History of Philosophy and Christian Thought

Lectures by
Professor John M. Frame, D.D.

REFORMED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
Virtual Campus
COURSE SYLLABUS
History of Philosophy and Christian Thought, OST504, 3 hours
Dr. John M. Frame
Reformed Theological Seminary, Virtual

Professor

Dr. Frame is professor of Systematic Theology and Philosophy. He has his A. B. degree from Princeton University, a B. D. from Westminster Theological Seminary, and an M.Phil. from Yale University and a D.D. from Belhaven College. An outstanding theologian, John Frame distinguished himself during 31 years on the faculty of Westminster Theological Seminary, and was a founding faculty member of WTS California. He is best known for his prolific writings including ten volumes, a contributor to many books and reference volumes, as well as scholarly articles and magazines. Dr. Frame is a talented musician and discerning media critic who is deeply committed to the work of ministry and training pastors.

Course 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.

Required Textbooks

Frame, “Christianity and Contemporary Epistemology.” (Appendix B).
______. “God and Biblical Language.” (Appendix C).
______. “Greeks Bearing Gifts.” (Appendix A).

All required books are available through the RTS Online Bookstore at: http://www.mindandheart.com/.
Course Requirements

Online Student Handbook

The online Student Handbook is a guide that contains information for participation in this course. Needed forms may be downloaded and printed from this site. You will find it located on the RTS/Virtual website under Student Servicess. Check here for all the latest updates.

Requirements in Brief
  Completion of Reading Assignments
  Listen to all Recorded Lectures
  Participate in Immersive Learning Simulations
  Participate in Forum Discussions (with other students and Professor)
  Midterm Exam
  Final Exam
  Course Paper
  Mentor Report

Simulations (20%)

There is an Introduction video, 5 sneak peak simulations, five immersive learning simulations and one Conclusion video in the course. Each simulation will cover a topic relevant to the topics covered in the readings and lectures for the appropriate weeks.

Examinations (Midterm 20%, Final 20%)

There are two examinations for this course, a mid-term and a final. The mid-term examination will cover the lectures and readings from Lesson One through Lesson Ten. The final examination will cover the lectures and readings from Lesson Eleven through Lesson Seventeen.

All exams are proctored. For this course, you will take your exams within the Moodle Virtual Classroom. Under Week 5 you will see links to instructions for the mid-term examination and a link to the examination itself. Under week 12, you will see links to instructions for the final examination and to the examination itself. Your mid-term examination will be in 2 sections and your final examination will be in 2 sections. In order to take your examinations, you must email student services (vcss@rts.edu) and request that the appropriate examination password be sent to your proctor, who will then open the exam for you.

Forum Discussions (10%)

The student is to participate in forum discussions in the online tutorial. 10% total (5% Student to Student, 5% Student to Professor)

Research Paper (25%)

Each student is required to submit a research paper on a topic of your choice from this course.

  a. Recommended length, 4500 words (approx. 15 pp., doublespaced). The professor will not be rigid about the length, but if the paper is longer, the additional pages should be especially worth reading. If it is shorter, it should be equivalent in quality to a longer paper.
b. For the paper, you should do some research beyond the course assigned reading and lecture material. Indicate such in footnotes and bibliography, but please use a consistent system.

c. For a topic, see SUGGESTED PAPER TOPICS on page v, or you may choose anything in the field of Philosophy, with approval from the professor.

Hall of Frame

The professor would like to post the most excellent term papers at www.reformedperspectives.org, in the “Hall of Frame.” This will give other students an idea of my standards for theological writing, and it will honor those who have made an extra effort. If you have any objection to your paper being used in this way, please notify the professor in advance.

Be sure to follow all instructions in the Tutorial re: submission of the “Big Four” and paper. If you have not done so already, please watch the separate Course Paper Simulation in the Virtual Classroom on Moodle.

Mentor Report/Course Application Paper (5%)

Each MA Distance student is required to have his mentor submit a report at the end of the course. This report will contribute to 5% of the student’s grade. For students who are not registered in the MA program, 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.

Assignments

All assignments are due at the end of the week in which they fall in the online course. Any student who needs an extension must get approval from the Virtual Campus before the deadline. Assignments are to uploaded within the tutorial. Please follow the directions provided.

Time Limit

All course work, including exams, papers, reading requirements, is to be completed within twelve weeks from your course start date.

Contact Information
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Web site: http://virtual.rts.edu/
SUGGESTED PAPER TOPICS
History of Philosophy and Christian Thought, 0ST504, 3 hours
John Frame
Reformed Theological Seminary, Virtual

1. A Comparison and Contrast Between Plato’s Philosophy and the Christian Worldview (This general topic could be adapted to any philosopher.)
3. Augustine’s Contributions to Epistemology.
5. Anselm’s Contribution to the Theology of the Atonement.
6. Aquinas’s Cosmological Arguments: Do they Assume a Non-Christian Worldview?
7. Occam’s Influence on Luther: May a Christian Be a Nominalist?
8. Calvin’s Doctrine of the Knowledge of God.
9. Pascal’s Contribution to Apologetics.
10. Rationalist and Irrationalist Elements in Kant’s Philosophy.
12. Wittgenstein and the Bible on the Meaning of Language
13. Is Metanarrative Possible Following the Postmodern Critique?
14. Clark and Van Til: Has Their Disagreement Been Exaggerated?
16. Is Barth a Good Model for Evangelical Theologians?
17. Pannenberg’s Contribution to Christian Thought

(You may substitute the name of any theologian, such as Schleiermacher, Ritschl, Barth, Bultmann, Moltmann). You may propose a topic of your own choosing; however, you must get approval from the professor, via the Student to Professor Discussion Forum, in order to receive credit for your paper.)
COURSE OUTLINE
History of Philosophy and Christian Thought, 0ST504, 3 hours
Dr. John M. Frame
Reformed Theological Seminary, Virtual

Part One: Ancient and Medieval

Reading Assignments
Allen, 1-110.
Lecture Outline, 1-34.
Frame, “Greeks Bearing Gifts”
Palmer, Chapters 1-4, 1-149.

I. Why Study Philosophy? 1
II. Philosophy: General Observations 1

Greek Philosophy 4

A. The Milesians 4
B. The Eleatics 5
C. Three Early Alternatives to Parmenides 7
   1. Heraclitus 7
   2. Atomism 8
   3. The Sophists 8
D. Plato 9
E. Aristotle 11
F. Plotinus 13
G. Gnosticism 14

Early Christian Thought 14

I. Original Opponents of Christianity 14
II. Second-Century Apologists 15
III. Irenaeus 16
IV. Tertullian 17
V. Clement of Alexandria 19
VI. Origen 20
VII. Athanasius 22
VIII. Augustine 23

Medieval Philosophy 24
I. Christian Neoplatonism 24
II. Anselm of Canterbury 25
III. Thomas Aquinas 27
IV. Later Medieval Developments 33

Part Two: Reformation to 1900 35

Reading Assignments
  Allen, 111-247.
  Lecture Outline, 35-83.
  Palmer, Chapters 5-6, 150-294.
  Placher II, Chapters 1-6, 11-155.

I. John Calvin 35
II. Seventeenth-Century Orthodoxy 36

Early Modern Philosophy (1650-1800) 37

A. Continental Rationalism 37
B. British Empiricism 38

Early Modern Christian Thought 39

I. Blaise Pascal 40
II. Joseph Butler 44
III. William Paley 46
IV. Thomas Reid 47

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<td>II. Albrecht Ritschl</td>
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### Mid-term Exam

Part 3: Twentieth Century Thought 1

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<td>III. William James</td>
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<td>IV. Edmund Husserl</td>
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<td>V. Martin Heidegger</td>
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<td>VI. Jean-Paul Sartre</td>
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### Theology, 1920-1970

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<td>III. Rudolf Bultmann</td>
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<td>IV. Paul Tillich</td>
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<td>VI. Christian Atheism</td>
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<td>VII. Dietrich Bonhoffer, Secular Theology</td>
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### Part 4: Twentieth-Century Thought 2

**From Hermeneutics to Postmodernism**

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<td>II. Ferdinand De Saussure</td>
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### Theology, 1950-2000

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II. Herman Dooyeweerd 238
III. Alvin Plantinga 239
IV. Gordon H. Clark 241
V. Cornelius Van Til 247
COURSE BIBLIOGRAPHY
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John Frame
Reformed Theological Seminary, Virtual

Bibliography

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Habermas, Jürgen, Knowledge and Human Interests (Boston: Beacon Press, 1972).
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—, Fear and Trembling; The Sickness Unto Death (Garden City: Doubleday, 1941, 1955).

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Palmer, Donald, Looking at Philosophy (Mountain View: Mayfield, 1988). A simple, but very competent exposition.

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Singer was a historian of Reformed convictions.

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Interacts especially with Heidegger, Bultmann, Gadamer, and Wittgenstein.

Oriental Philosophy


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Hart, H., Vander Hoeven, Johan, and Nicholas Wolterstorff,
eds., Rationality in the Calvinian Tradition
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.
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Fuller, Daniel P., Easter Faith and History (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965). 4.95. 279. h.
Geisler, Norman, and McKenzie, Ralph, Roman Catholics and Evangelicals  
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.
Gruenler, Royce Gordon, The Inexhaustible God (Grand Rapids:  
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1.25. 86. p.
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1964). 426. h.
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view.
   —, The Uses of Scripture in Recent Theology  
Klooster, Fred, The Significance of Barth= 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.

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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.
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179. p. Liberationism.
   A friend of Bultmann, rather to Bultmann's left! He demythologizes God, too.
   --, God as the Mystery of the World (Grand Rapids:
Jungel is a contemporary German theologian, fairly reminiscent of Barth, but trying to move ahead.


—, 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.


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.

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Davis, Stephen, Faith, Skepticism, and Evidence: an Essay in Religious
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Geivett, R. Douglas, and Sweetman, Brendan, Contemporary
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your SD.
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Reformed Christian, well respected in secular philosophical circles.
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1987).
Reviewed by Frame in WTJ.
See Frame’s review in DKG. Lindbeck is now known as the founder of “postliberalism.”
Important to recent discussions of religious epistemology.
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Postmodernism

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Course Objectives Related to MAR Student Learning Outcomes

<table>
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<th>MAR Student Learning Outcomes</th>
<th>Rubric</th>
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| **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 21st 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 21C Christians |