

Impact of the Great War on Western Culture & the Western Worldview



Charles A. O'Connor III

A Bursting Shell, 1915

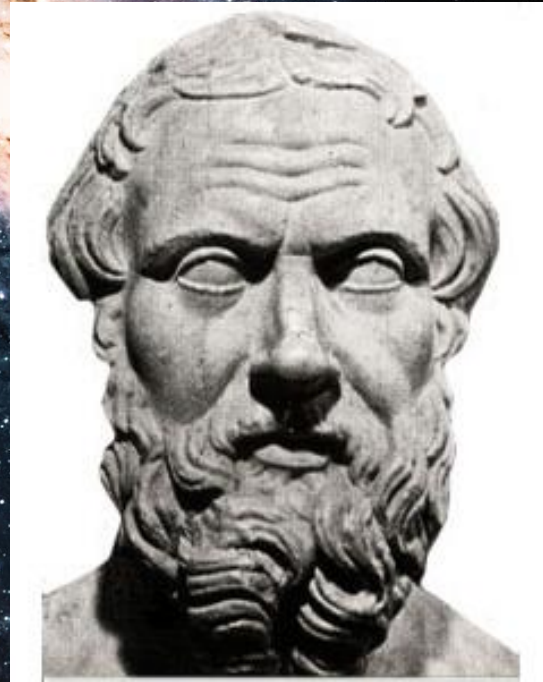
Christopher R. W. Nevinson
(1889-1946)

Class 1:

Culture, Cosmology & the Great War

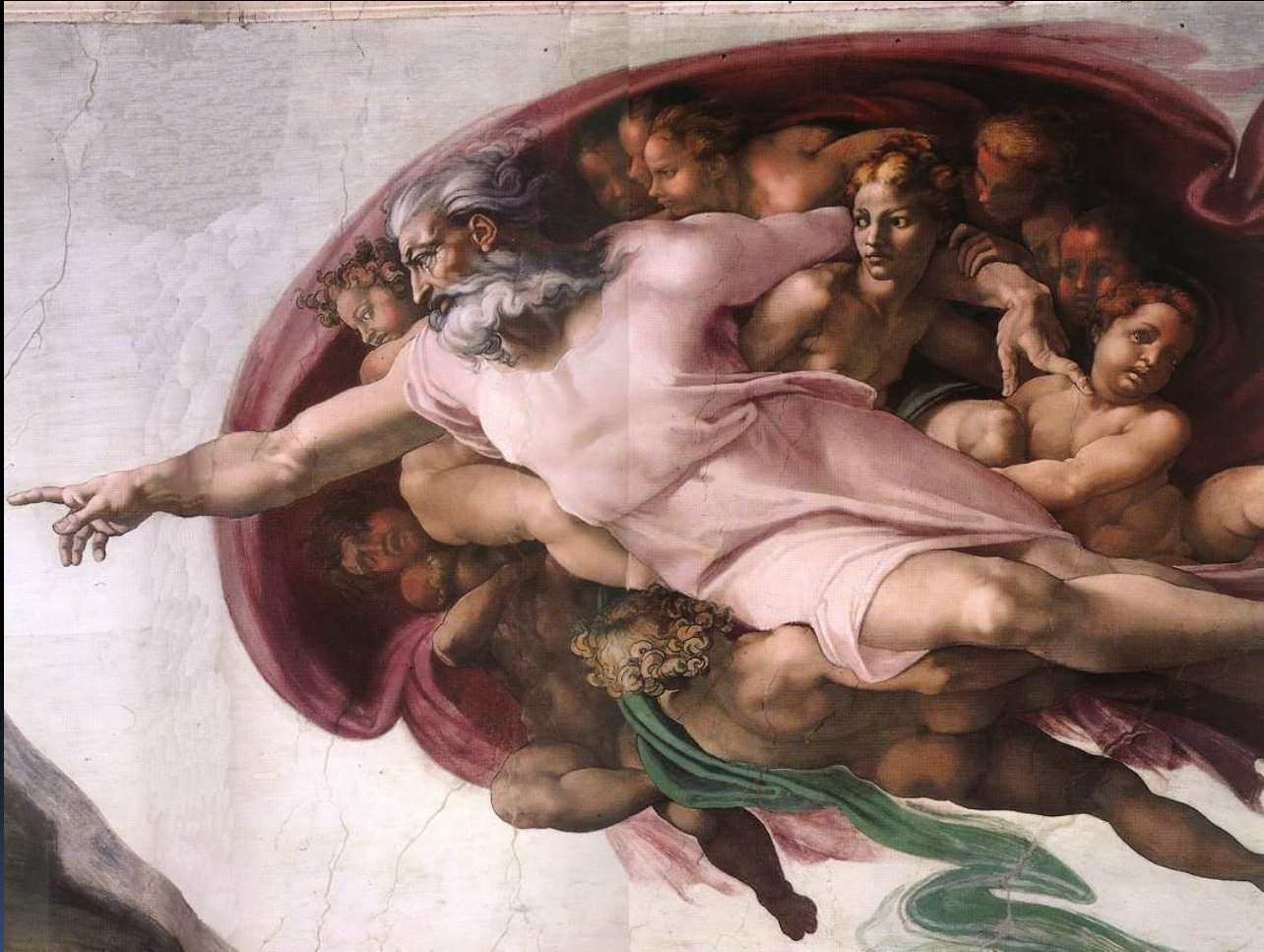
- **Syllabus Review**
- **Introductions**
- **Course Overview:**
**Prewar Worldview
& Course Approach**

Atoms, the Void, and Nothing Else



Democritus (460-370 B.C.E.)

**“In the beginning God created the
heaven and the earth.”**



Genesis 1:1 (~538 B.C.E.)

The Medieval Synthesis: Faith & Reason

Moses Maimonides

1135-1204



Thomas Aquinas

1225-1274



Reason & Modern Science



Francis Bacon
(1561-1626)



René Descartes
(1596-1650)



Isaac Newton
(1642-1727)

Modern science began in the West due to “the medieval insistence on the rationality of God, conceived as with the personal energy of Jehovah and with the rationality of a Greek philosopher. Every detail was supervised and ordered: the search into nature could only result in the vindication of the faith in rationality.”

Alfred North Whitehead

Enlightenment Optimism



John Locke
(1632-1704)

- Reason & Progress
- Dogma & Deism
- Jewish Enlightenment



Natural Theology
(1802)

William Paley

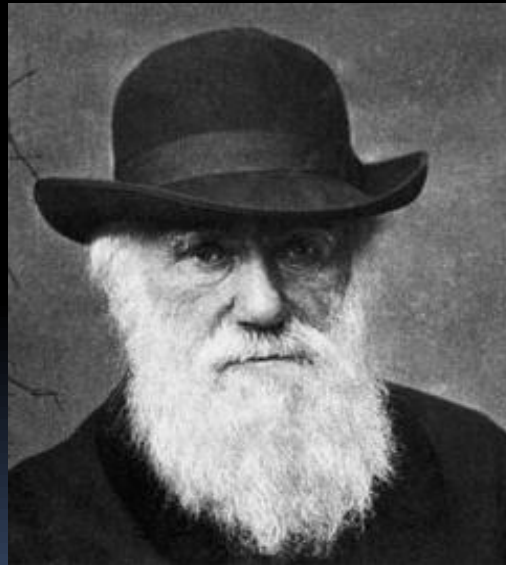
“Reason must be our last judge and guide in everything.”
John Locke

Prewar Cosmic Skepticism

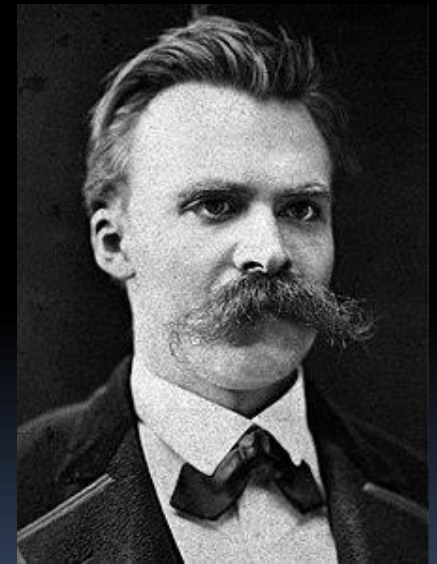
- **Western Worldview Critics**
- **Cultural Engagement**



David Hume
(1711-1776)



Charles Darwin
(1809-1882)



Friedrich Nietzsche
(1844-1900)

World War I (1914 – 1918)

Western Turning Point



Assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand
June 28, 1914

Literature



“Peace” (1914)
Rupert Brooke
(1887-1915)



“The Second Coming” (1919)
William Butler Yeats
(1865-1939)

Art



Balzac (1892-98)

Auguste Rodin
(1840-1917)



Mechanical Head

(The Spirit of Our Age)(1920)
Raoul Hausmann (1886-1971)

Music



Pomp and Circumstance (1901)

Sir Edward Elgar
(1857-1934)



La Valse (1920)

Maurice Ravel
(1875-1937)



Sakari Oramo, BBC Symphony Orchestra (2014)

Music



Pomp and Circumstance (1901)

Sir Edward Elgar
(1857-1934)



La Valse (1920)

Maurice Ravel
(1875-1937)



Myung-whun Chung, Philharmonic Orchestra
of Radio France (2010)

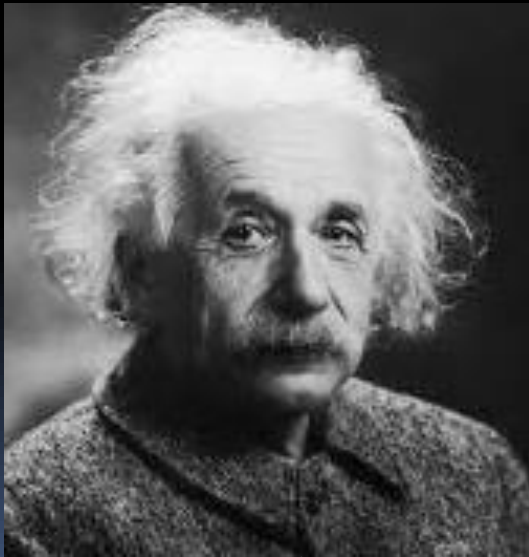
Postwar Cosmic Pessimism: Literature, Art & Music



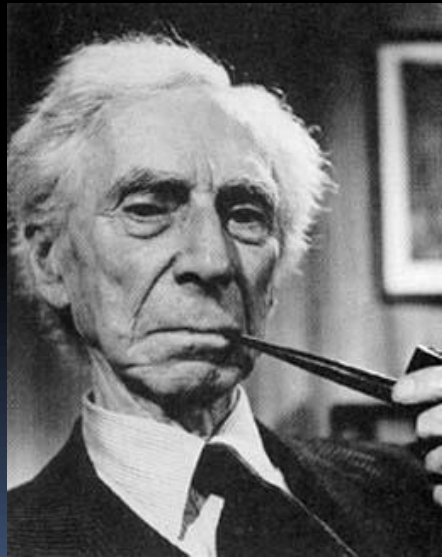
Flanders
(After Henri Barbusse
“*Le Feu*”) (1934-36)
Otto Dix (1891-1969)

Science, Scientism & Scientific Materialism

- **Einstein's Scientific Revolution**
- **Science: Sole Source of Truth**
- **Emergent Cosmology: Brute Matter**



Albert Einstein
(1879-1955)



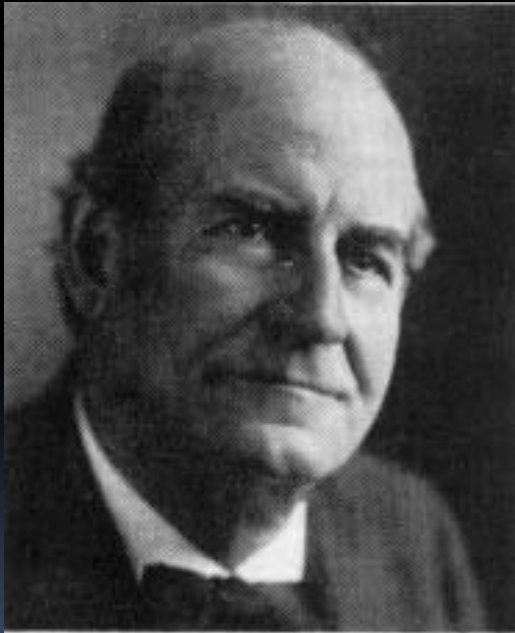
Bertrand Russell
(1872-1970)



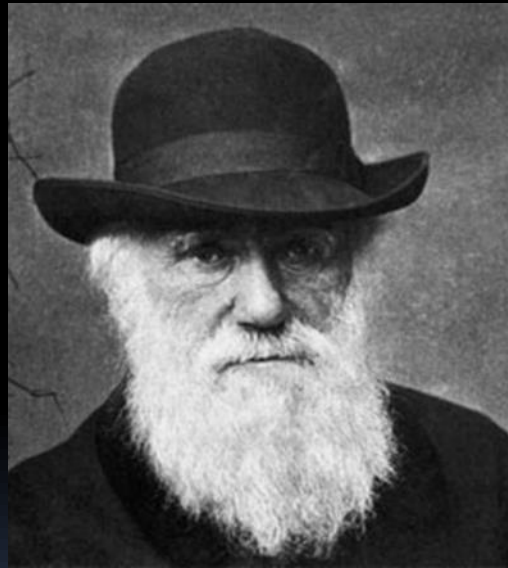
A. N. Whitehead
(1861-1947)

The Riven Postwar Cosmos

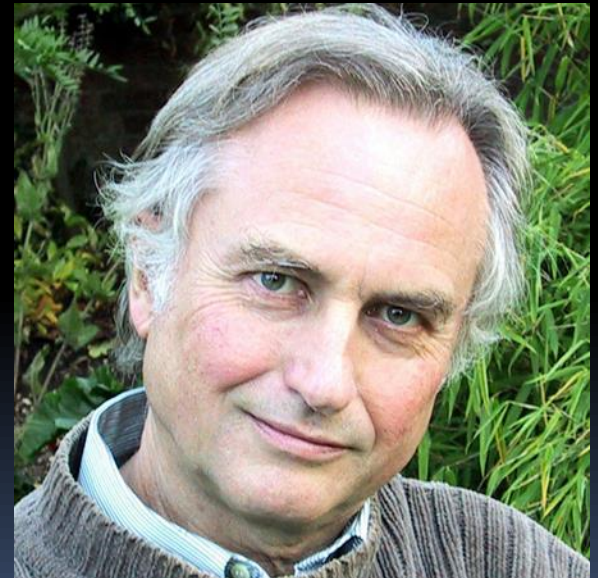
- **Debating Cosmic Design**
- **Bible vs. Science**



William Jennings Bryan
(1860-1925)



Charles Darwin
(1809-1882)



Richard Dawkins
(b. 1941)

Postwar Quest for Certainty: Scientism & Fundamentalism

“Certainty is generally illusion and repose is not the destiny of man”
Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr.

“The worship of God is not a rule of safety – it is an adventure of the spirit, a flight after the unattainable. The death of religion comes with the repression of the high hope of adventure.”
Alfred North Whitehead

