Reformed Theological Seminary,
Houston, Texas

History of Philosophy and Christian Thought ST504

INSTRUCTION - TIME AND DATE

THE CLASS MEETS ON
FRIDAY EVENINGS (7 to 9pm)
SATURDAYS (8:00am - 4pm)

DATES:
JUNE 7-8, 2013
JUNE 28-29, 2013
JULY 26-27, 2013
AUGUST 9-10, 2013

OVERVIEW

Syllabus Summary Statement:
A critical, historical survey of the development of the main schools of philosophy and the principal developments in Christian doctrine and thought. After a brief introduction to philosophical thinking, the course concentrates on philosophical movements from Heraclitus to contemporary existentialism. Each school of thought is evaluated from a distinctively Reformed perspective.

Reading - Overview
Baird, Forrest E., Philosophic Classics: From Plato to Derrida (6th Edition, though editions 3 through 5 would be OK too), (Prentice Hall, 2010) [Paperback]. Selected readings (focus upon primary sources, see assigned readings for each weekend)
Calvin, John, Institutes of the Christian Religion, any complete edition. Selected readings (see assigned readings for each week)
Heraclitus (around 500 BC), See HANDOUT: Notes and translations of fragment by Richard Hooker 1995.
Parmenides (earlier part of the 5th c. BC), Proemium (fragments) See two
HANDOUTS; one from ancient authors and one from Hanover Historical Texts; scanned and proofread by Aaron Gulyas, May 1998.

Protagoras (480-411BC?), See HANDOUT covering various fragments, and also providing some background notes by by Carol Poster of Oregon State University.

Sproul, R.C., The Consequences of Ideas, (Wheaton, Il: Crossway Books, 2000). [Paperback] This book will give a general overview of philosophy and will be a refresher for those who read some philosophy in College and will help those who have not read any philosophy before.


GRADING AND EVALUATION

Grading

The grading structure will be as follows:

Three tests - each carries 15 points = 45 points

“Reflection Essay” = 15 points

Final Examination (Essay Format) = 15 points

One Research Paper = 25 points

TOTAL = 100 points

Evaluation

Three tests

At the beginning of class on Weekend #2, #3, and #4 a short test will be given during class, comprising 10 to 20 short answer questions, or fill in the blank questions.

These tests will cover the previous week’s assigned readings and class presentations. The questions will focus on distinguishing various philosophical ideas and the philosophers who put them forth.

One “Reflection Essay”

This essay will be set out your reflections on the ways a Christian Worldview needs to be expressed to ensure that it can be clearly distinguished from one of the philosophical views previously discussed in class, during weeks 1 and 2. It is expected that your essay will show the philosophical training you have received and the philosophical resources you have used in this class.

In class on Weekend #2 more information on the requirements for this essay will be discussed. This essay will be between 6 and 10 double spaced typed pages, will attach a properly formatted Bibliography, and will include appropriate citation of sources.
The typed essay is to be e-mailed to rferguson@ffarpc.org on or before July 23, 2013.

**One Take Home Final Examination**
The take home test will require typing three short essays of about one or two pages (the detailed requirements for answering these essay questions will be explained in Class on Weekend #4)

The first short essay will discuss the ways Plato’s philosophy has impacted, positively and negatively, the expression of Christian truth. The second short essay will discuss the ways Aristotle’s philosophy has impacted, positively and negatively, the expression of Christian truth. The third short essay will be outlined at the end of weekend #4

The typed answers for the Take Home Final Examination are to be e-mailed to rferguson@ffarpc.org on or before August 20, 2013.

**One Research Paper**
The Research Paper will examine how the philosophical views of one of the philosophers noted below has impacted both Christian and non-Christian thought today. The paper will cite at least two examples where the philosopher’s views have made an impact. In setting forth these two examples, the paper will include a citation for the original sources for the philosopher’s views. The paper will then discuss those views as understood in their original historical setting, and will then cite examples of where the philosopher’s views may be seen to be impacting today’s philosophy, theology and culture. In citing the contemporary impact of the philosopher’s views, the paper will cite scholarly sources that show this impact. In addition, first, the paper is to contain the student’s reasoned views on two matters: an evaluation of the significance of the impact of these philosophical views upon current philosophical and theological scholarship; and secondly, seek to evaluate what, if any, has been the impact of these cited philosophical views on how Christians view the world around them today.

The paper will consider the views of one of the following philosophers; Plato, Aristotle, St Augustine, St Thomas, Descartes, Kant, Hegel, Edwards or Van Til.

This Research Paper will be due to be e-mailed to rferguson@ffarpc.org on or before August 20, 2013. The paper will be typed double spaced and be attached to an e-mail to the instructor. The paper will be typed in either MS Word or Mac Pages, or be presented in a PDF file. The paper will be between 10 and 15 pages in length, it will conform to the Chicago Style Manuel, and it will attach a detailed Bibliography. In citing “in-text” references the paper will use foot notes and not end notes.
INSTRUCTIONAL OUTLINE AND PROGRAM

Weekend #1

June 7: Friday evening (7 to 9pm)
Introduction to Christian Thought
Introduction to Philosophy
Discussion of Faith, Reason, and Revelation
Pre-Socratic Philosophy
Protagoras, Heraclitus, Parmenides

June 8: Saturday (8 to 4 pm)
The Ancient Classical Philosophers
Socrates, Plato and Aristotle
Early Church Fathers and Neo-Platonism
Early Christian Apologists
Augustine and Boethius

Reading for Weekend #1:
   a. Plato – Introduction and *Euthyphro, Apology and Republic* (VI-VII)
   b. Aristotle – Introduction and *Nicomachean Ethics* (Bk I-II), and *Physics* (Bk II)
   c. Augustine – Introduction and *Confessions* (Bk VIII, XI), *City of God* (Bk XII)
   d. Boethius – The Consolation of Philosophy (Book V. Chapter 6)
3. Parmenides (earlier part of the 5th c. BC), *Proemium* (fragments) Online at [http://history.hanover.edu/texts/presoc/parmends.html](http://history.hanover.edu/texts/presoc/parmends.html)
4. Protagoras (480-411BC?), Online at [http://www.public.iastate.edu/~goodwin/eng350/protagoras](http://www.public.iastate.edu/~goodwin/eng350/protagoras). These are fragments other Greek writes, also see [http://oregonstate.edu/instruct/phl201/modules/Philosophers/Protagoras/protagoras.html](http://oregonstate.edu/instruct/phl201/modules/Philosophers/Protagoras/protagoras.html) for background.
5. R.C. Sproul – For the first weekend read through pages 64.
6. N. Pearcey – For the first weekend read through pages 96.

Weekend #2

June 26: Friday evening (7 to 9pm)
Short test on last week’s reading, lectures and presentations.
Medieval Philosophy
Anselm and Thomas Aquinas.

June 27: Saturday (8 to 4 pm)
Early Modern Philosophers (Catholic Thinkers)
Descartes and Pascal
Reformation Thinkers
Calvin, Luther and Edwards

Reading for Weekend #2:

1. Baird, Forrest E., Philosophic Classics: From Plato to Derrida
   a. Anselm – Proslogion (Chapters 2-4), and Gaunilo and Anselm: Debate
      (Selection given by Baird)
   b. Thomas Aquinas Summa Theolgica (Selection given by Baird)
   c. Descartes – Meditations (As given by Baird)
   d. Pascal – Pensees (Selection given by Baird)
4. N. Pearcey – For the second weekend read through pages 97-152.
5. R.C. Sproul – For the second weekend read through pages 65-90.

Weekend #3

July 8: Friday evening (7 to 9pm)
   Short test on last week’s reading, lectures and presentations
   Other Early Modern Philosophers
   Hobbs, Locke and Hume

July 9: Saturday (8 to 4 pm)
   Transcendental idealism – Kant
   Existentialism and Nietzsche

Reading for Weekend #3:

1. Baird, Forrest E., Philosophic Classics: From Plato to Derrida
   a. Hobbs – Leviathan, Bk I.12-15
   b. Locke – An Essay Concerning Human Understanding, (Abridged)
   c. Hume – Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding, Bk II-VII, X
   d. Kant – Foundation for the Metaphysics of Morals, I-II
   e. Nietzsche – Twilight of the Idols (Selections), and The Anti-Christ (1.2-7, 62)
2. N. Pearcey – For the third weekend read through pages 251- 324.
3. R.C. Sproul – For the third weekend read through pages 91-172.

Weekend #4

Short paper on Edwards due Friday evening

Aug 9: Friday evening (7 to 9pm)
   Short test on last week’s reading, lectures and presentations
   Later Modern Philosophers
   Hegel and Kierkegaard

Aug 10: Saturday (8 to 4 pm)
   Analytical Philosophy -- Wittgenstein
   Postmodernism and Derrida
Reading for Weekend #4:

   a. Hegel – *The Phenomenology of Spirit*
   b. Kierkegaard - *Fear and Trembling* (Problema I), and *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (Section II, Chapter II)
   c. Wittgenstein – *Philosophical Investigations* (Selection given by Baird)
   d. Derrida – *Of Grammatology* (Selection given by Baird)

2. N. Pearcey – For the fourth weekend read through pages 325 - 380.
3. R.C. Sproul – For the fourth weekend read through pages 173-204.