Assignment Schedule #3:

A13: Read Kierkegaard (PR 118-122) and Adams (handout).

1. What does Kierkegaard mean by ‘truth’? Justify your response with selections from the text.

2. Even supposing that religious propositions receive support from reason, Kierkegaard thinks it is inappropriate to base faith on reason. Give and evaluate one of the arguments for this position.

3. Kierkegaard thinks not only that faith shouldn’t be based on reason, but that it is best opposed to reason. Give and evaluate the argument for this position.

EX: Compare Kierkegaard’s account of truth with Roy’s from “Truth as Correspondence” (if you haven’t already seen this short paper, you may find it online at http://philosophy.csusb.edu/~troy/TRUTH.pdf). Does it make sense to say that one is right and the other is wrong? Why?

A14: Read Clifford (PR 104 - 109) with the one-page excerpt from Scriven (handout), and RRB Ch 3

1. Consider Clifford’s “credo” (“To sum up...” on p. 109). Do you think it is right? Explain.

2. What is critical rationalism? Do you think Scriven or Clifford would think a critical rationalist is automatically obligated to be an atheist? Explain.

3. Roy suggests that attempts to resist skepticism may “let religion in through the back door.” What does this mean? Do you think it is right? Explain.

EX: Consider the “skeptical story” and/or “broadly Humean” attack on justifications for knowledge. Are these sufficient to establish skepticism? Explain.

A15: Read Pascal (PR 101 - 103 with the Pascal handout) and James (PR 110 - 118)

1. Suppose you are offered $1,000,000 to believe that dogs can fly. Is it rational for you to believe this? What consequences does your response have for the third premise of Pascal’s argument on the handout? Explain.

2. On p. 117 James says, “a rule of thinking which would absolutely prevent me from acknowledging certain kinds of truth if these kinds of truth were really there, would be an irrational rule.” Is it possible that his own rule might prevent him from acknowledging certain kinds of truth? Explain and evaluate.

EX: Respond to study question # 3 on p. 118.
A16: Read Plantinga (PR 261 - 273) and RRB chapter 6


2. What is Plantinga’s positive approach for identifying beliefs that are properly basic? How does this legitimate belief in god as properly basic? Does it commit Plantinga to the claim that belief in the Great Pumpkin is properly basic? Could it allow that belief in the Great Pumpkin is properly basic for someone else? Explain.

EX: Is there a place for faith in classical foundationalism? Is there a place for faith in Plantinga’s picture? Which, if either, do you think is right? Explain.

A17: Read Alston (PR 45 - 53) and Alston, “Religious Belief and Religious Belief and Religious Experience” Noûs 16 (1982): 3 - 12, which you can obtain through the library.

1. Suppose you regularly get a pain in your knee before thunderstorms. On Alston’s model, can it be said that you therefore, with your knee, perceive a storm’s arrival? Explain using his criteria of perception. Apply to the religious case.

2. Compare and contrast Alston and Plantinga on proper basicality for religious beliefs. Do you find their accounts contrasting or complimentary? Is it plausible that religious beliefs are or can be properly basic? Explain.

EX: Suppose some group claims to be in communication with aliens whose spaceship is following behind a mysterious comet. Given his discussion of the 4 criteria on p. 8 of “Religious Experience & Religious Belief” does Alston have any particular basis on which to distinguish such claims from standard religious experience? Does your response give any grounds to question his discussion?

A18: Read Pargetter (PR 273 - 279) and Hasker (PR 280 - 286). Respond to study question #2 on p. 279 and #1 and 2 on p. 286.

EX: Respond to question #3 on p. 286.