

As always, we should think about possible counter-arguments:

How could you argue that God does *not* exist? What reasons could you give to try and convince yourself or someone else that He does not exist?

# Introduction to Philosophy

## Discussion on Proving the Existence of God

Today we start the first unit of the course, which involves analyzing some traditional attempts to prove the existence of God. Throughout this unit, keep in mind that my concern as your instructor is not to convince you that God exists or that He does not. That would be inappropriate for such a personal issue. In face, at the end, I hope you are unable to ascertain my own views on this matter. Rather, the point of the unit is for *you* to reflect on this important issue while also learning about the many different shapes that a philosophical argument can proceed.

To get our bearings for this unit, today we want to consider an important question:

How do you prove that something exists?

This is actually quite a complicated question once one starts to reflect upon it. So let’s start with a simpler instance of this question:

How would you prove that this table exists (I will show you which table I mean)? What reasons could you give to convince yourself or someone else that it exists?

Now let’s ask something that may seem more interesting:

How would you argue that this table does *not* exist? What reasons could you give to convince your- self or someone else that it does not exist?

So much for talking about physical things. Now about this:

How would you prove that gravity exists? What reasons could you give to convince yourself or someone else that it exists?

Once more, we can argue the other way as well:

How would you argue that gravity does *not* exist? What reasons could you give to convince yourself or someone else that it does not exist?

Let's try to think about the existence of even more abstract things:

How would you argue that the number three exists? What reasons could you give to convince yourself or someone else that it exists?

Again, we can always argue the other way as well:

How would you argue that the number three does *not* exist? What reasons could you give to convince yourself or someone else that it does not exist?

Finally, we reach the substance of this unit: what about God? Unfortunately, He seems to be very different from tables, gravity, and the number three. To begin with this, we should clarify what is meant by the noun "God".

What is normally meant by the word "God"? What properties and attributes is God supposed to possess?

With this attributes in mind, we can argue about the existence of God:

How could you argue that God exists? What reasons could you give to try and convince yourself or someone else that He exists?