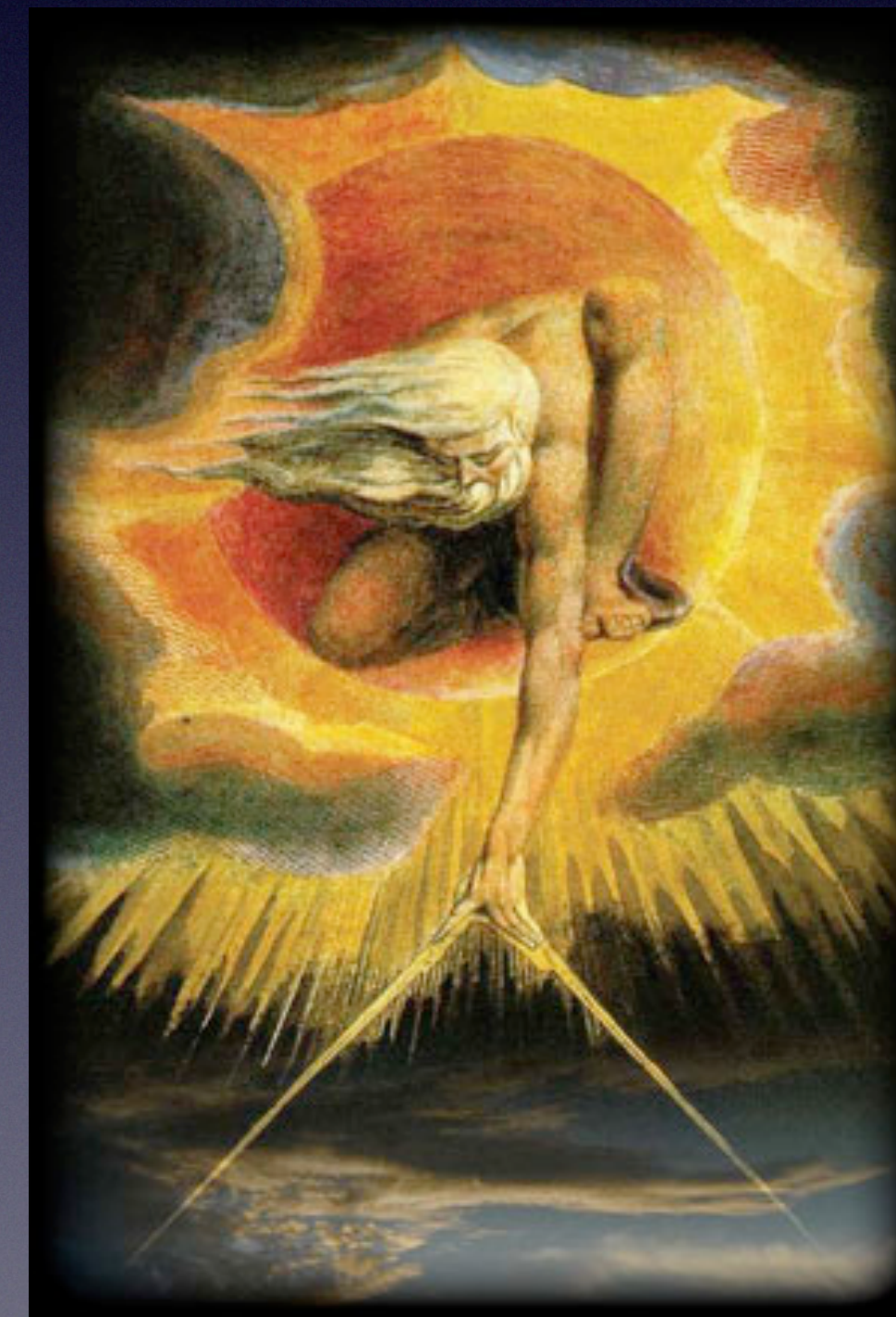


# What is Knowledge

HZT4U1 - Mr. Wittmann - Unit 3 - Lecture 1



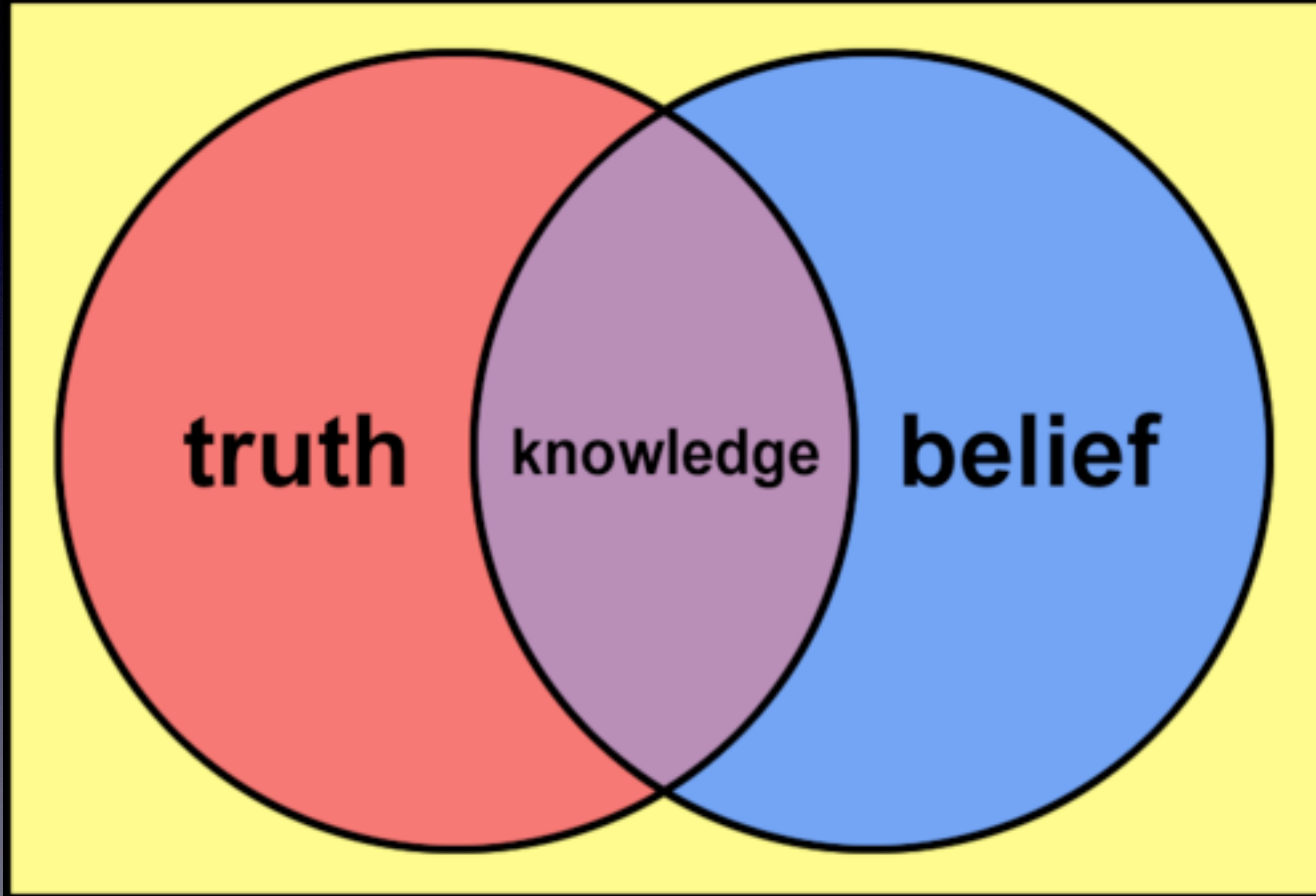
# Knowledge

- Knowledge allows us to function in the world.
- We believe to have knowledge of some things but not others
- Philosophers have raised questions about...
  - what is knowledge
  - what things can we know
  - can we really know about things
  - how we can acquire knowledge
  - how can we communicate knowledge

# Knowledge (continued)

- In Plato's Theaetetus
- Defined knowledge as “justified true belief.”
- “...believing what is true and having sufficient reasons for believing its accuracy...”
- 3 features of knowledge...
  - belief (what you think), truth (reality), and justification (proof)

# Knowledge (continued)



# Theories of Knowledge

## **Rationalism:**

- true knowledge can be attained only by reason, without the aid of the senses.
- Reason is the source of most of our knowledge.

## **Empiricism:**

- true knowledge can be attained only through sense experience.
- Sense experience is the source of most of our knowledge.

# Theories of Knowledge (continued)

**DESCARTES**  
*Discourse on Method*

•

*Meditations*


**SPINOZA**  
*The Ethics*

•

**LEIBNIZ**  
*The Monadology*

•

*Discourse on Metaphysics*



**THE RATIONALISTS**

Versus

**LOCKE**  
*An Essay Concerning Human Understanding (Abridged)*

•

**BERKELEY**  
*Principles of Human Knowledge*


•

*Three Dialogues*

**HUME**  
*An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*

•

*Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*



**THE EMPIRICISTS**

# What is Belief

- A mental process that we trust to be an accurate representation of reality
- A firmly held opinion or conviction that a statement is true or false
- A firmly held opinion or conviction that something does or does not exist
- You believe your ideas (representations of reality) are facts that exist in reality
- Thus belief portrays the reality to be one way rather than another
  - i.e. summer will be hotter than winter
- Thus, philosophers and psychologists have proposed many different theories of how beliefs are able to portray the world

# Plato's Picture Theory of Belief

- A belief is like a innate picture or an image of something (idea or thought)
- In being directly aware of an idea, we think of everything associated with it
- This theory of belief is important because many previous philosophers have used it in thinking about questions of truth, knowledge, and reality

# Sources of Belief

- But, other types of consciousness are also about reality
- Sense perception, memory, thought, theoretical reason, emotion, portray the world in a certain way
- Belief is the feature of any mental process that causes you to portray the world in a certain way, which might be true or false

# Sources of Belief (continued)

- We take most of our beliefs to be an accurate account of reality (memory)
  - i.e. next summer will be hotter than this winter
- This is in contrast with other states of consciousness in which we are less sure (sense perception)
  - i.e. you see the water on the road ahead but do not believe it is there



**THE END**