Please send questions to Prof. Davis at davis@covenant.edu

Texts:


On-line texts (Parmenides, Heraclitus)

Supplemental Reading packet (distributed in class)

Exams:
Final Exam distributed on the final class day and due (postmarked or e-mailed) June 19, 2015.

Papers:
Christian Thought Essay. A careful look at the devotional writing of one Christian thinker in light of the intellectual climate of the writer’s age. In addition to summarizing the principal features of the writer’s work, the essay’s thesis will concern the writer’s success at managing the philosophical currents of his or her age along Biblical lines. See below for details. A Prospectus for this essay is due during the second weekend of meetings; a Rough Draft of this essay is due during the fourth weekend of meetings. The Final Draft is due (postmarked or e-mailed) three weeks after the final weekend of meetings. See below for a full description of this assignment.

Participation: From time to time graded quizzes will be given over the course readings and lectures. In some cases students will be encouraged to work on the quizzes in pairs. Some class time will be used to solve problems (play games) in groups. The games have sufficient pedagogical and mnemonic value to warrant the use of class time, and participation is part of the course grade.

Grading:
Grades will be calculated using the following percentages:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>40%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Christian Thought Essay Prospectus</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian Thought Essay Final Draft</td>
<td>35%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participation (quizzes, games, etc.)</td>
<td>20%</td>
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</tbody>
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Schedule of Readings & Assignments:

**June 1**  *The Nature of Philosophy and the Pre-Platonics*
Readings: Parmenides, selections (sent electronically in advance of class)
Heraclitus, *Fragments* (sent electronically)

*Ancient Philosophy:*
*Plato, Aristotle, Stoics*
Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* I-II (B 184-207) *Physics* II (B 151-162)
Epictetus, *Encherideian* (B 257-268)

June 2  **Early Church Fathers & Neo-Platonism:**
*Justin, Tertullian, Plotinus, Augustine, Boethius*
Readings: Justin, *First Apology* (selections) [handout distributed in class]
Tertullian, *Prescription Against Heretics* [handout]
Plotinus, *Enneads* I.6, (B 270-276)
Augustine, *Confessions* VIII, XI, *City of God* XII.1-9 (B 286-310)
Boethius, *The Consolation of Philosophy* V.6 (B 313-316)

**Medieval Philosophy:**
*Anselm, Thomas Aquinas, Ockham, Molina, Calvin*
Readings: Anselm, *Prologion* and with Gaunilo (B 319-325)
Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* (selections) (B 337-366 and handout on analogy)
Ockham, *Summa Logicae* I.14-16 (B 369-374)
Flint (on Molina), *On God’s Providence* [handout]
Calvin, *Institutes* I-x [on-line or any edition]

June 3  **Early Modern Philosophy:**
*Descartes, Hobbes, Pascal, Locke*
Readings: Descartes, *Meditations* (B 387-430)
Pascal, *Pensees* (B 476-482)
Locke, *Of Civil Government* [handout]

*Leibniz, Edwards, Hume*
Readings: Leibniz, *Discourse on Metaphysics* 1-14 (B 595-605)
Hume, *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* II-VII, X (B 703-733, 746-757)

June 4  **Late Modern Philosophy:**
*Kant, Hegel*
Readings: Kant, *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics* §40-§56 (B 817-830)
Kant, *Foundation for the Metaphysics of Morals* I-II (B 852-882)
Hegel, from *The Phenomenology of Spirit* B.IV.A (B 898-903)

*Kierkegaard, Marx, Mill*
Reading: Kierkegaard, *Fear and Trembling, Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (B 953-971)
Marx, *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844, Communist Manifesto* (B 975-993)
Mill, *Utilitarianism* II (B 912-925)

Writing: *Christian Thought Essay Prospectus*

June 5  **Contemporary Philosophy:**
*Existentialism*
Camus, *The Myth of Sisyphus*, “The Myth of Sisyphus” (pp. 119-123) and “An Absurd Reasoning” (pp. 1-65)

*Analytic Philosophy, Postmodernism*
Ayer, from *Language, Truth and Logic* (B 1122-1130)
Rorty, “Solidarity or Objectivity?” [handout]
Taylor, "Postmodern A/Theology" [handout]

Writing: Final Exam distributed

June 19: Final Exam due (midnight by e-mail or postmarked)
July 3: Christian Thought Essay (midnight by e-mail or postmarked)

**CHRISTIAN THOUGHT ESSAY : Full description:**

**Purpose of this essay:** Christian thinking about the faith and the relationship between faith and life unavoidably reflects the intellectual climate of its time period. If only because thinking takes place in human language, concepts and idioms, even the most careful Christian writers have had to wrestle with uncritically adopting the world’s categories, assumptions and values at the very heart of their devotional lives. This essay will give the student the opportunity to join in this struggle as a concerned spectator, reading a renowned author focusing attention on the author’s success in dealing with the influence of their own intellectual climate.

**Target Length:** Eight pages is the approximate target for the Final Draft, but the nature of the topic demands that this not be thought of as a maximum. If the paper exceeds 10 pages it should be obvious that the length was necessary. Because it is likely that the Rough Draft will suggest fruitful lines of development, a draft between six and eight pages will be acceptable.

**Style:** Chicago Style (footnotes, bibliography, etc.) is greatly preferred.

**Reading Requirement, Length:** In order to comment seriously on an author’s success in using without falling prey to the limitations of their intellectual environment, it will be necessary to read *at least* 100 pages of an author’s work. (Because some editions have very small or large print, the minimum might be more clearly specified as 30,000 words. The idea is for comments to be based on an adequate foundation. Err on the side of reading too much, not too little.)

**Reading Requirement, Content:** Although systematic academic writing must struggle with philosophical currents and baggage, it is self-consciously written for an intellectual audience and thus it is often difficult to determine whether the author adopted biblically suspect concepts and idioms for the sake of the audience. The same can’t be said, however, for devotional writing and works prepared exclusively for other believers (letters, prayers, sermons, diaries, journals, devotionals, etc.). In order to simplify the task of analysis, it will be important that the readings be clearly intended for an exclusively Christian audience. (The best data will come from writing intended for a small audience of intimate friends or parishioners, or even written only for the author’s edification.)
Topics: The choice of the Christian author is left to the student, but students would be advised to choose an author who worked in an intellectual climate with which the student has some familiarity. (For example, a student with little knowledge of the intellectual climate of 18th century New England shouldn’t attempt to assess Jonathan Edwards’ success at managing the problems posed by the prevailing worldview.) Here is a short list of suggestions that purposely omits some obvious possibilities:

Augustine’s *Confessions* (the early books)
Anselm’s *Monologion*;
Teresa of Avila’s *The Life of Teresa of Avila*
Blaise Pascal’s *Penses*
Samuel Rutherford’s *Letters*
Soren Kierkegaard’s *Journals and Papers*; (etc.)

Thesis Requirement: Even though the focus is on personal writings, every essay must have a thesis about the author’s success at using without being used by the available conceptual resources. It will be necessary to do more than summarize. You will be arguing for a conclusion about the author’s success.

Prospectus: One to two paragraphs identifying (a) the author to be considered, (b) the content basis for the analysis, (c) a justification for believing that the content basis will be adequate for the analysis attempted, and (d) the reason for selecting this author and content basis. The Prospectus is due by e-mail Feb. 6 (Friday) and is likely to be returned with comments on Mar. 1. (Students without access to e-mail should provide an electronic copy to John Sowell for e-mailing.)

Extension Policy

All assignments and exams are to be completed by the deadlines announced in this syllabus or in class.

Extensions for assignments and exams due within the normal duration of the course must be approved beforehand by the Professor. Extensions of two weeks or less beyond the date of the last deadline for the course must be approved beforehand by the Professor. A grade penalty may be assessed.

Extensions of greater than two weeks but not more than six weeks beyond the last deadline for the course may be granted in extenuating circumstances (i.e. illness, family emergency). For an extension of more than two weeks the student must request an Extension Request Form from the Student Services Office. The request must be approved by the Professor and the Academic Dean. A grade penalty may be assessed. (RTS Catalog p. 42 and RTS Atlanta Student Handbook p. 14)

Any incompletes not cleared six weeks after the last published due date for course work will be converted to a failing grade. Professors may have the failing grade changed to a passing grade by request. (RTS Catalog p. 42)