2ST504, History of Philosophy and Christian Thought

Course Handbook

RTS/Orlando, Spring Term, 2013

Meetings

Wednesdays, 8-10 AM, 11-12 AM.

Instructor

John M. Frame

My stated office hours this term are Tuesdays, 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 and will be available to help you prepare for exams.

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. This year I will be using my new book Philosophy: a Christian
Perspective, available at www.reformedperspectives.org. With each chapter, you should be prepared to define the Key Terms at the end and answer the Study Questions. As of this writing, I haven’t finished writing the book. After we finish what is completed in the book, I will revert to lecture, from my Lecture Outline (LO), which is also at Reformed Perspectives.

2. One paper of roughly 3000 words, due Fri., May 17, 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. First MidTerm Exam, March 18-23: covering the first six assignments (through the assignment of March 13). The exam will be given in the library. You can go there to take it any time between its opening Mon., Mar. 18 to its closing Sat., March 23. You are responsible to know the library’s opening and closing hours.

4. Second Mid Term Exam, Apr. 15-20: same format as the first. Covers all assignments of March 21 through April 3. Take it in the library between its opening April 15 to its closing April 20.

5. Final Exam: covering the assignments from that of Apr. 10 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 1-5 will be graded on a pass-fail basis. Your final grade will be calculated as follows:

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

Required Texts

Papers by Frame and Edgar, including Frame’s book Philosophy: a Christian Perspective, 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”
-- Philosophy: a Christian Perspective
-- Lecture Outline
-- “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.

William Placher, Readings in the History of Christian Theology, 1 and 2 (Phila.: Westminster Press, 1988). Primary source readings for many of the thinkers we discuss in the course.


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 Wednesdays.

Feb. 6: Introduction

Be able to define all key terms and answer all study questions.  
Palmer (henceforth P), 1-51.

Feb. 13: Greek Philosophy

PCP, Chapter 2.  
Allen and Springsted (henceforth AS), 1-82.  
P, 52-108.

Feb. 20: Early Christian Thought, Through Augustine

PCP, Chapter 3.  
P, 109-118.

Feb. 27: Medieval Philosophy

PCP, Chapter 4  
AS, 83-110  
Frame, “Ontological Argument”  
--“Infinite Series”  
P, 118-160.

Mar. 6: Early Modern Thought: Secular

LO, 35-39.  
AS, 111-171.
Frame, “Certainty.”

Mar. 13: Early Modern Thought: Christian
LO, 39-49.

MAR. 18-23: FIRST MIDTERM: Covering lectures and readings through the assignment of Mar. 13. Take it in the Library any time from opening Monday, Mar. 18, till closing Saturday, Mar. 23. You are responsible to find when the library is open.

Mar. 20: Early Liberal Theology; Kant and His Successors
LO, 49-64.
AS, 172-218, 228-247.
P, 235-304.

Mar. 27: Spring Break; No Class

Apr. 3: Nineteenth Century Theology
LO, 64-83.
AS, 219-228.

Apr. 10: Phenomenology, Pragmatism, Existentialism
LO, 84-93
AS, 248-262.

Apr. 15-20: SECOND MIDTERM: Covering lectures and readings assigned through the assignment of April 3. Take it in the library any time from its opening Monday, 4/15, to its closing Saturday, 4/20. You are responsible to determine when the library is open.

Apr. 17: Theology, 1920-1950
Apr. 24: From Hermeneutics to Postmodernism; Theology 1950-2000

LO, 146-185
AS, 263-280
Edgar, “No News is Good News”
P, 384-416.

May 1: Process Thought, Open Theism, Narrative Theology

LO, 185-222

May 8: Language Analysis

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

May 15: Recent Reformed Philosophy

LO, 237-end.
Frame, “Transcendental Arguments.”
--, “Van Til Reconsidered.”

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).
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.
brief account of early twentieth century language analysis. My lectures are heavily dependent on it.


**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.
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.

Bockmuehl, Klaus, The Unreal God of Modern Theology (Colorado Springs:

26. p. Critique of Berkouwer by a former student, now PCA pastor.

229. H.

155. p.

Ferm, Deane William, Contemporary American Theologies I:
184. p.

Freeman, David H., Recent Studies in Philosophy and Theology

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:
process theologian. Appreciates Van Til.

Gundry, Stanley N., and Johnson, Alan F., Tensions in
Contemporary Theology, second ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1983).

Hamilton, Kenneth, God is Dead (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1966).
1.25. 86. p.
249. P. Hamilton is an evangelical, somewhat influenced by Kierkegaard.
This is his critique of Tillich.

Henry, Carl F. H., Christian Faith and Modern Theology (NY: Channel Press,
1964). 426. h.

Holmer, Paul, Theology and the Scientific Study of Religion (Minneapolis:

Hughes, Philip E., ed., Creative Minds in Contemporary Theology


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.


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


Major Works of Modern Theologians, Readings in Modern Theology

---, and Montgomery, John W., The Altizer-Montgomery
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.


--, 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.


“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

-- Perceiving God : the Epistemology of Religious Experience (Ithaca:
Clouser, Roy, Knowing with the Heart (Downers Grove: IVP, 1999).
Helm, Paul, Belief Policies (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1994). Frame’s review is in your SD.
See also Frame’s review in WTJ 56 (Spring, 1994), 133-151.
Wittgensteinian.
--, 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

Course Objectives Related to MDiv Student Learning Outcomes

Course: 2ST504, History of Philosophy and Christian Thought

Professor: John M. Frame

Campus: Orlando, FL

- Grenz, Stanley J., A Primer on Postmodernism (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996). Probably the best general introduction to the subject, but would be more critical of the postmodern movement.
- McCallum, Dennis, ed., The Death of Truth (Minneapolis: Bethany House, 1992).
- Tilly, John, Postmodern Theologies (NY: Orbis, 1994).
- Tilley, John, Postmodern Theologies (NY: Orbis, 1994).
<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><strong>Articulation</strong>&lt;br&gt;(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><strong>Scripture</strong></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><strong>Reformed Theology</strong></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><strong>Sanctification</strong></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><strong>Desire for Worldview</strong></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><strong>Winsomely Reformed</strong></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><strong>Preach</strong></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><strong>Worship</strong></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><strong>Shepherd</strong></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><strong>Church/World</strong></td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Mini-Justification**

- **Strong**: Strong understanding and articulation in all ways.
- **Moderate**: Moderate understanding and articulation in all ways.
- **Minimal**: Minimal understanding and articulation in all ways.
- **N/A**: Not applicable.