Shalom Carmy

Yeshiva College
Belief & Religious Commitment

Our primary concern in this course will be to examine certain issues and texts relating to the nature of belief, its place and significance in human thought in general, with special regard to religious commitment. We shall read texts, and call upon methods of thought, belonging to the disciplines of Western philosophy, intellectual history, theology, and literature (possibly cognitive psychology as well). Though unable to undertake a study of all the pertinent facets of thought, or even to exhaust one specific discipline, we shall, I hope, hit several of the high points of the subject and, if successful, learn something about the manner in which one may integrate various disciplines.

Writing: There will be frequent assignments (about 15-20 pages in all). I must insist on promptness in handing them in.

I will try to arrange additional “office hours” via Zoom, most likely on Sundays late afternoon or Friday—once day gets longer.

Journal articles, almost all books before 1900 available online or via our online holdings. Other texts are on reserve on 2nd Floor of library.

TENTATIVE OUTLINE: (Additional texts and references will come.)

2. Plato, passages from Meno.
5. Descartes: Meditations #4;
8. Pascal: Pensées paragraphs 233-34; 267-77 (the “wager”; editions vary
12. Ramban: Exodus 19:17; Bet haLevi to Bo (handout)

Time permitting--
Wittgenstein: On Certainty (selections)
Graham Greene: The End of the Affair, Chesterton, Orthodoxy.
Carmy: "Dialectic, Doubt and a Self-Erasing Letter" (in Kaplan & Shatz, R. Abraham Isaac Kook and Jewish Spirituality)
Reformed Epistemology (Plantinga, Wolterstorff, Mavrodies et al), maybe Alston, Perceiving God. Possibly work on sincerity
(e.g. Trilling, *Sincerity and Authenticity*).

**Availability:** M;T;W;R all day. 5th Floor Library and other haunts. I plan to eat lunch on Library ground floor:M,W 12:15-1:00 and T, Th 12:15-12:45 or so.

Feel free to reach me by phone 1-718-252-0496 (best time-- 10-12 P.M.) to discuss course material or any other constructive matters. As usual, let me express the shopworn yet phoenix-like belief that we can contribute to one another's growth as thinking religious individuals and perhaps to the future flourishing of a *Torah veHokhma* community. e-mail: **carmy@yu.edu**