Idea of God
Philosophy 146A
Prof. Yourgrau
Office Hours: M/W  2:30 - 3:30, and by appt.

Texts:
Gilson, *God and Philosophy*
Plato, *Five Great Dialogues*
Weil, *Intimations of Christianity Among the Ancient Greeks*
Selections from the Bible
Handouts

Requirements:
Several short papers (4/5 ppgs).

Brief Description:

This is a philosophy class, but this is not a class in the philosophy of religion. It is a course devoted to an exploration of the very idea or concept of God, the idea of a divine being. We will investigate, compare and contrast this idea as it emerges in ancient Greek myth, and in Greek philosophy, in particular, in the thought of Plato and Aristotle, and in the biblical tradition of the Hebrew Bible and the Christian Gospels. Though we will address the question of the existence of God, we will not be preoccupied with this issue but will try to discover the answer to such questions as: What kind of being is God? (e.g. material or immaterial ?; contingent or necessary ?; personal or impersonal ?) What difference would the existence of God make in our lives? (e.g. can there be absolute goodness without God ?) How could we know that a divine being exists? (e.g. how can a finite being come to know what is infinite ?) How should we relate to a divine being? (e.g. is prayer essentially a form of petition ?) In addition, we will address the question of how to read sacred texts and try to discover the basis of the authority claimed for them, which will take us to an analysis of the sometimes competing demands of revealed religion and rational theology.*

*Please Note: If you are a student with a documented disability on record at Brandeis and need to have special accommodations for this class, please see me immediately. Also please note that any case of dishonesty (cheating on a test, using materials, including from the internet, and failing to cite its origin) is a serious academic infraction and is subject to disciplinary action.