REVIEW of WEEK 1 CONTENT:

Worldview: The set of basic beliefs through which we see and understand reality.

The Problem: Given the same data

1. Lots of smart people conclude that God exists—the RELIGIOUS worldview.
2. Lots of smart people conclude that God does not exist (or we can't know)—the SECULAR worldview.

How do we account for these different conclusions?

Two Theories that don't work:

1. Religious people are RATIONAL, whereas secular people are BIASED.

   a. Problems with this theory:
      i. The strongest arguments for God are never AIRTIGHT; There is always room for DOUBT. Secular people can have intellectual INTEGRITY.
      ii. Furthermore, Christians believe God wants us to exercise FAITH in addition to reason.

2. Secular people have objective and unbiased REASON, whereas religious people have subjective and emotionally-biased FAITH.

   "Subtraction Theory" – The Secularist view that removing Faith and Emotion enables us to see the world with the clear eye of Reason, which reveals the truth of secularism. (from *A Secular Age*, by Charles Taylor)

   BUT OUR THESIS IS: Secularism is not the ABSENCE of belief, but the presence of a NEW SET of beliefs, which are just as UN-PROVABLE as religious beliefs. Therefore, *BOTH* Secular and Religious people equally must JUSTIFY their beliefs.

   2 Arguments Supporting this Thesis:
   1. You can't DISPROVE the existence of God. Therefore, the Secularist view rests on FAITH in the non-existence of God.
   2. There are as many EMOTIONAL reasons to disbelieve in God as there are to believe. Therefore, emotional bias can apply equally to both views.

   TODAY: A 3rd argument in support of our thesis, and a way forward.

A Third Argument Supporting Our Thesis — VIDEO 1:

2. _____ and _____ are based on un-provable beliefs

    a. Rationality:

        i. In order to reason, we must makes assumptions about the definition of _____
           i. Conflicting definitions in Math, Law, Philosophy, Science

        ii. _____ beliefs influence what we find convincing
           i. The Argument From Evil before/after 1500 AD

        Conclusion: _____ is ever being completely objective or rational

REVIEW BLANKS & DISCUSS:
1. Name some examples of background beliefs

2. How do you discover your own background beliefs?

3. How can you help others discover theirs?

A Third Argument Supporting Our Thesis, continued — VIDEO 2:

   b. Morality:

      i. All _____ _____ are matters of faith

         i. In order to affirm Equal Human Rights and Universal Benevolence:

            1. The Religious person makes a _____ inference, which naturally follows from his/her belief in a creator God who made all humans in his image and commands us to love as he loves.

            2. The Secular person must make a _____ _____ ____ _____, which contradicts his/her belief in an impersonal and purposeless universe in which the strong eat the weak.

"What Nietzsche recognizes is that you can be rid of God only if you also do away with all innate moral meaning. Civilization is in the process of ditching divinity while still clinging to all those values that came from the belief in divinity" – John Gray, Atheist Philosopher

"I'm not prepared to argue that there is no transcendent basis for my commitment to human rights... [My] modern secularism, then, is a religious worldview." – Andrew Koppelman, Agnostic Professor of Law & Political Science

"Man descended from apes in a process of the strong eating the weak. Therefore, let us love one another." – Vladimir Solovyov, Russian Philosopher

REVIEW BLANKS & DISCUSS:
1. How could you direct a conversation to have the discussion of "why you believe in human rights" without attacking or confronting?

2. How could you fit in "I think human rights make sense if there is a God " into a conversation?

3. Our thesis is: The Secular and Religious worldviews are BOTH based on FAITH. What questions does this raise for you?

VIDEO 3 -
If both the Secular and Religious worldview are based on un-provable faith, simply weighing evidence will not suffice in determining which view is correct. **So what can we do?**

A Way Forward: _____ _____

We can rationally _____ our faith and compare our answers with others.

1. Use these questions to compare which belief system is most consistent with itself, our experience and the evidence:

   a. Do my beliefs _____ one another?

   b. Do my beliefs fit with the reality of human _____?

   c. Do I have to _____ from other belief systems?

   d. Am I willing to embrace the _____ _____ of my beliefs? If not, why not?

2. Compare how each belief system answers fundamental human questions*:

   a. MEANING - What is the meaning of life?
   b. HOPE - How can I have hope in the face of suffering and death?
   c. SATISFACTION - What provides true happiness and satisfaction?
   d. PERSONAL IDENTITY - What is the basis for my worth as an individual?
   e. MORALITY/JUSTICE - On what grounds can I make moral judgments?

   for clarity, some material has been added from later videos

   Christianity has strong answers for all of these. How do other belief systems compare?

REVIEW BLANKS & DISCUSS:
1. How can you use this information from this class to share your faith with others?
   Suggestion: Ask an atheist/agnostic friend to help you fill out the chart on the next page. Then discuss your answers. If they are interested, follow up by sharing a few apologetics videos (Search "Reasonable Faith Animated Videos" on youtube), and/or offering to read through one of the Gospels together (the book of John is a great place to start).

2. What other ideas do you have?

	CHRISTIANITY	ATHEISM/AGNOSTICISM
MEANING What is the meaning of life?		
HOPE How can I have hope in the face of suffering and death?		
SATISFACTION What provides true happiness and satisfaction?		
PERSONAL IDENTITY What is the basis for my worth as an individual?		
MORALITY/JUSTICE On what grounds can I make moral judgments?		