2ST504, History of Philosophy and Christian Thought

Course Handbook

RTS/Orlando, Spring Term, 2010

Meetings

Thursdays, 1-4 PM

Instructor

John M. Frame

My stated office hours this term are Thursdays, 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

Louis Schieferdecker, mirrorimage1018@gmail.com. Louis 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. At present I don’t expect to have a lot of discussion in class, but if you ask questions they should be well-informed.

2. One paper of roughly 3000 words, due Fri., May 13, 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 March 10). The exam will be given in the library. You can go there to take it any time between its opening Mon., Mar. 14 to its closing Sat., March 19. You are responsible to know the library’s opening and closing hours.

4. Final Exam: a multiple choice test on the assignments from that of Mar. 17 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.


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.


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, 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.

Feb. 3: Introduction; Early Greek Philosophy

Lecture Outline (henceforth LO), 1-8.
Frame, “Greeks Bearing Gifts”
Palmer (henceforth P), 1-51.

Feb. 10: Mature Greek Philosophy

LO, 9-14.
Allen and Springsted (henceforth AS), 1-82.
P, 52-108.

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.”
P, 160-234.

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

LO, 49-64.
AS, 172-218, 228-247.
P, 235-304.

Oct. 1: Nineteenth Century Theology

LO, 64-84.
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”
P, 384-416.

Nov. 5: Language Analysis
LO, 223-237.
AS, 281-303.
Frame, “God and Biblical Language.”
   “Christianity and Contemporary Epistemology.”
P, 318-359.

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).
--, Selections (NY: Scribner’s, 1929).
--, From Shakespeare to Existentialism (Boston: Neacon Press, 1959).
5.95. 404. h. Anti-Christian.
--, 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).
Plato, Plato: The Collected Dialogues, ed. Edith Hamilton and Huntington 
Pojman, Louis P., Classics of Philosophy (texts, with introductions) (NY: Oxford 
Reese, William L., Dictionary of Philosophy and Religion (NJ: Humanities Press, 
Russell, Bertrand, The Basic Writings of Bertrand Russell (NY: Simon and 
Singer was a historian of Reformed convictions.
Spinoza, Selections (NY: Scribner's, 1930).
Thilly, Frank, and Wood, Ledger, A History of Philosophy 
Thiselton, Anthony C., The Two Horizons (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980).
Interacts especially with Heidegger, Bultmann, Gadamer, and 
Wittgenstein.
brief account of early twentieth century language analysis. My lectures are 
heavily dependent on it.
Warner, Rex, ed., The Greek Philosophers (NY: Mentor, 1958, 
1986).
White, Morton, ed., The Age of Analysis (NY: Meridian, 1955, 
1983).
Wild, John, Existence and the World of Freedom (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-
Hall, 1965).
--., Lectures and Conversations on Aesthetics, Psychology, and Religious 
--., Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 
1921, 1963).
Yolton, John W., Perception & Reality : a History from Descartes to Kant 
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.
  325. H.
  414. P.
Kimpel, Ben F., Religious Faith, Language, and Knowledge (NY: Philosophical
  Library, 1952). 2.75. 162. H.
Lawrence, Irene, Linguistics and Theology: The Significance of Noam Chomsky
Lotze, Hermann, Outlines of the Philosophy of Religion (Boston: Ginn and Co.,
  1903). 162. H.
MacGregor, Geddes, Introduction to Religious Philosophy (Boston: Houghton
  Mifflin, 1959). .75. 366. P.
Morris, Thomas V., ed., Philosophy and the Christian Faith
Newman, John H., The Idea of a University (Notre Dame: UND Press, 1982,
  1986). 428. P.
  6.95. 163.
  --, An Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion (NY: St. Martin’s Press,
  1982). 218. H.
Peterson, Michael, et al., Reason and Religious Belief
  4.95. 225. H.
  --, Warrant (3 vols.)
  --, and Wolterstorff, Nicholas, ed., Faith
  321. h.
  1.45. 221. p.
Ricoeur, Paul, and MacIntyre, Alasdair, The Religious Significance of Atheism
Torrance, Thomas F., ed., Belief in Science and in Christian Life (Polanyi)
  H.
Wolfe, David, Epistemology: The Justification of Belief
Wolterstorff, Nicholas, Reason Within the Bounds of Religion
-- same, second ed., 161. →
4.75. 320. H.

**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.
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.


  --, ed., Process Theology (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1987). 17.95. 387 h. These volumes are very useful. Evangelical critiques.
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.
  --, Theology in Reconstruction (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965). 5.00. 288 h. Torrance largely follows Barth.

Major Works of Modern Theologians, Readings in Modern Theology

Baillie, 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.


-- 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.
Kant, Immanuel, Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone
-- The Necessity of Faith (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976). 2.95. 159. P.
Mollenkott, Virginia R., Sensuous Spirituality (NY: Crossroad, 1993). Mollenkott was known as an evangelical for many years. Now known as a lesbian apologist for feminist theology.
Neville, Robert C., Creativity and God (NY: Seabury, 1980). 12.95. 163. h.

Professing evangelical argues new “open theism,” a God who doesn’t know the future.

Pinnock, Clark, ed., The Openness of God (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


Clouser, Roy, Knowing with the Heart (Downers Grove: IVP, 1999).


--, The Possibility of Religious Knowledge (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971).
Helm, Paul, Belief Policies (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1994). Frame’s review is in your SD.


--., 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**


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><strong>MDiv Student Learning Outcomes</strong></th>
<th><strong>Rubric</strong></th>
<th><strong>Mini-Justification</strong></th>
</tr>
</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>
</table>

| Knowledgeable of historic and modern Christian-worship forms; and ability to construct and skill to lead a worship service. | N/A |

| Ability to preach and teach the meaning of Scripture to both heart and mind with clarity and enthusiasm. | Moderate |

| 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.) | Strong |

| 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. | Moderate |

| Ability to interact within a denominational context, within the broader worldwide church, and with significant public issues. | Moderate |