I. Details
A. Times: Wednesdays, 8:30–12:00 AM
B. Instructor: Dr. James Anderson
C. Contact: janderson@rts.edu
D. Availability: If you wish to discuss some aspect of the course, please either arrange (via email) an appointment or knock on the door of my office (in E building) if it’s open.

II. Goals
A. To familiarize the student with some of the major movements, figures, and texts in the history of Western philosophy, both Christian and non-Christian.
B. To introduce the student to the “big ideas” that have dominated philosophical debates over the centuries and their significance for Christian theology and apologetics.
C. To encourage the student to analyze the history of Western thought in terms of conflicting worldviews; and more specifically, in terms of deviations from the biblical worldview.
D. To develop the student’s critical thinking skills through the close reading and analysis of primary sources.
E. To help the student to appreciate the importance and utility of philosophical thinking.

III. Course Overview
A. Introduction: What is Philosophy? Why Does It Matter?
B. Context: The Biblical Worldview
C. All Greek to Me: Ancient Philosophy
D. Platonic Relationships: Early Christian Philosophy
E. Lights in the Dark Ages: Medieval Philosophy
F. Revolutionary Times: Renaissance and Reformation
G. From Theism to Deism: Early Modern Philosophy
H. From Deism to Atheism: Late Modern Philosophy
I. From Atheism to Nihilism: Postmodern Philosophy
J. God Strikes Back: 20th-Century Christian Philosophy

IV. Course Requirements
A. Class attendance and thoughtful participation.
   1. As per seminary policy, you are required to attend all the lectures. If you know that you will be unable to attend class on a particular date, please inform me in advance, otherwise you may be penalized for your absence.
   2. There will be opportunity for class participation and questions during the lectures.
3. A proportion of your final grade (see below) will depend on your attendance record and your participation in the classes (thoughtful interaction with the professor and other students).

B. Reading assignments.
1. A proportion of your final exam mark (and thus your final grade) will depend on your acknowledgment that you have completed the required reading (see below).
2. You will be penalized for each uncompleted reading assignment.
3. A reading schedule will be provided at the start of class (available on the Course Home Page).

C. Writing assignment.
1. You should write a paper (3500–4500 words, excluding footnotes) that discusses one of the thinkers covered in class who took a distinctive position on one major philosophical issue. Here are some examples, but feel free to formulate your own:
   i. Leibniz, Hume, or Plantinga on the existence of God
   ii. Aristotle, Aquinas, or Descartes on the nature of the soul
   iii. Hobbes, Locke, or Berkeley on the reality of matter
   iv. Plato, Ockham, or Derrida on the reality of universals
   v. Augustine, Hegel, or Marx on the goal of history
   vi. Kant, Van Til, or Rorty on the possibility of knowledge
2. Your paper should include detailed interaction with at least one primary source from your chosen thinker. It should also make use of a good number of secondary sources.
3. Your paper should include all of the following:
   i. A concise explanation of the philosophical issue in question.
   ii. An exposition of the position on the issue taken by your chosen thinker and his reasons for taking that position, with reference to your primary sources. You should also indicate how this thinker’s views were influenced by his historical context.
   iii. A critical evaluation of that position in light of both reason and Scripture.
   iv. An explanation of your own position on the issue (compared and contrasted with that of your chosen thinker).
   v. A brief discussion of the significance of the philosophical issue in question for Christian doctrine or practice.
   vi. A standard bibliography (see below on sources and citations).
4. Your paper will be graded according to the following criteria, in no particular order: responsible use of Scripture, responsible use of sources, extent of research, creativity, clarity, structure and coherence, cogency of argument, evidence of critical thinking, and good writing style (inc. grammar, spelling, and punctuation).
5. The paper should cite at least 8 scholarly sources.
   i. For the purposes of this paper, a scholarly source is a book or article by a recognized expert in the field (and not aimed at a popular level for a general audience)—ideally one that has been peer-reviewed.
   ii. Wikipedia is clearly not a scholarly source.
   iii. That said, with sufficient discernment, Wikipedia can be a useful pointer to scholarly sources and is generally reliable for fact-checking on uncontroversial issues.
iv. Please consult me if you have any doubts about whether a source is scholarly.

v. You should not rely heavily on Internet sources. Use the library!

6. The paper should be word-processed, not hand-written.
   i. Use a 12-point font and double line-spacing for the main text.
   ii. Use section headings where applicable to improve readability.
   iii. Use footnotes (10-point font) rather than endnotes.
   iv. Use a recognized scholarly style for citations (e.g., Chicago, Turabian, SBL).

7. The paper should be submitted with a title page containing all of the following: the name and year of the course; your name; the professor’s name; the title of the paper; and the exact word count for the main text of the paper (obtained from your word processor’s word-count feature).

8. You will be penalized if you do not observe the requirements and guidelines above.

9. Your paper is due on May 14. It should be submitted to the assistant (usually Linda Dixon) at the main front desk on or prior to this date. Ensure that the assistant stamps the paper with the date of submission. Late submissions will be penalized.

10. Your paper will be returned to you after grading with limited feedback. Consult the document “Guide to Annotations on Graded Papers” to crack the code. If you wish to receive more detailed feedback, please email me to arrange an appointment.

D. Midterm exam.
   1. The midterm exam will be taken in the week before spring break: March 18–22.
   2. The exam will consist of multiple-choice questions based on the class material covered to date.
   3. At your convenience you should pick up the exam paper from the assistant at the front desk and take the exam in the library.

E. Final exam.
   1. The final exam will be taken in exam week: May 16–21.
   2. The exam will consist of a combination of short-answer and short-essay questions based on all of the class material and all of the required readings. You will have 3 hours to complete it.
   3. You may refer to an English translation of the Bible (but not one with study notes, etc.). You may not refer to any class notes or other study resources.
   4. You will be asked to sign a declaration that you have not discussed the content of the exam with any other students before taking it.
   5. You will also be asked to indicate which of the required reading assignments you have completed and to sign a declaration to that effect.

V. Course Documents

A. Instructions for accessing course documents on Course Home Page.
   1. Login to the Self-Service website (https://selfservice.rts.edu).
   2. Select Classes > Schedule > Student Schedule.
   3. Select the period (“2013/Spring”) from the drop-down menu.
   4. Click on the link “Go to Course Home Page” for the relevant class.
   5. Select Course Documents.
   6. All the course documents can be found in the “Section Media” folder.

B. Course outline.
1. Other than the syllabus, the course outline is the most important document. You will need a copy (either electronic or printed) in front of you throughout the class.
2. You are strongly encouraged to supplement the outline with your own notes.
3. The outline will be uploaded to the Course Home Page the week before class.

C. Supplementary documents.
1. The reading schedule and some of the required readings (see below) will be available on the Course Home Page.
2. You should also consult the document “Guide to Annotations on Graded Papers”.

VI. Grading
A. Class attendance and participation — 10%
B. Midterm exam — 20%
C. Final exam (including credit for reading assignments) — 30%
D. Writing assignment — 40%

VII. Required Reading
You should obtain copies of all the items below. You are also required to read a selection of primary source texts, which will be discussed in class. These will be made available on the Course Home Page at the start of class (along with the reading schedule).

A. John M. Frame, “How to Write a Theological Paper,” Appendix F in The Doctrine of
   the Knowledge of God (P&R, 1987). [A copy of this will be made available on the
   Course Home Page.]
B. W. Andrew Hoffecker, ed., Revolutions in Worldview (P&R, 2007). [Note the helpful
glossary at the back of the book.]
C. Ted Honderich, ed., The Philosophers: Introducing Great Western Thinkers (Oxford
   University Press, 1999).

VIII. Recommended Supplementary Reading
You are not required to read any of the items below, but you may find them useful to consolidate the course material and for further study as your interests dictate. For many of these, the table of contents can be viewed on Amazon.com or Google Books.

A. Diogenes Allen and Eric O. Springsted, Philosophy for Understanding Theology, 2nd
   [Written for seminarians, the authors have aimed to focus on those philosophical issues of
greatest relevance to Christian theology, although often the relevance to evangelical Reformed theology is hard to discern. Not exactly a page-turner.]
   [Covers figures and movements from the pre-Socratics to Kant that have influenced
Christian thought.]
C. Kelly James Clark, Richard Lints, and James K. A. Smith, 101 Key Terms in
   Philosophy and Their Importance for Theology (Westminster John Knox, 2004).
   [A helpful little reference book for deciphering those ‘isms’ and other ten-dollar words.]
D. Frederick Copleston, A History of Philosophy, 9 vols (Image Books, 1993–4; originally
   published 1946–74).
[A very thorough history of Western thought by a Roman Catholic (Thomist) philosopher. The set published by Continuum in the UK has two additional volumes.]


[A topically-arranged introduction to philosophy (not a history of philosophy) by two Calvinist philosophers. It follows the recent trend in Christian philosophy books toward encouraging worldview awareness. Chapter 9 on aesthetics is particularly good.]

F. James Fieser and Bradley Dowden, eds., *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy* ([http://www.iep.utm.edu](http://www.iep.utm.edu)).

[A free, online, peer-reviewed encyclopedia of philosophy; contains good articles on many of the figures and concepts discussed in the course.]


[An insightful treatment of epistemology from a biblical perspective by a Reformed theologian.]


[A reliable one-volume history of philosophy from a highly respected Oxford scholar. Wittgenstein gets a whole chapter, while Heidegger doesn’t even get a mention, which tells you something about the author’s biases—although I can’t help but sympathize. Nice glossy pictures.]


[A comprehensive systematic introduction to philosophy (not a history of philosophy) from a conservative Arminian/Molinist perspective. It follows the recent trend in Christian philosophy books toward encouraging worldview awareness.]


[A clear and engaging introduction to philosophy by an evangelical philosopher and apologist (former RTS/O professor) that attempts to blend topical, historical, and worldview/system perspectives. Good illustrations of philosophical concepts and a helpful glossary.]


[An excellent anthology of writings in Western philosophy.]


[An introduction to modern-era philosophy; topical rather than chronological. Contains a Study Guide.]


[A popular and well-written introduction to the history of philosophy, now in its 8th edition. The main downside is the price!]


[Sequel to Brown’s book (see above); extends the survey to the turn of the 20th century.]


[A free, online, peer-reviewed encyclopedia of philosophy; contains good articles on many of the figures and concepts discussed in the course.]
## Course Objectives Related to MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes

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<th>MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes</th>
<th>Rubric</th>
<th>Mini-Justification</th>
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| **Articulation (oral & written)**                                                              | 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**                                                                                  | 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**                                                                          | Minimal | 1. Evaluates philosophical ideas from Reformed perspective  
2. Discusses Reformation as intellectual/cultural movement |
| **Sanctification**                                                                             | Minimal | 1. Encourages application of Matthew 22:37 (“with all your mind”) |
| **Desire for Worldview**                                                                       | 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**                                                                         | Moderate | 1. Appreciation for insights from non-Reformed traditions and non-Christian philosophies (common grace)  
2. Application of philosophical criticism to apologetics and evangelism |
| **Preach**                                      | Minimal | 1. Understanding modernism and postmodernism aids preaching and teaching in 21C |
| **Worship**                                     | None    | 1. Understanding modernism and postmodernism helps diagnose intellectual problems for 21C Christians |
| **Shepherd**                                    | Minimal | 1. Appreciation for breadth of Christian philosophical tradition |
| **Church/World**                                | Minimal | 1. Understanding modernism and postmodernism helps diagnose intellectual problems for 21C Christians |

*As the MDiv is the core degree at RTS, the MDiv rubric will be used in this syllabus.*

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**In order to measure the success of the MDiv curriculum, RTS has defined the following as the intended outcomes of the student learning process. Each course contributes to these overall outcomes. This rubric shows the contribution of this course to the MDiv outcomes.**

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**Course:** History of Philosophy and Christian Thought  
**Professor:** James N. Anderson  
**Campus:** Charlotte  
**Date:** 01/21/11