, Uncaused Cause or Necessary Being is the best explanation thereof... but is everything in the universe really moved, caused and contingent as Aquinas argues? Also, even if the Cosmological Argument can survive the advent of Quantum science, is it fair to say that the cause of the universe is "what everybody calls God"? This lecture explores the arguments presented by Aquinas and William Lane Craig and evaluates them with reference to Hume, Kant and Russell.

#### 3) The Argument from Religious Experience

Another popular argument for God's existence starts with the observation that Religious Experiences are a common feature of human experience, reasoning that the best explanation of their occurrence is the existence of God as their object. Nevertheless, Religious Experiences are very diverse and many are subject to plausible naturalistic explanations. This lecture considers which religious experiences have the best claim on being authentic (with particular reference to William James' arguments) and discovers how common these are, before evaluating the attempt to argue for God's existence from Religious Experience, such as in the work of Richard Swinburne.

#### 4) The Ontological Argument

Ontological Arguments take a different approach, starting with an a priori definition of God and reasoning that God's existence is a logically necessary part of that definition. If successful the Ontological Argument has the potential to prove God's existence in a way that no a posteriori argument could do... but many people struggle to see them as any more than "a charming joke" as Arthur Schopenhauer put it. This lecture considers and evaluates the Ontological Arguments proposed by St Anselm and Rene Descartes with reference to criticisms made by Gaunilo, Aquinas, Kant and Russell, encouraging students to take arguments from reason more seriously.

## To Book

A school licence to access the Arguing for God lecture series for the academic year 2022-23 costs £50, which includes the right to show the videos in class and copy the student resources.

Individual students or teachers can purchase access for £5, but this only includes personal use of the videos and resources

<https://candleconferences.com/events/arguing-for-god/>

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