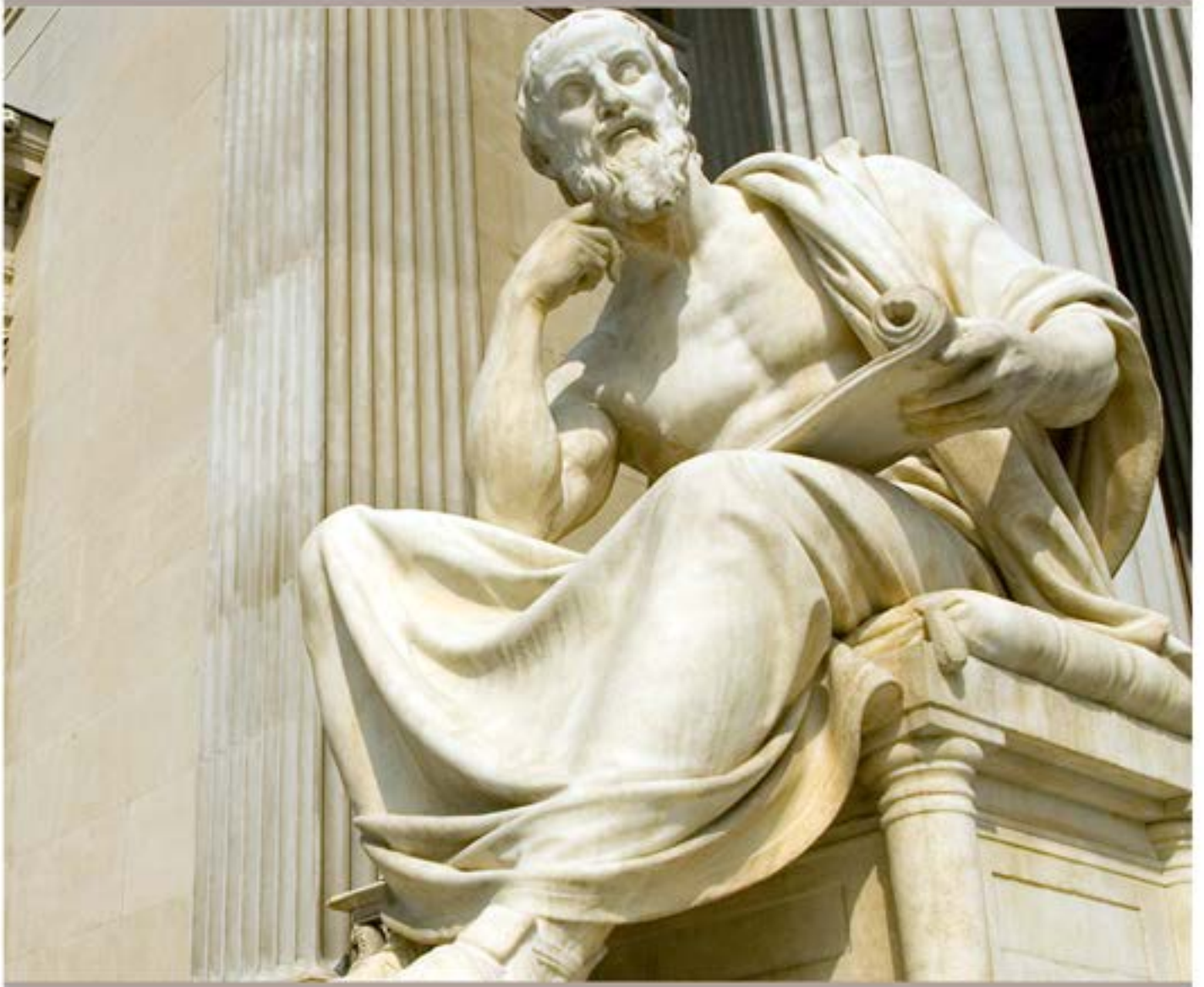

REFORMED  THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
DISTANCE EDUCATION



HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY AND CHRISTIAN THOUGHT
DR. JAMES N. ANDERSON



Course Overview

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Course Description:

OST504 History of Philosophy and Christian Thought, 3 hours
Lecturing Professor and Professor of Record:
Dr. James N. Anderson

A critical, historical survey of the development of the main schools of philosophy and the principle developments in Christian doctrine and thought. After a brief introduction to philosophical thinking, the course concentrates on philosophical movements from Heraclitus to contemporary existentialism. Each school of thought is evaluated from a distinctively Reformed perspective.

Course Objectives:

- To familiarize the student with some of the major movements, figures, and texts in the history of Western philosophy, both Christian and non-Christian
- To introduce the student to the “big ideas” that have dominated philosophical debates over the centuries and their significance for Christian theology and apologetics
- To encourage the student to analyze the history of Western thought in terms of conflicting worldviews; and more specifically, in terms of deviations from the biblical worldview
- To develop the student’s critical thinking skills through the close reading and analysis of primary sources
- To help the student to appreciate the importance and utility of philosophical thinking

Required Textbooks:

Frame, John M. *A History of Western Philosophy and Theology*. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2015.

_____. “How to Write a Theological Paper,” Appendix F in *The Doctrine of the Knowledge of God*. Phillipsburg: P&R, 1987.

[A copy of this will be made available on the LMS Course Home Page.]

Various primary source readings that will be distributed to the student in the Learning Management System (LMS).

[These books may also be available in ebook format through various retailers]

Online Student Handbook:

The [Online Student Handbook](#) has been designed to assist you in successfully navigating the Distance Education experience, whether you are taking a single course or pursuing a certificate or degree program. In it you will find valuable information, step-by-step instructions, study helps, and essential forms to guide you through every aspect of your distance education opportunity from registration to graduation. Please use this resource as your first-stop reference manual.

Summary of Requirements:

1. Listen to all recorded [Lectures](#)
2. Complete all [Readings](#)
3. Participate in [Forum Discussions](#) (with other students and the professor)
4. Take the [Midterm Exam](#)
5. Take the [Final Exam](#)
6. Submit [Research Paper](#)
7. Submit [Reading Requirement](#)
8. Submit [Mentor Report or Course Application Paper](#)

Meet the Professor

Lecturing Professor and Professor of Record:



Dr. James Anderson is an ordained minister in the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church. Dr. Anderson came to RTS from Edinburgh, Scotland, and specializes in philosophical theology, religious epistemology, and Christian apologetics. His doctoral thesis at the University of Edinburgh explored the paradoxical nature of certain Christian doctrines and the implications for the rationality of Christian faith. His research and writing has also focused on the presuppositionalism of Cornelius Van Til, particularly his advocacy of the transcendental argument. Dr. Anderson has a longstanding concern to bring the Reformed theological tradition into greater dialogue with contemporary analytic philosophy. Before studying philosophy, Dr. Anderson also earned a Ph.D. in Computer Simulation

from the University of Edinburgh. He is a member of the Society of Christian Philosophers, the British Society for the Philosophy of Religion, and the Evangelical Philosophical Society. Prior to joining RTS Charlotte, Dr. Anderson served as an assistant pastor at the historic Charlotte Chapel in Edinburgh where he engaged in regular preaching, teaching, and pastoral ministry. He is active now in service at Ballantyne Presbyterian Church in Charlotte. He is married to Catriona and they have three children. You can follow his blog at www.proginosko.com or on Twitter [@proginosko](https://twitter.com/proginosko)

Selected Publications by Dr. Anderson

Paradox in Christian Theology: An Analysis of Its Presence, Character, and Epistemic Status. Paternoster Theological Monographs. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2007.

What's Your Worldview?: An Interactive Approach to Life's Big Questions. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2014.

"The Lord of Noncontradiction: An Argument for God from Logic" co-authored with Greg Welty, *Philosophia Christi* 13:2. 2011.

Review of *Analytic Theology: New Essays in the Philosophy of Theology* edited by Oliver Crisp and Michael Rea, *Ars Disputandi* 11. 2011.

"No Dilemma for the Proponent of the Transcendental Argument: A Response to David Reiter," *Philosophia Christi* 13:1 2011.

Review of *The Reformed Objection to Natural Theology* by Michael Sudduth, *Themelios* 35:2 2010.

Grades

Forum Discussions (15%):

The student is required to interact in two (2) forums:

1. Student-Professor Posts (15 total posts)
 - A. Personal Introduction Forum: The student is required to post a brief personal introduction to the professor/class. Suggested details include your vocation, where you live, your church background, why you chose RTS, and what you hope to gain through the course (1 required post).
 - B. 5 Topical Discussion Q&A Forums: The student is required to answer each topical discussion question with one (1) response. The professor will acknowledge the student's answer and will follow up with a subsequent question to which the student must also answer with one (1) response. Each topical discussion question therefore requires two (2) total posts/responses from the student (Total of 5 forums x 2 posts = 10 total posts).
 - C. Student-Professor Forum: The student is required to post four (4) times in this forum. Posts in this forum should focus on course-related content such as research paper topics, lectures and reading assignments, or other academic issues related to the course.
2. Student-Student Forum (5 total posts)

A post may be either a new topic or a response to an already existing topic.

Examinations (Midterm 20%, Final 30%):

There are two examinations for this course. The midterm exam will cover lessons 1-6. The format of the exam will be a series of multiple-choice questions based on the material covered to date. Use the Lesson Questions to assist you in your study. You will have one hour to complete the exam.

The final exam will be cumulative covering all lessons, 1-15. You should review all of the class material and all of the required reading in preparation for the exam. Use the Lesson Questions to assist you in your study. The format for the final exam will be a series of ten (10) short essay questions in which you are required to choose three (3) to respond to. Responses should be approximately five paragraphs (500 words) in length. You have three hours to complete the exam.

The midterm and final exams for this course are to be taken online in the LMS. Please note that you will need to have a proctor for your exams. Your proctor can be anyone except a relative or current RTS Student. After clicking on the exam link you will be given detailed instructions about the exam. Please read these instructions carefully before entering the exam.

Research Paper (25%):

The student will write a paper 3500–4500 words, excluding footnotes that discusses one of the thinkers covered in class who took a distinctive position on one major philosophical issue. See section titled “[Research Paper Instructions](#)” in this syllabus.

Reading Report (5%):

The student must complete all of the required reading. Reading assignments are broken down week by week within the LMS. The Reading Report will indicate the amount of required reading that has been completed during the semester and must be filled out and submitted at the end of the course.

Mentor Report OR Course Application Paper (5%):

If you are enrolled in an **RTS Global** degree program, you are required to submit a mentor report at the end of the course. Every portion of the form (goals, summaries, assessments, and signatures) should be completely filled out by both the student and the mentor to receive full credit. You can download the Mentor Report form in your Canvas classroom.

If you are receiving your degree through another **RTS campus** (Orlando, Jackson, Charlotte, et. al.), or are a certificate student, or special student (i.e. from another seminary), you are asked to write a 200 word summary of how you perceive what you have learned in this course will fit into the objectives you have for your ministry, your educational goals, or other objectives you wish to achieve in life. Course Application Papers (CAP) that fall well-short of 200 words will receive a grade deduction.

Assignments:

Best practice for your time management is for you to submit all assignments at the end of the week in which they fall, using the upload links provided in the LMS. All work must be submitted by midnight of the course end date, per your course start letter. You are responsible for turning in all assignments on time; no late submissions are permitted. Any student who needs an extension must get approval from the Registrar prior to that time.

Contact Information:

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Web site: www.rts.edu/global

Lessons

Lesson One
Introduction to Philosophy and Worldviews

Lesson Two
The First Philosophers

Lesson Three
The Big Three

Lesson Four
Late Greek Philosophy

Lesson Five
Early Christian Philosophy

Lesson Six
Medieval Philosophy

Lesson Seven
The Renaissance and The Reformation

Lesson Eight
Early Modern Philosophy
Part I - Continental Rationalism

Lesson Nine
Early Modern Philosophy
Part II - British Empiricism

Lesson Ten
The Apologists

Lesson Eleven
Late Modern Philosophy
Part I - Idealism and Anti-Idealism

Lesson Twelve
Late Modern Philosophy
Part II - Existentialism

Lesson Thirteen
Analytic Philosophy

Lesson Fourteen
Postmodern Philosophy

Lesson Fifteen
Twentieth-Century Christian Philosophy



Research Paper Instructions

The student will write a paper 3500–4500 words, excluding footnotes, that discusses one of the thinkers covered in class who took a distinctive position on one major philosophical issue.

Here are some examples, but feel free to formulate your own:

1. Leibniz, Hume, or Plantinga on the existence of God
2. Aristotle, Aquinas, or Descartes on the nature of the soul
3. Hobbes, Locke, or Berkeley on the reality of matter
4. Plato, Ockham, or Derrida on the reality of universals
5. Augustine, Hegel, or Marx on the goal of history
6. Kant, Van Til, or Rorty on the possibility of knowledge

The paper should include detailed interaction with at least one primary source from your chosen thinker. It should also make use of a good number of secondary sources and include all of the following:

1. A concise explanation of the philosophical issue in question.
2. An exposition of the position on the issue taken by your chosen thinker and his reasons for taking that position, with reference to your primary sources. You should also indicate how this thinker's views were influenced by his historical context.
3. A critical evaluation of that position in light of both reason and Scripture.
4. An explanation of your own position on the issue (compared and contrasted with that of your chosen thinker).
5. A brief discussion of the significance of the philosophical issue in question for Christian doctrine or practice.
6. A standard bibliography (see below on sources and citations).

At least eight (8) scholarly sources should be cited.

- For the purposes of this paper, a scholarly source is a book or article by a recognized expert in the field (and not aimed at a popular level for a general audience)—ideally one that has been peer-reviewed.
- Wikipedia is clearly not a scholarly source.
- That said, with sufficient discernment, Wikipedia can be a useful pointer to scholarly sources and is generally reliable for fact-checking on noncontroversial issues.
- Please consult me if you have any doubts about whether a source is scholarly.
- You should not rely heavily on Internet sources. Use the library!

The paper should be word-processed, not hand-written.

- Use a 12-point font and double line-spacing for the main text.

- Use section headings where applicable to improve readability.
- Use footnotes (10-point font) rather than endnotes.
- Use the guidelines in the current edition of *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, by Kate L. Turabian.

The paper should be submitted with a title page containing all of the following:

1. The name and year of the course;
2. Your name; the professor's name;
3. The title of the paper; and
4. The exact word count for the main text of the paper (obtained from your word processor's word-count feature).

You will be penalized if you do not observe the requirements and guidelines above.

The following rubric contains some of the key criteria by which your paper may be graded:

1. **Clear & Viable Thesis:** The paper puts forth a viable thesis that is clearly stated and can be reasonably defended in a paper of the assigned length.
2. **Structure & Argumentation:** The paper has a logical structure and provides appropriate argumentation in support of the thesis.
3. **Use of Resources:** The paper uses the proper number and types of resources. This includes using diverse, quality resources in a responsible manner.
4. **Turabian Formatting:** The paper is properly formatted according to the RTS Turabian guidelines. These guidelines can be downloaded within your course on the "Notebook" page.
5. **Depth of Paper:** The paper has depth that reflects scholarly research, critical analysis, theological insight, and creativity.
6. **Presentation of Paper:** The paper reflects good grammar, spelling, and punctuation, with clarity of expression and appropriate academic style.

Course Objectives Related to MAR Student Learning Outcomes

Course: History of Philosophy and Christian Thought
Professor: Dr. James N. Anderson

MAR Student Learning Outcomes <i>In order to measure the success of the MAR curriculum, RTS has defined the following as the intended outcomes of the student learning process. Each course contributes to these overall outcomes. This rubric shows the contribution of this course to the MAR outcomes.</i>		Rubric ➤ Strong ➤ Moderate ➤ Minimal ➤ None	Mini-Justification
Articulation (oral & written)	Broadly understands and articulates knowledge, both oral and written, of essential biblical, theological, historical, and cultural/global information, including details, concepts, and frameworks.	Moderate	1. Critical review/application paper 2. Final exam tests knowledge and articulation of course topics 3. Class discussion questions testing understanding and application
Scripture	Significant knowledge of the original meaning of Scripture. Also, the concepts for and skill to research further into the original meaning of Scripture and to apply Scripture to a variety of modern circumstances. (Includes appropriate use of original languages and hermeneutics; and integrates theological, historical, and cultural/global perspectives.)	Moderate	1. Evaluates philosophical ideas and movements in light of Scripture 2. Influences on modern hermeneutics 3. Discusses different approaches to Scripture in history of Christian thought
Reformed Theology	Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards.	Minimal	1. Evaluates philosophical ideas from Reformed perspective 2. Discusses Reformation as intellectual/cultural movement
Sanctification	Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student's sanctification.	Minimal	1. Encourages application of Matthew 22:37 ("with all your mind")
Desire for Worldview	Burning desire to conform all of life to the Word of God.	Strong	1. Emphasizes understanding and application of biblical worldview 2. Discusses philosophical implications of biblical worldview 3. Christian worldview contrasted with non-Christian worldviews
Winsomely Reformed	Embraces a winsomely Reformed ethos. (Includes an appropriate ecumenical spirit with other Christians, especially Evangelicals; a concern to present the Gospel in a God-honoring manner to non-Christians; and a truth-in-love attitude in disagreements.)	Moderate	1. Appreciation for insights from non-Reformed traditions and non-Christian philosophies (common grace) 2. Application of philosophical criticism to apologetics and evangelism
Teach	Ability to teach the meaning of Scripture to both heart and mind with clarity and enthusiasm.	Minimal	1. Understanding modernism and postmodernism aids preaching and teaching in 21 st century
Church/World	Ability to interact within a denominational context, within the broader worldwide church, and with significant public issues.	Minimal	Appreciation for breadth of Christian philosophical tradition
MAR Specific SLO	An ability to integrate such knowledge and understanding into one's own calling in society	Minimal	Understanding modernism and postmodernism helps diagnose intellectual problems for 21 st century Christians