2ST504, History of Philosophy and Christian Thought

Course Handbook

RTS/Orlando, Fall Term, 2009

Meetings

Wednesdays, 8-10 AM

Instructor

John M. Frame

My stated office hours this term are Mondays, 8-11 AM, others by appointment. I'm in my office most mornings, and if my door is ajar I'll be happy to see you. Feel free to write me at jframe@rts.edu. I will probably give a better answer to your question by email than in person, but I realize that sometimes face-to-face meetings are better.

Teaching Assistant

Berek Smith, berek.qinah@gmail.com, or berek@berek.net. Berek is also available to help you. He will be evaluating your written assignments.

Objectives

1. To inform students about the main thinkers in the history of philosophy, Reformed theology, and liberal theology.
2. To show the interaction of philosophy and theology, especially the influence of philosophy on our theological formulations.
3. To illumine the spiritual warfare that takes place in the intellectual movements of human history.
4. To give students critical tools to evaluate, not only thinkers of past history, but future thinkers as well.

Assignments

1. Regular attendance, preparation of assigned material each day for discussion. Students who are often late, absent, or unprepared may be penalized.
2. One paper of roughly 3000 words, due Wed., Dec. 9, at 11 AM. Put it in
the bin marked with our course name in the area near the Administrative
Assistants.

a. Choose some thinker discussed in this course.
b. Read some of the thinker's own works, plus some secondary
sources, both assigned and unassigned.
c. Describe and explain briefly one of his distinctive theses (one for
which he is known in distinction from other thinkers).
d. Note one or more of his main arguments for that thesis.
e. Evaluate those arguments.
f. Compare his position with that of Reformed Christian Theism.

3. MidTerm Exam: a multiple choice test on the first six assignments
(through the assignment of Oct. 1). The exam will be given in the library. You can
go there to take it any time between its opening Mon., Oct. 5 to its closing Sat.,
Oct. 10. You are responsible to know the library’s opening and closing hours.

8 to the end of the course. It will be given during the official exam period, at a
place to be announced by the Seminary.

N. B.: In your preparation for the exams, do not make use of any exam
used for this course in an earlier year. If you do, it will be considered cheating, for
which RTS applies draconian penalties.

Grading

Individual assignments 1-4 will be graded on a pass-fail basis. Your final
grade will be calculated as follows:

Passing work on all four assignments—A.
Passing work on three of four assignments—B.
Passing work on two of four assignments—C.
Passing work on one of four assignments—D.
Passing work on no assignment—F.

Required Texts

Papers by Frame and Edgar can be found at www.reformedperspectives.org.
Click on “Hall of Frame,” then this course.
**ISBN-13:** 978-0664252083.

Edgar, “No News is Good News”  
Frame, “Certainty”  
  --, “Christianity and Contemporary Epistemology”  
  --, “God and Biblical Language”  
  --, “Greeks Bearing Gifts”  
  --, “Infinite Series”  
  --, “Ontological Argument”  
  --, “Transcendental Arguments”  
  --, “Van Til Reconsidered”

**Recommended, Supplementary Texts**

Andrew Hoffecker, ed., *Revolutions in Worldview* (Phillipsburg: P&R, 2007). An excellent survey of worldviews from the Greek philosophers to the present. My “Greeks Bearing Gifts” is included. Other contributors include present and former RTS professors and other well-known Reformed scholars like Vern Poythress, Peter Leithart, Carl Trueman, Richard Lints.

Donald Palmer, *Looking at Philosophy* (NY: McGraw-Hill, 2001). I have assigned this text in the three-hour version of the course. It is not Christian in its orientation, but it is a competent treatment. The writing is exceptional: very clear, engaging, with humor. Illustrated with cartoons.


Samuel Enoch Stumpf, *Socrates to Sartre and Beyond: A History of Philosophy* (NY: McGraw-Hill, 2003). Dr. MacKenzie used this book as his main text. Excellent, detailed account. I have thought that it is perhaps too technical for most seminarians, at least for a two-hour course, but I could be wrong.

**Course Schedule**

This schedule indicates roughly how the readings correlate with the lectures. I will not test you on them during the week, but it would be good for you to have completed the readings in order better to follow the lectures. I will not usually discuss the readings in class. They will cover some thinkers I may not mention in class. Mastering these texts is your responsibility. The final exam will cover both lectures and readings.
All dates are Thursdays.

**Aug. 27: Introduction; Early Greek Philosophy**

Lecture Outline (henceforth LO), 1-8.
Frame, “Greeks Bearing Gifts”

**Sept. 3: Mature Greek Philosophy**

LO, 9-14.
Allen and Springsted (henceforth AS), 1-82.

**Sept. 10: Early Christian and Medieval Thought**

LO, 14-24.
AS, 83-110.
Frame, “Ontological Argument.”
-- “Infinite Series.”

**Sept. 17: Early Modern Thought: Secular and Christian**

LO, 35-49.
AS, 111-171.
Frame, “Certainty.”

**Sept. 24: Early Liberal Theology; Kant and His Successors**

LO, 49-64.
AS, 172-218, 228-247.

**Oct. 1: Nineteenth Century Theology**

LO, 64-84.
AS, 219-228.

**OCT. 5-10 MIDTERM EXAM, on all lessons through Oct. 1.** Take it in the library any time from opening Monday to closing Saturday. You are responsible to determine when the Library is open.
Oct. 8: Phenomenology, Pragmatism, Existentialism
LO, 84-93
AS, 248-262.

Oct. 15: READING WEEK, No Class.

Oct. 22: Theology, 1920-1950
LO, 93-146.

Oct. 29: From Hermeneutics to Postmodernism; Theology 1950-2000
LO, 146-185
AS, 263-280
Edgar, “No News is Good News”

Nov. 5: Language Analysis
LO, 223-237.
AS, 281-303.
Frame, “God and Biblical Language.”
   “Christianity and Contemporary Epistemology.”

Nov. 12: Recent Reformed Philosophy
LO, 237-end.
Frame, “Transcendental Arguments.”
   --, “Van Til Reconsidered.”

NOV. 19: THANKSGIVING BREAK, no class.

Nov. 26 and Dec. 3, Catch-up, discussion.
Bibliography

Histories of Philosophy (Western), Reference Works, and Primary Sources


Descartes, Rene, A Discourse on Method and Selected Writings (NY: Dutton, 1951).


Ewing, A. C., A Short Commentary on Kant's Critique of Pure Reason (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1938, 1974).


Habermas, Jürgen, Knowledge and Human Interests (Boston: Beacon Press, 1972).


   --, On Christianity: Early Theological Writings, Int. Richard Kroner
--, From Shakespeare to Existentialism (Boston: Neacon Press, 1959).
--, Fear and Trembling; The Sickness Unto Death (Garden City: Doubleday, 1941, 1955).
Leibniz, G. W., Selections (NY: Scribner's, 1951).
Palmer, Donald, Looking at Philosophy (Mountain View: Mayfield, 1988). A simple, but very competent exposition.
Pascal, Blaise, Pensees (NY: Dutton, 1956).
Singer was a historian of Reformed convictions.
Spinoza, Selections (NY: Scribner's, 1930).
Thiselton, Anthony C., The Two Horizons (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980).
Interacts especially with Heidegger, Bultmann, Gadamer, and Wittgenstein.

Oriental Philosophy


**Recent Philosophy of Religion**

Flew, Antony, and MacIntyre, Alasdair, New Essays in Philosophical Theology (London: SCM Press, 1955, 1958). 274. H. This volume was one of the earliest collections of essays representing the modern analytic approach to philosophy of religion.
Hamilton, Kenneth, Words and the Word (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971). 2.95. 119. P.
---, The Varieties of Belief (NY: Humanities Press, 1973). 189. H. Helm is one of the few Calvinists among contemporary analytic philosophers.
Lotze, Hermann, Outlines of the Philosophy of Religion (Boston: Ginn and Co., 1903). 162. H.
--., An Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion (NY: St. Martin’s Press, 1982). 218. H.
--., Warrant (3 vols.)
--., same, second ed., 161. →
History of Modern Theology, Critical Analyses

--., The Triumph of Grace in the Theology of Karl Barth (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1956).
414. p. Appendix strongly critical of Van Til. Berkouwer’s book raises some very serious problems in Barth, but Berkouwer doesn’t take them seriously enough.
26. p. Critique of Berkouwer by a former student, now PCA pastor.
155. p.
184. p.
Fuller, Daniel P., Easter Faith and History (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965). 4.95. 279. h.
Grenz, Stanley, and Olson, Roger, Twentieth Century Theology (Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity Press, 1992.) 393. h. One of the more recent evangelical discussions. I’m much less impressed with it than most reviewers have been. Contrary to Grenz and Olson, The problems of twentieth-century theology are far greater than a mere imbalance between transcendence and immanence.

Hamilton, Kenneth, God is Dead (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1966).
1.25. 86. p.
--. The System and the Gospel (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1963). 2.45. 249. P. Hamilton is an evangelical, somewhat influenced by Kierkegaard. This is his critique of Tillich.


--. The Uses of Scripture in Recent Theology (Phila.: Fortress, 1975). 11.95. 227. h.

Klooster, Fred, The Significance of Barth’s Theology (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1961). 2.95. 98. H. Klooster taught at Calvin Seminary for many years. Quite orthodox, a nephew of Cornelius Van Til.


Niebuhr, Richard R., Resurrection and Historical Reason (NY: Scribner’s, 1957). 3.95. 184. H. Excellent critique of Barth and Bultmann, as far as it goes.


Polman, A. D. R., Barth (Phila.: P&R, 1960). 1.50. 68. P.


110. p.

Major Works of Modern Theologians, Readings in Modern Theology

Bailie, John, The Idea of Revelation in Recent Thought (NY: Columbia UP, 1956). 151. p. Surveys views of Barth, Brunner, Tillich and others. He seems to agree with all of them!
Barth, Karl, Church Dogmatics (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, from 1936). Many volumes.
Cone, James H., A Black Theology of Liberation (Phila.:
DeGraaff, A., and Seerveld, Calvin, Understanding the Scriptures
Ferm, Deane William, Contemporary American Theologies II:
Hauerwas, Stanley, and Jones, L. Gregory, Why Narrative?
---, God as the Mystery of the World (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983). 414. h. Jungel is a contemporary German theologian, fairly reminiscent of Barth, but trying to move ahead.
H.
--., The Necessity of Faith (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976). 2.95. 159. P.
142. P. The leading text of “postliberalism.” See Frame’s review in an
appendix to DKG.
544. P. A systematic theology along existentialist lines.
was known as an evangelical for many years. Now known as a lesbian
apologist for feminist theology.
Niebuhr, H. Richard, The Meaning of Revelation
Neville, Robert C., Creativity and God (NY: Seabury, 1980).
12.95. 163. h.
--., God the Creator (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1968). 8.50. 320. h. Neville wants his fellow process thinkers to develop a
more credible doctrine of creation. Highly complex and confusing.
--., An Introduction to Systematic Theology
--., The Idea of God and Human Freedom
427. P.
--., Metaphysics and the Idea of God (Grand Rapids:
4.75. 143. P.
--., Theology and the Philosophy of Science (Phil.: Westminster Press,
1976). 17.50. 458. H.
Pinnock, Clark, ed., The Openness of God (Downers Grove: IVP, 1994).
Professing evangelical argues new “open theism,” a God who doesn’t
know the future.
--., and Brow, Robert C., Unbounded Love (Downers Grove: IVP, 1994). A
more systematic presentation of the above viewpoint.


“Reformed Epistemology”

Anderson, James, “If Knowledge Then God: The Epistemological Theistic Arguments of Plantinga and Van Til,” forthcoming.

Clark, Kelly James, Return to Reason (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990). An apologetic based on Plantinga’s “Reformed Epistemology.”
--, articles in Steve Cowan, ed., Five Views of Apologetics (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000). Note the interchanges between Clark and Frame, and with the other authors.


**Recent Epistemology of Religion**


--., God, Freedom, and Evil (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974). These titles were published before Plantinga developed his “Reformed epistemology,” but he considers them still valid as providing supplementary argumentation for the rationality of Christian belief.


Postmodernism

Allen, Diogenes, Christian Belief in a Postmodern World
Grenz, Stanley J., A Primer on Postmodernism (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996). Probably the best general introduction to the subject, but I would be more critical of the postmodern movement.
Lundin, Roger, The Culture of Interpretation (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993).
Lyotard, Jean-Francois, The Postmodern Condition (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1984).
Middleton, J. Richard, and Walsh, Brian J., Truth is Stranger than it Used to Be (Downers Grove: IVP, 1995). Christians who are more friendly than most toward some postmodern ideas.
Taylor, Mark, Deconstructing Theology (NY: Crossroad, 1982).
Tilley, John, Postmodern Theologies (NY: Orbis, 1994).
Course Objectives Related to MDiv Student Learning Outcomes

Course: 2ST504, History of Philosophy and Christian Thought
Professor: John M. Frame
Campus: Orlando, FL
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MDiv Student Learning Outcomes</th>
<th>Rubric</th>
<th>Mini-Justification</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Articulation (oral &amp; written)</td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>Discusses the forms of Christian and non-Christian thought through history, promoting understanding and articulation in all these ways.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scripture</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Not a course in exegesis, but the intent is to present and defend a biblical worldview as it applies to historical and modern circumstances.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reformed Theology</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Teaches a worldview that is distinctively Reformed, notes a number of significant Reformed thinkers. Doesn’t focus on Reformed standards.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanctification</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>This is certainly one goal in the course. I am trying to show that the biblical worldview is best for the intellect, will, and passions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desire for Worldview</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>The worldview presented in the course is comprehensive, pertaining to all of life, and therefore motivating our greatest passion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winsomely Reformed</td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>Presents positively Christian thinkers of all traditions and tried to model a winsome approach to non-Christian thinkers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preach</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Not a preaching course. But I hope the course will help students to understand better the needs of the world today and will help them to think and speak more clearly about those needs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worship</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>The course ought to encourage concern for non-Christians, since it will present their epistemological situation as hopeless. I hope to present the material in a way that will model Christian maturity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shepherd</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>The course focuses on a worldview held essentially in common by all Christians, and it seeks to show how differences of worldview affect all discussions of public issues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church/World</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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| Knowledgeable of historic and modern Christian-worship forms; and ability to construct and skill to lead a worship service. |
| Ability to shepherd the local congregation: aiding in spiritual maturity; promoting use of gifts and callings; and encouraging a concern for non-Christians, both in America and worldwide. |
| Ability to interact within a denominational context, within the broader worldwide church, and with significant public issues. |