

Medieval Philosophy

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CATHOLIC STUDIES
ACADEMY



Medieval Philosophy

Syllabus & Objectives

Medieval Philosophy

Medieval philosophy centered on the synthesis of Catholic faith with ancient philosophy, the rise of university culture, and the widespread systematic exploration of philosophy. In this course, students will be introduced to the major figures and ideas of medieval philosophy. This course will include discussions of the emergence of scholasticism, Saint Thomas Aquinas, Blessed Duns Scotus, and William of Ockham. Students in this course will be equipped to:

- explain and evaluate the core topics of medieval philosophy including the relationship of faith and reason, the divine names, the analogy of being, the problem of universals, natural theology, voluntarism, divine foreknowledge, et cetera
- compare and evaluate diverse schools of medieval philosophy: Thomist, Scotist, and Ockhamist
- identify the continuing importance and relevance of medieval philosophy for catholic theology and contemporary culture.

Medieval Philosophy

Lectures and Recommended Readings

The following lectures will be provided in this course:

1. Introduction: sources, method, context, and meaning (Faith seeking understanding)
2. Faith and Reason I: Augustinian Approaches
3. Faith and Reason II: Latin Averroism
4. Faith and Reason III: The Handmaiden of the Theology
5. Anselm: The Existence of God
6. Thomas Aquinas: The Divine Names
7. Duns Scotus: Univocal Naming of God
8. Augustine: Divine Illumination
9. Thomas Aquinas: Experience and Abstraction
10. William of Ockham: Nominalism
11. Thomas Aquinas: Law and Morality
12. Thomas Aquinas: Church and State
13. Scotus: Law, Freedom, and the Will
14. Ockham: Morality, Church, and State
15. Faith Seeking Understanding: The Continuing Relevance of Medieval Philosophy

Text for the Course:

Medieval Philosophy: From Augustine to Duns Scotus, Frederick Copleston, S.J., in *A History of Philosophy* (New York: Double Day, 1993).

Introduction: Sources, Method, Context, and Meaning (Faith seeking Understanding)

Reading: Medieval Philosophy: From Augustine to Duns Scotus, Frederick Copleston, S.J., in *A History of Philosophy* (New York: Double Day, 1993), Chapter I and Chapter XXII.

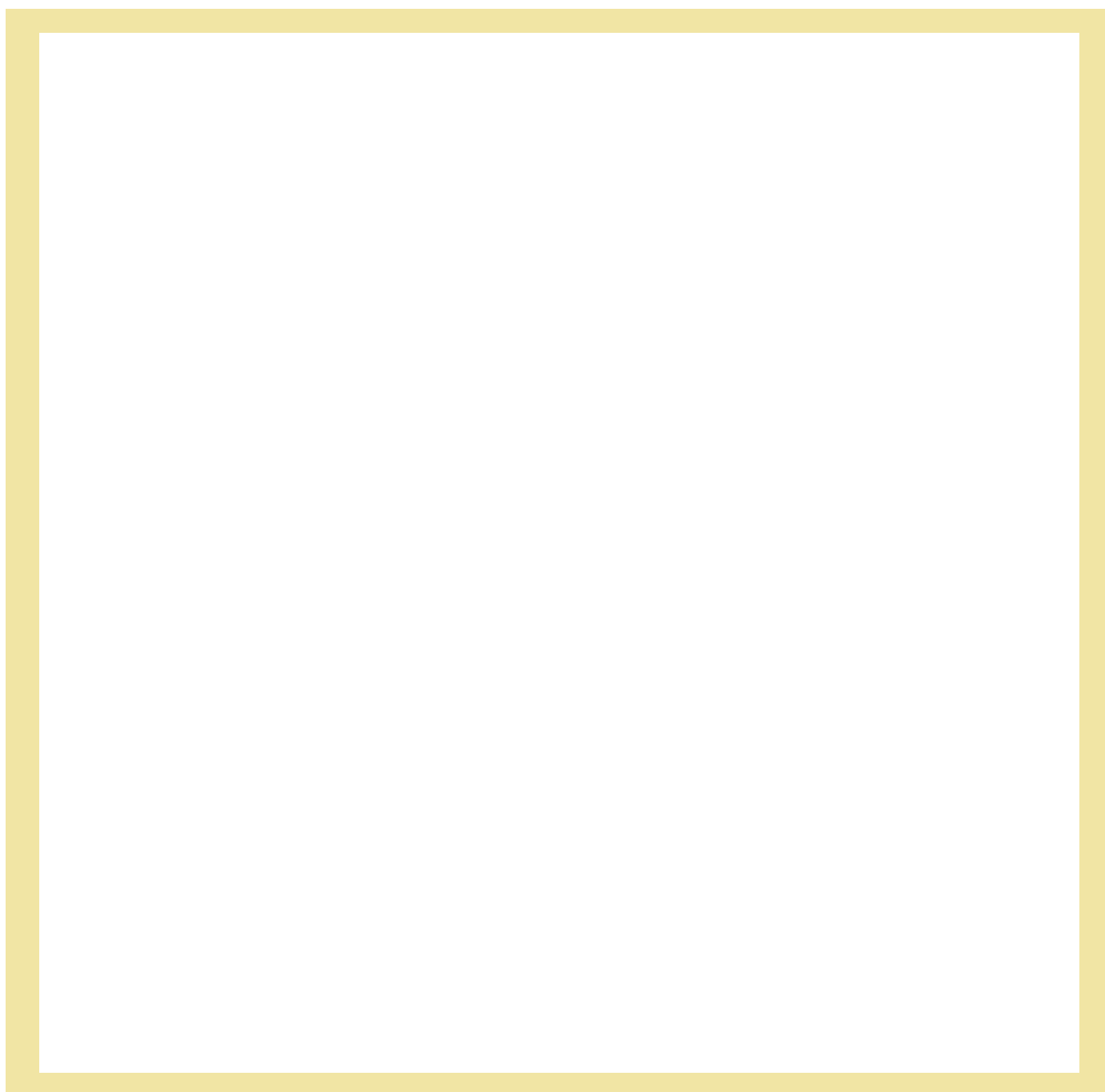
What is the spirit of medieval philosophy?

How is medieval philosophy related to the Catholic Church?

Why is it important?

Introduction: Sources, Method, Context, and Meaning (Faith seeking Understanding)

Notes:



Faith and Reason I: Augustinian Approaches

Reading: Medieval Philosophy, III.

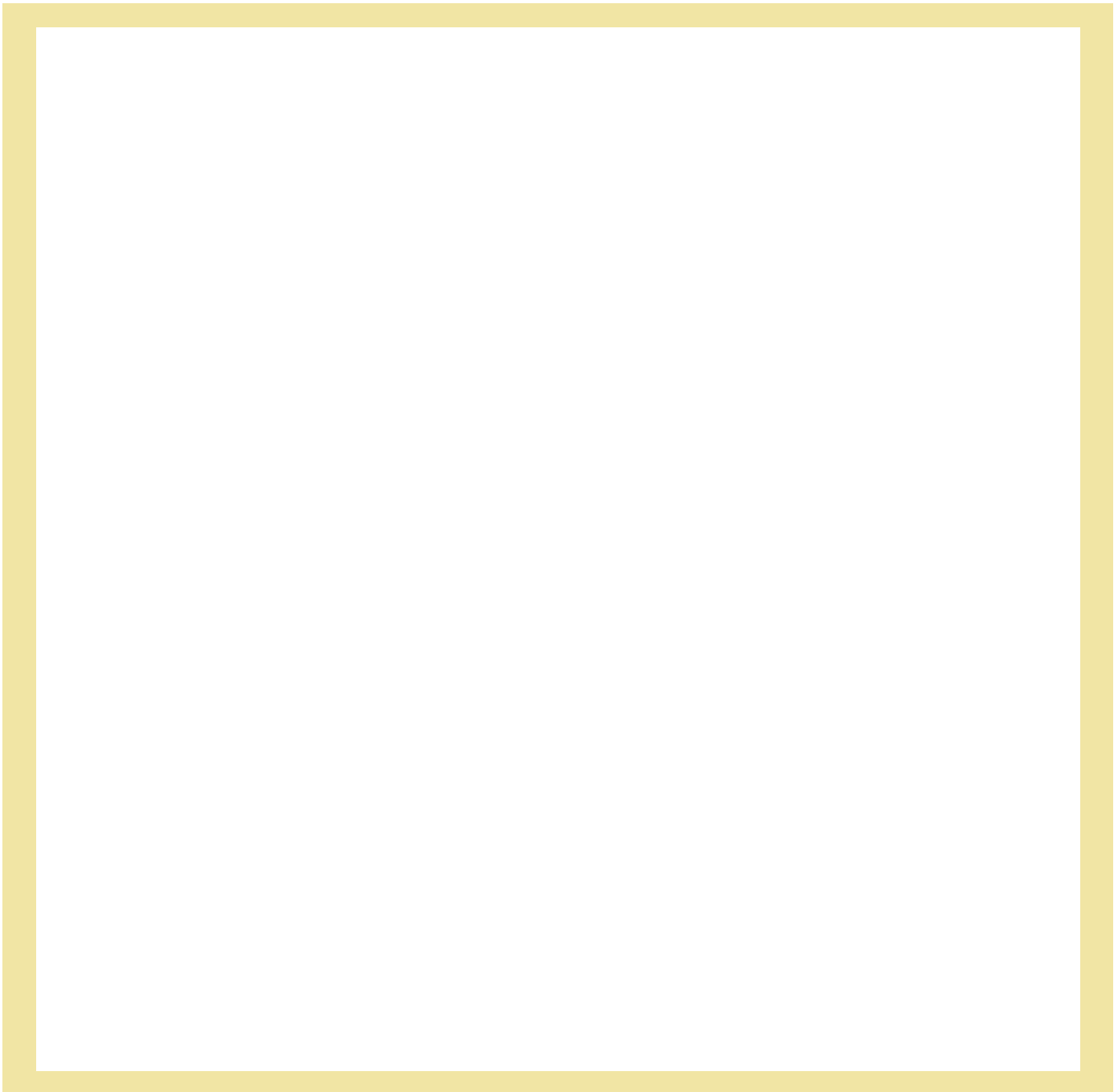
What is the relationship of faith and reason?

Why is faith superior to reason?

Why does S. Augustine say that Christianity is the true philosophy?

Faith and Reason I: Augustinian Approaches

Notes:



Faith and Reason II: Latin Averroism

Reading: Medieval Philosophy, XLII (42).

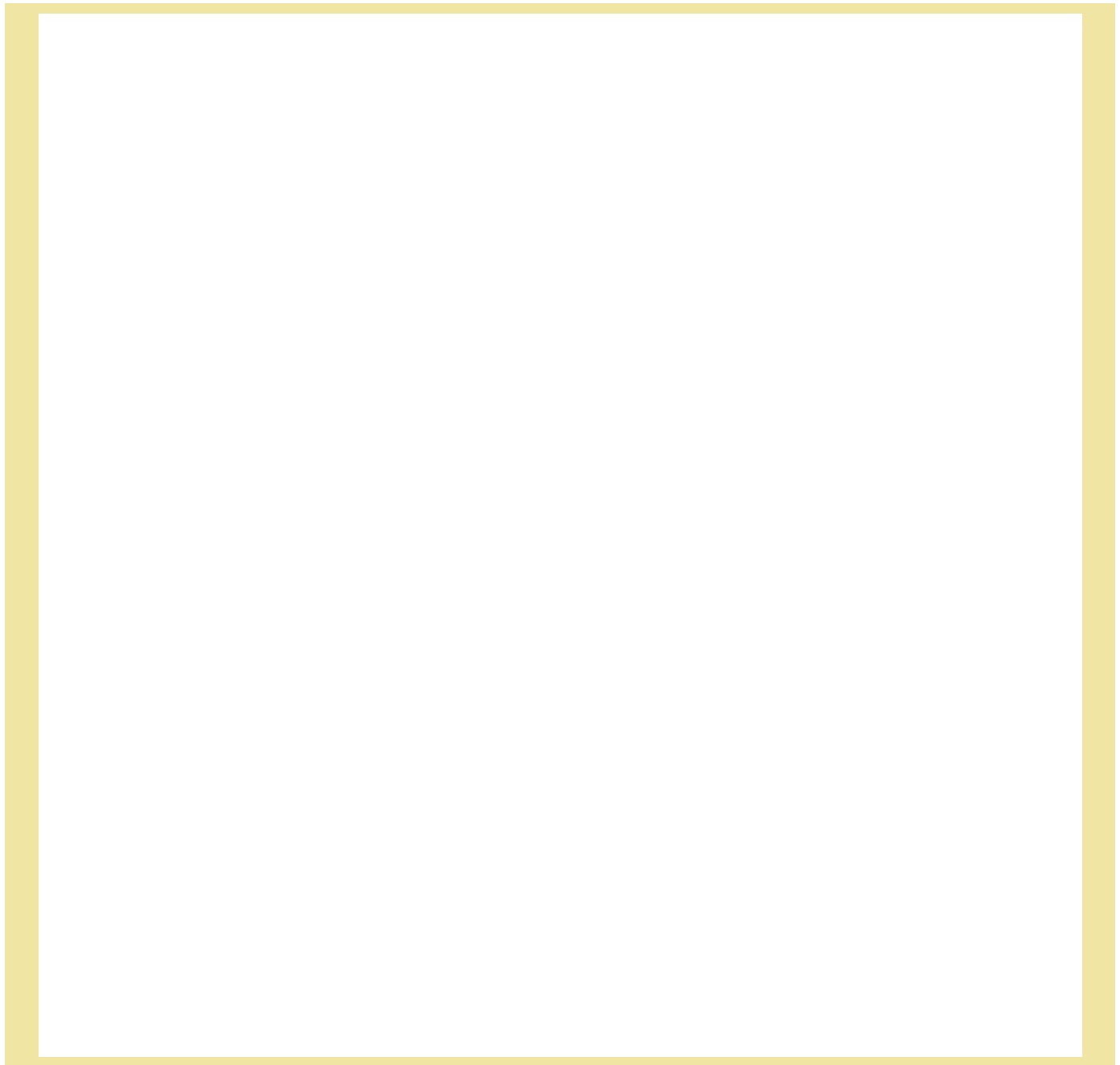
Whether there are two kinds of truth?

Is philosophy autonomous from theology?

What happens when faith and reason collide?

Faith and Reason II: Latin Averroism

Notes:



Faith and Reason III: Saint Thomas Aquinas

Reading: Medieval Philosophy, XXXII.

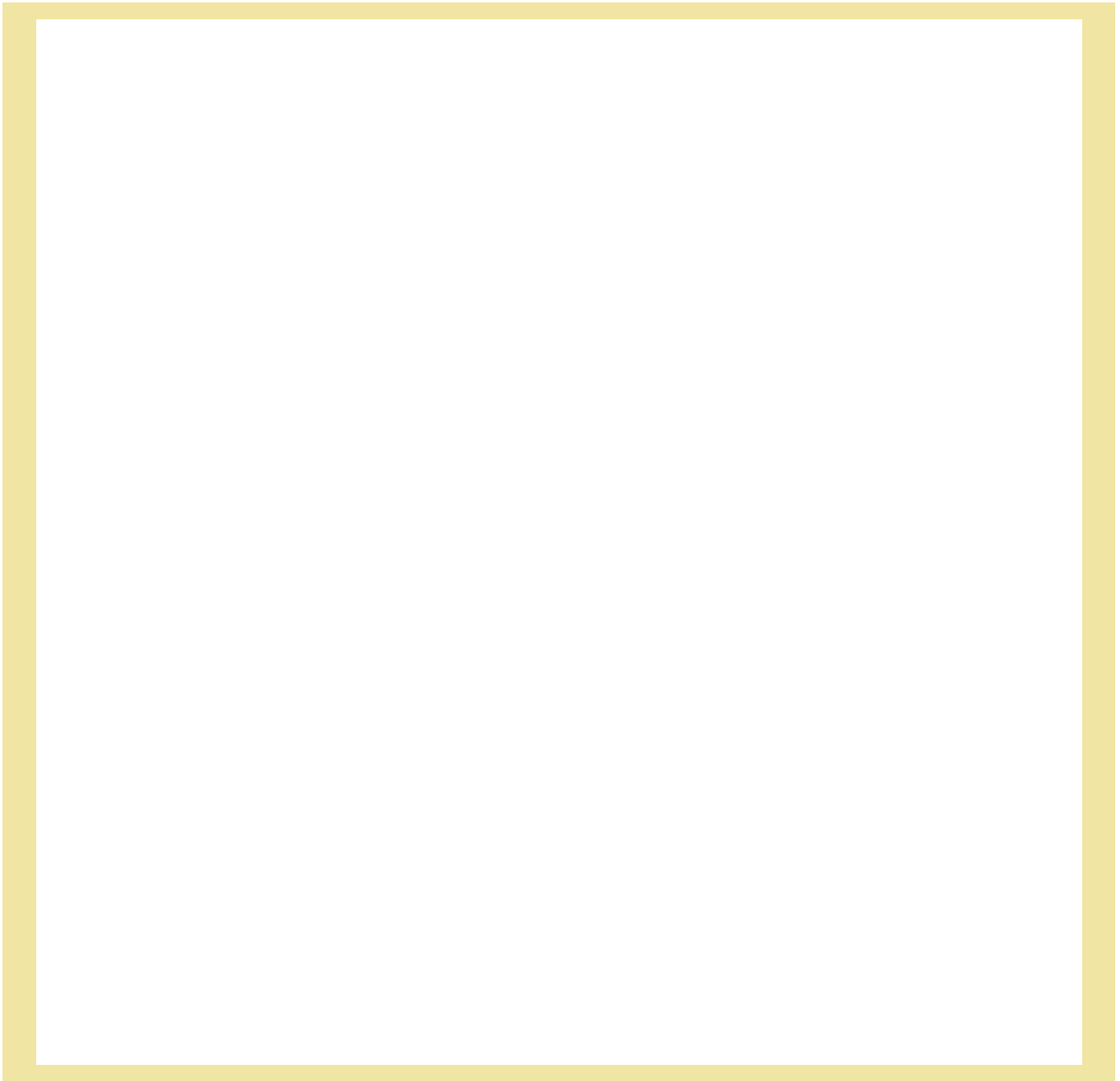
What is the basis of truth?

Why must truth be consistent?

How does Saint Thomas refute Latin Averroism?

Faith and Reason III: Saint Thomas Aquinas

Notes:



Anselm: The Existence of God

Reading: Medieval Philosophy, XV.

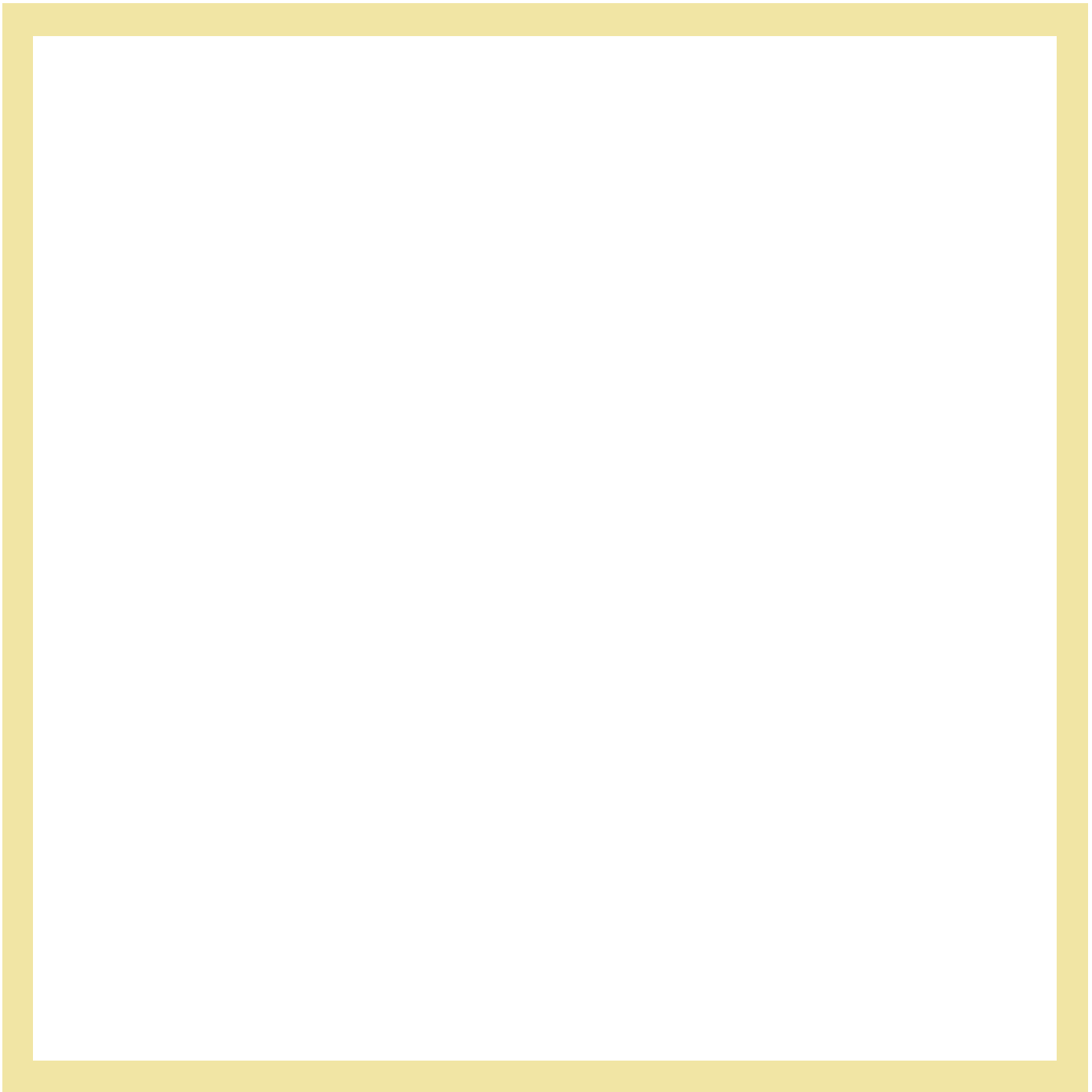
Whether it is possible to demonstrate the existence of God with one argument?

What is the best way to describe God?

Why ontological argument often criticized?

Anselm: The Existence of God

Notes:



Thomas Aquinas: The Divine Names

Reading: Medieval Philosophy, XXXV, sections 1-5.

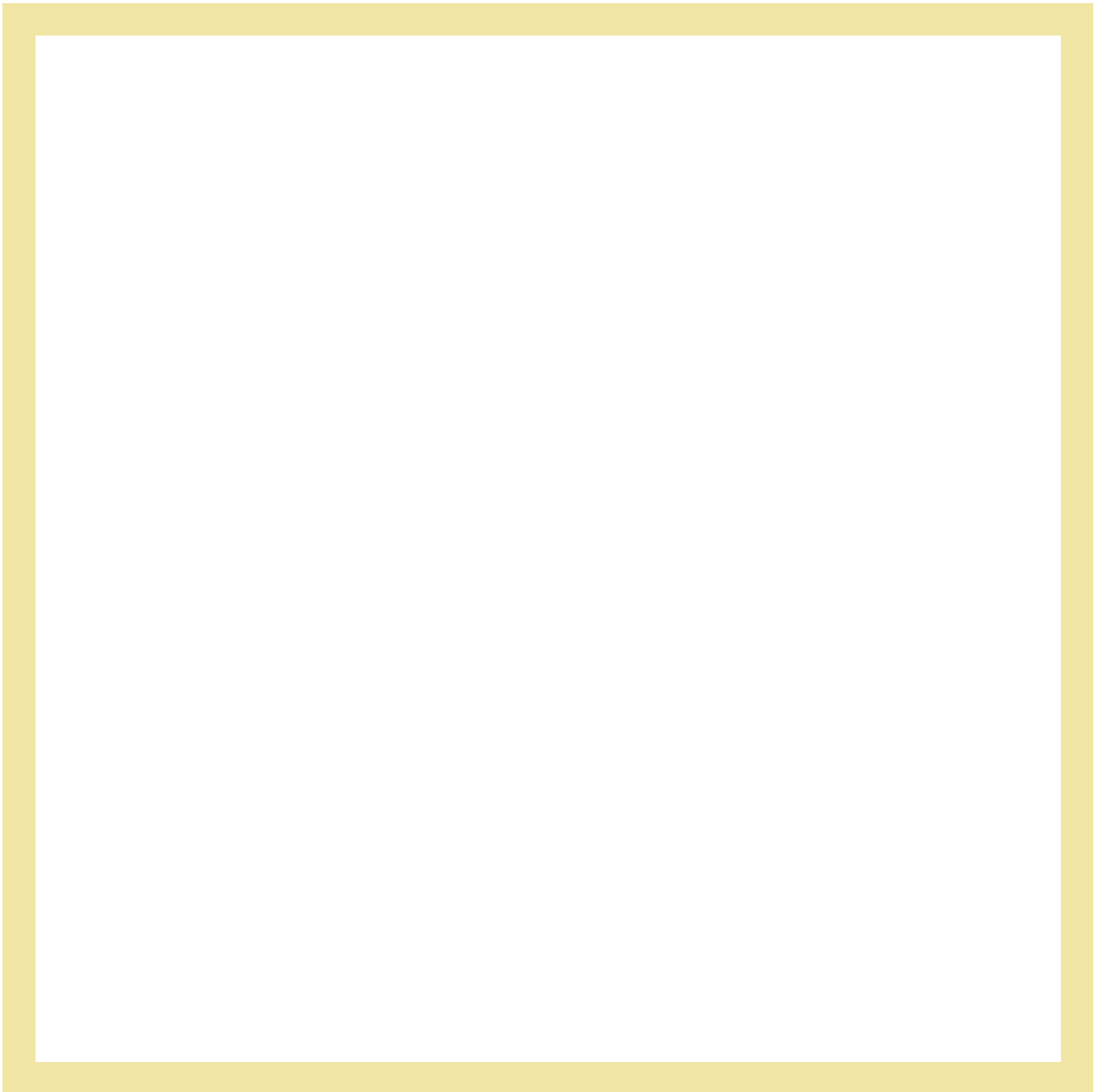
What is the via negativa?

What is analogy?

How should we talk about God?

Thomas Aquinas: The Divine Names

Notes:



Duns Scotus: Univocal Naming of God

Reading: Medieval Philosophy, XLVII (46), sections 1-3.

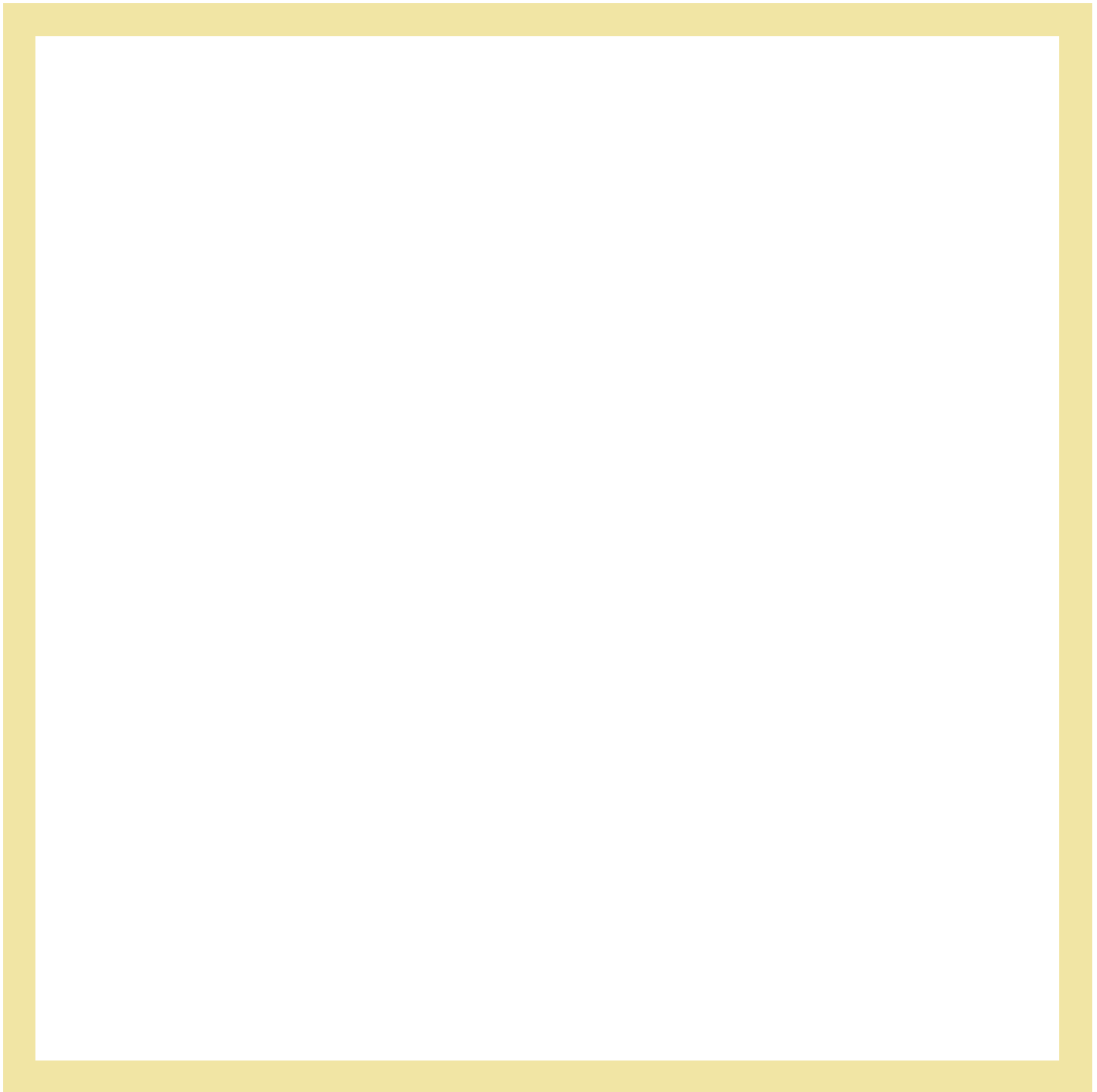
Whether “being” always has the same meaning?

In what way are the “names of God” similar and different from ordinary names.

How do Thomas and Scotus differ?

Duns Scotus: Univocal Naming of God

Notes:



Augustine: Divine Illumination

Reading: Medieval Philosophy, IV

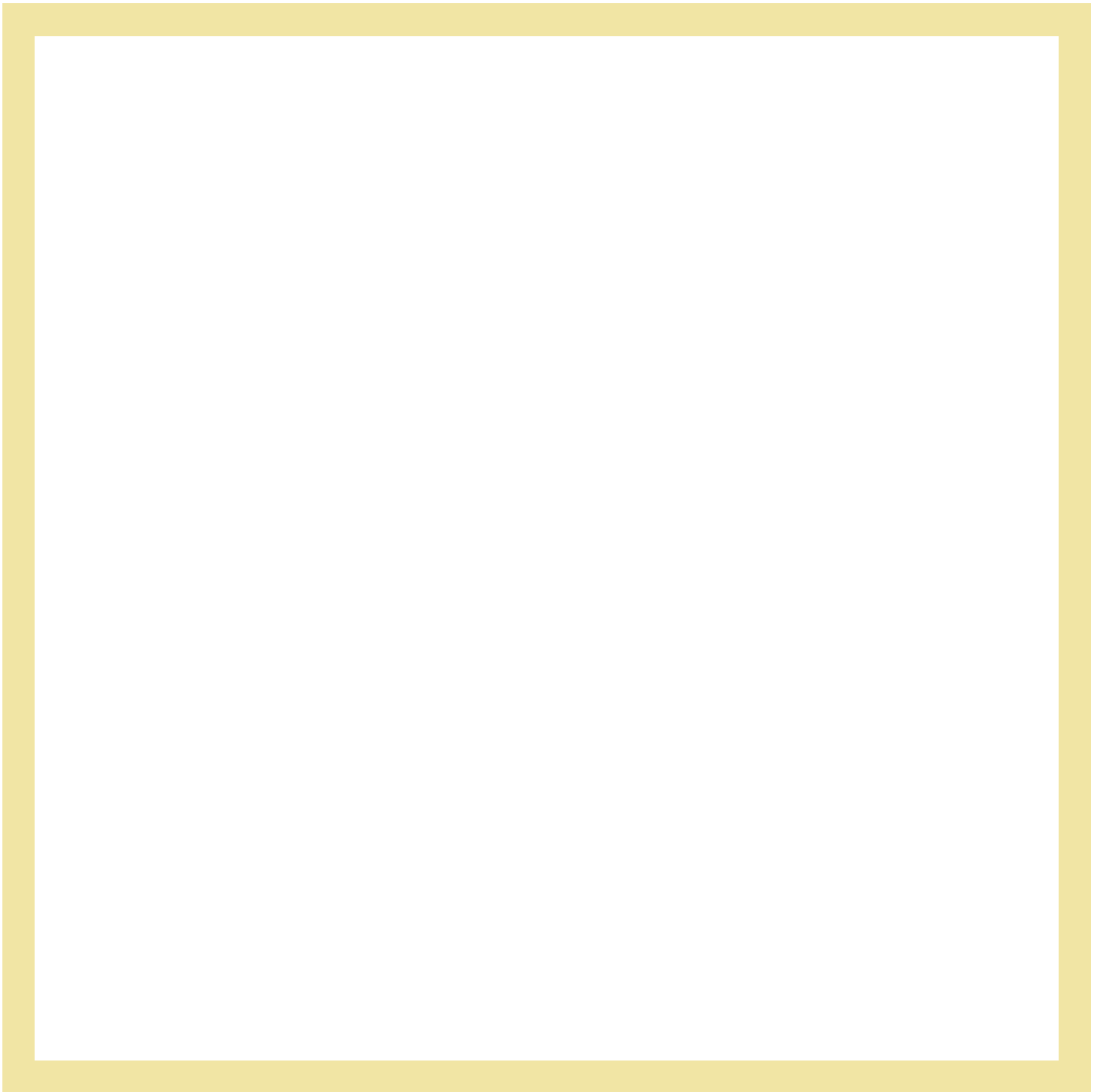
How does human knowledge demonstrate the existence of God?

How is Augustine's doctrine related to Platonism?

Do universals really exist?

Augustine: Divine Illumination

Notes:



Thomas Aquinas: Experience and Abstraction

Reading: Medieval Philosophy, XXXVIII.

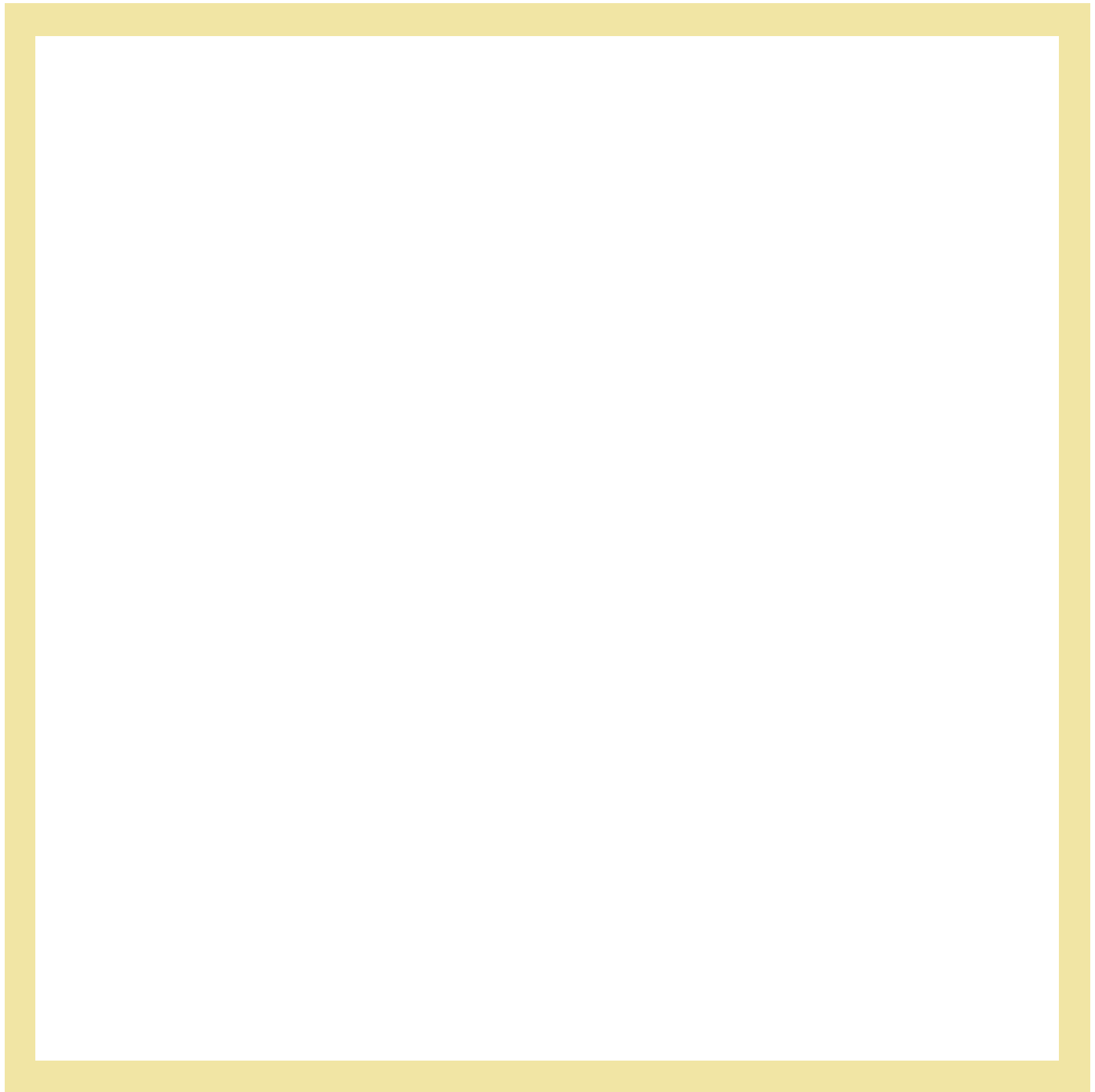
Why does Thomas not adopt illumination?

How does abstraction differ from illumination?

Do universals really exist?

Thomas Aquinas: Experience and Abstraction

Notes:



William of Ockham: Nominalism

Reading: Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy:
<https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/ockham/#TheoKnow>

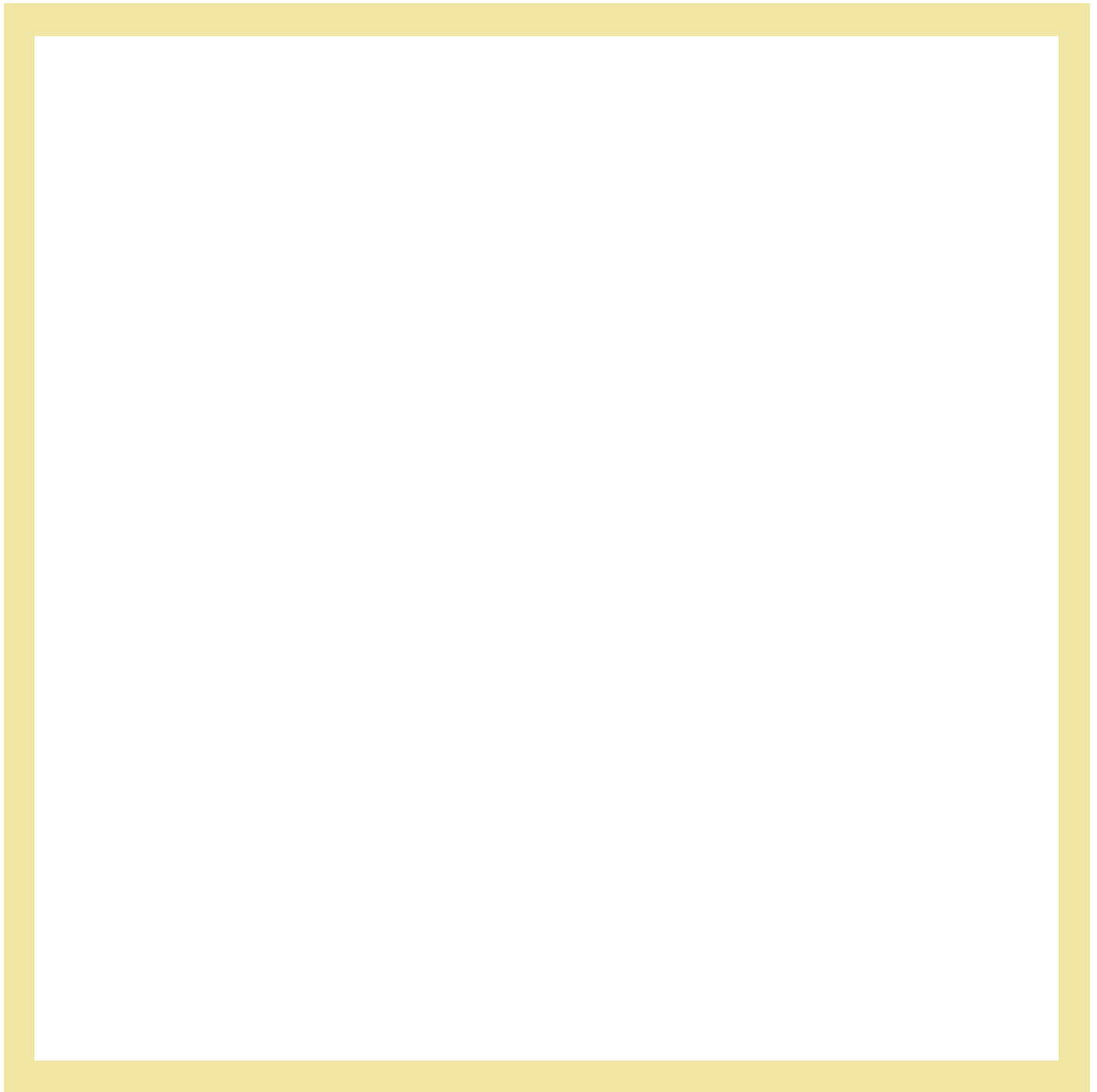
What is the relationship between language and universals?

Do you universals really exist?

What are the implications of nominalism?

William of Ockham: Nominalism

Notes:



Thomas Aquinas: Law and Morality

Suggested reading: Medieval Philosophy, XXXIX.

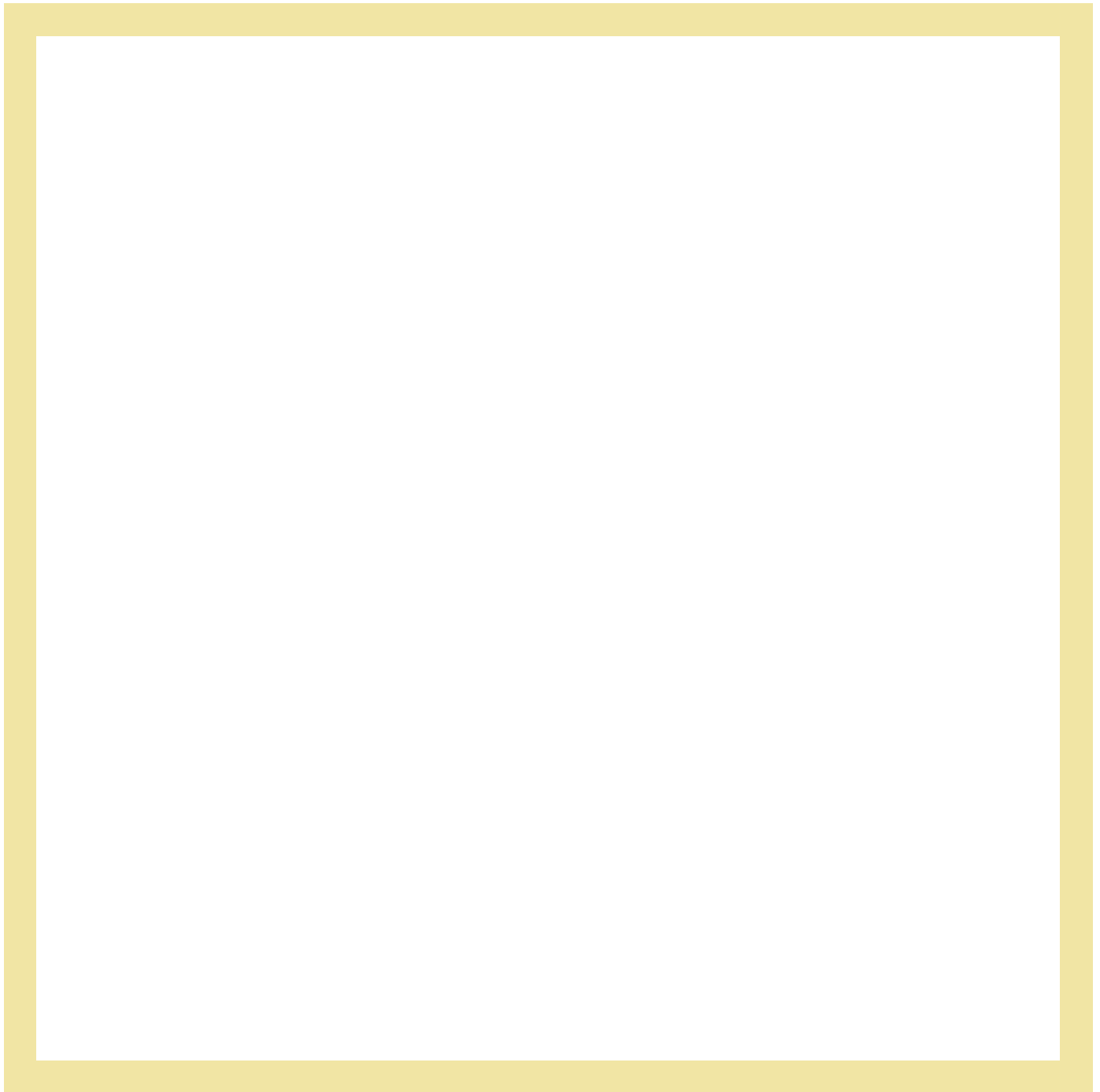
What is the basis of natural law?

How does natural law relate to God?

Is natural law changeable?

Thomas Aquinas: Law and Morality

Notes:



Thomas Aquinas: Church and State

Reading: Medieval Philosophy, XL (40).

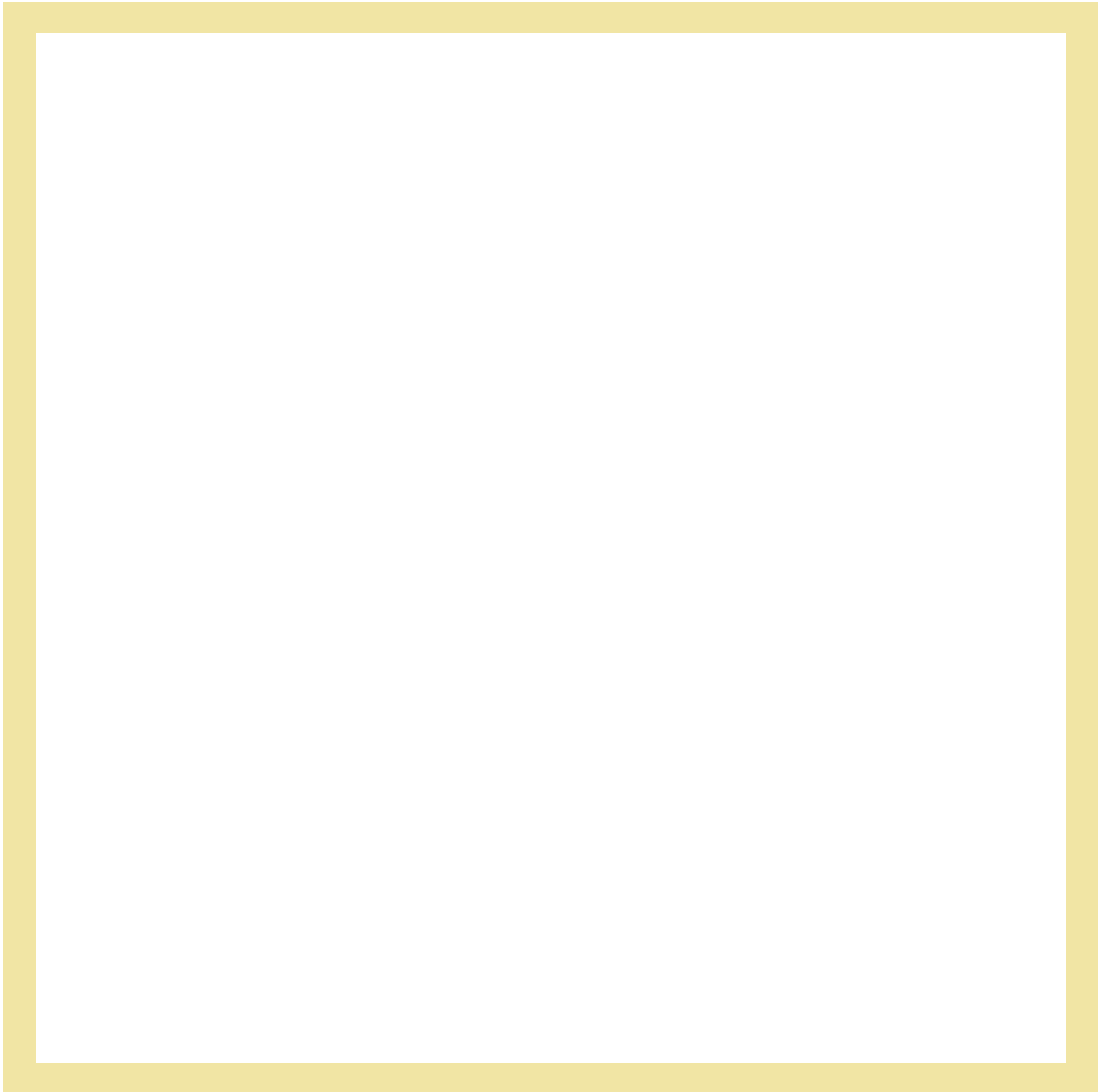
What is the purpose of the political community?

How should a Christian king rule?

What is the relationship between church and state?

Thomas Aquinas: Church and State

Notes:



Scotus: Law and the Will

Reading: Medieval Philosophy, L (50).

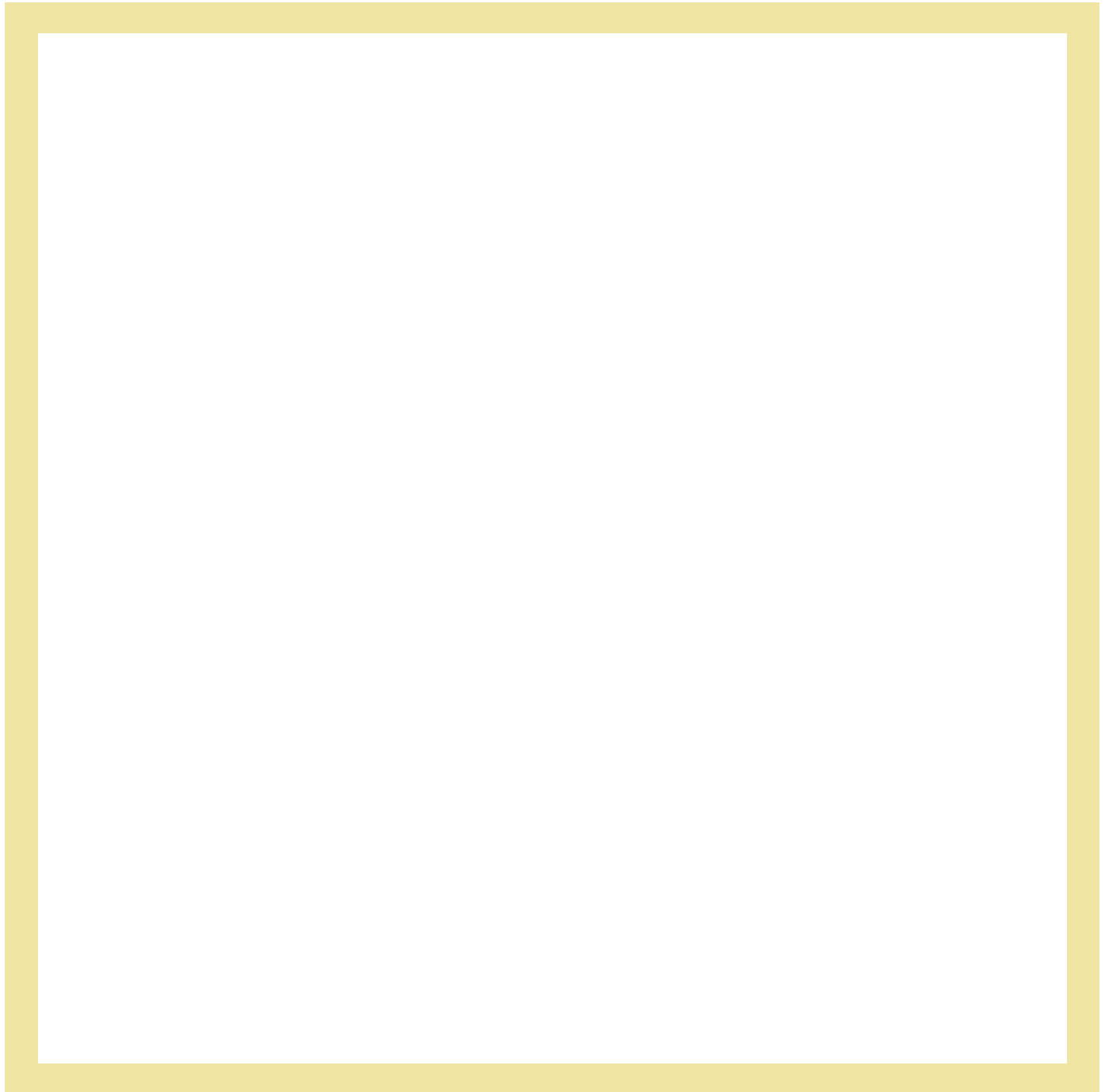
What is will for Scotus?

What is the relationship of the moral law to God?

How do Thomas and Scotus differ regarding the moral law?

Scotus: Law and the Will

Notes:



Ockham: Morality, Church, and State

Reading: Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy:
<https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/ockham/#Ethi>,
<https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/ockham/#PoliPhil>

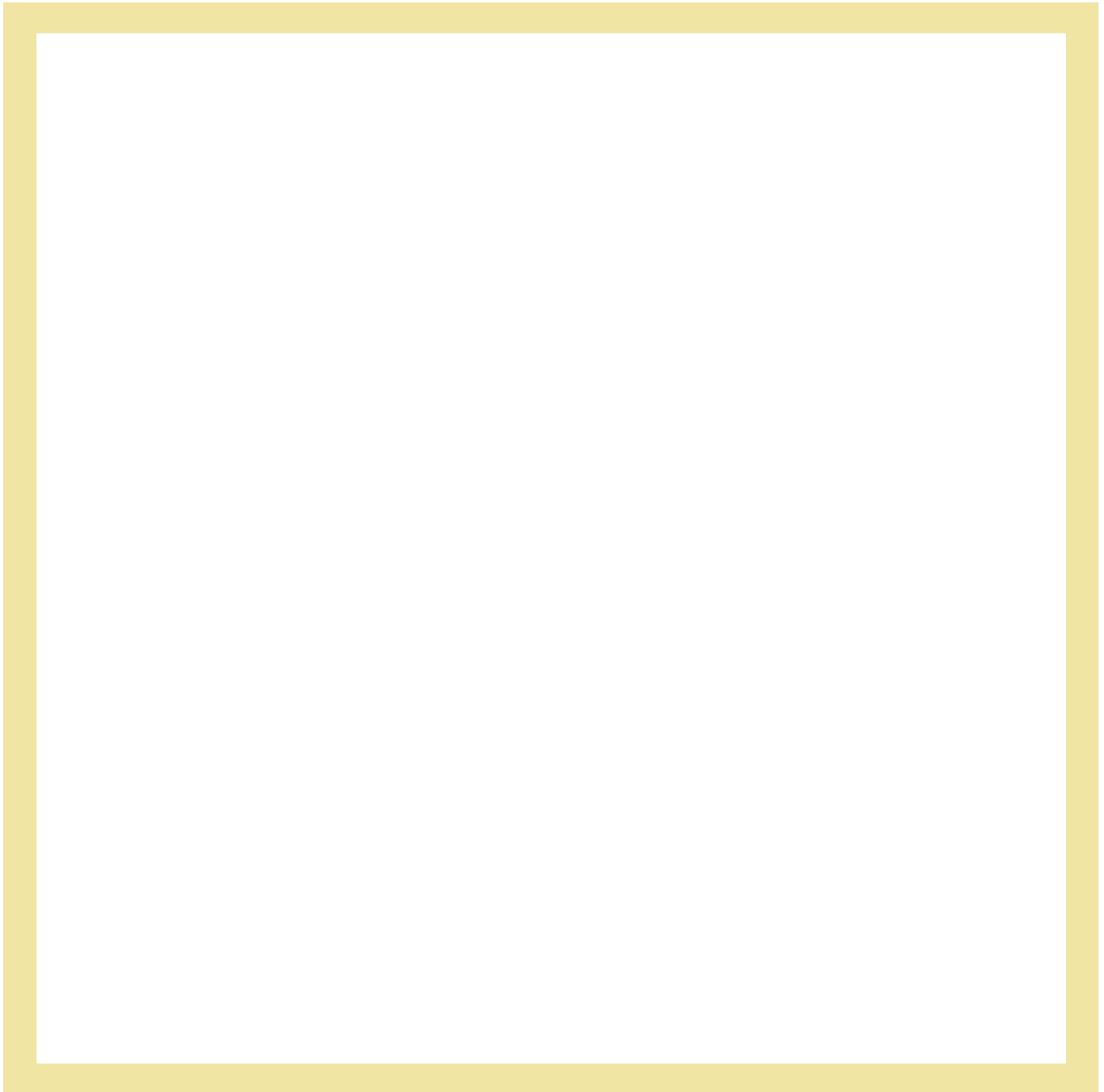
What is the basis of morality?

What is the basis of political authority?

What is the relationship church and state?

Ockham: Morality, Church, and State

Notes:



Faith Seeking Understanding: The Continuing Relevance of Medieval Philosophy

Reading: Medieval Philosophy, LI (51).

Again, what is medieval philosophy?

What are the most achievements of medieval philosophy?

What are the best lessons we can learn from medieval philosophy?

Faith Seeking Understanding: The Continuing Relevance of Medieval Philosophy

Notes:

