Catalog Course Description

[This Course is 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.

Explanation

Philosophy is inescapable and the relationship between philosophy and Christian thought, life, and ministry is varied and complex. The purpose of this course is to familiarize students with some of the most significant philosophical contributions, influences, and challenges to Christian thought. We will consider the relationship between philosophy and theology, and critique the various philosophical methods and proposals discussed in class beginning with pre-Socratic philosophy and running through contemporary postmodern thought. The primary objective of this course is to survey that body of philosophy students should know in order to (1) understand the development and present form of Christian thought and (2) be culturally literate.

Textbooks & Readings

Textbooks (Required)
- Colin Brown, *Christianity & Western Thought*, vol. 1 only (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1990)

Primary Readings (Required)
- Augustine, *On Christian Teaching* (various publishers and online)
- Immanuel Kant, *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone*
- David Hume, *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*
- Homemade Reader (primary readings listed below posted on Self-Service and on reserve in Library)

Recommended

Assignments

Reading Reports: Each week students are expected to bring to class a summary of the major points or themes of the assigned primary readings for that day’s discussion (if any). Students may be asked to summarize their thoughts on a particular reading and may use their summaries to help them in class discussions. These summaries will be collected at the end of the class and graded.

Exams: Two exams will cover course content including assigned readings and class lectures and discussions. They will consist primarily of objective and short answer type questions but will likely also include a few essay questions. NOTE: The mid-term exam will be completed by students under the honor code over Fall break.

Course Grade

Reading Reports 40%
Exams 60% (30% each)
Outline of Course Lecture Content

[Introduction to Course] ........................................................................................................... Aug 27

Introduction to Philosophy
I. Definition and Divisions
II. Philosophy and Theology
III. Scripture and Philosophy

Classical Philosophy
I. Pre-Socratic Philosophy
   A. Central Problems: One and the Many (Unity and Diversity) & Change
   B. Major “Schools”
      1. Array of Theories: Ionians; Pythagoreans; Heraclitus; Eleatics (Parmenides and Zeno of Elea)
      2. Attempts at Synthesis: Empedocles and Anaxagoras
      3. Atomists
   C. Sophists

II. Socrates ................................................................................................................................. Sept 3
III. Plato ..................................................................................................................................... Sept 10

IV. Aristotle ................................................................................................................................ Sept 17

V. Hellenistic Philosophy .......................................................................................................... Sept 24
   A. Epicureanism
   B. Stoicism
   C. Pyrrhonism/Skepticism
   D. Neo-Platonism

Early Christian Thought.......................................................................................................... Sept 24
I. Christian Engagement
   A. Apologists
   B. Theological Debates: Incarnation and Trinity
   C. Christian Appropriation of Pagan Thought
II. Augustine

Medieval Christian Philosophy................................................................................................ Oct 1
III. Medieval Christian Philosophy
   A. Boethius, Carolingian Renaissance, & Rise of Scholasticism
   B. Anselm of Canterbury

[Fall Reading Week] ................................................................................................................. Oct 8

[Midterm Exam Due] ............................................................................................................... Oct 15
   C. Thomas Aquinas (Thomism)
   D. Duns Scotus (Scotism)
   E. William of Ockham (Nominalism)

IV. Philosophy & the Reformation
   A. Lutherans & Anabaptists
   B. Reformed Fathers & Protestant Scholastics

Modernity..................................................................................................................................... Oct 22
I. Seventeenth Century Rationalism
   A. Descartes & Rise of Modern Rationalism
   B. Continental Rationalism: Spinoza, Leibniz, & Lessing
C. British Rationalism: Rational Theology, Locke, Newton, and Deism
D. Dissent: Blaise Pascal & Jonathan Edwards

II. Eighteenth Century Enlightenment ................................................................. Oct 29
A. David Hume & Thomas Reid
B. French *Philosophes* & the *Encyclopédie*
C. Reason and Rebellion: American and French Revolutions

III. Nineteenth Century Philosophy ................................................................. Nov 5
A. Kant: Rational Moral Faith
B. Romanticism (Schleiermacher) ................................................................. Nov 12
C. Idealism (Hegel)
D. Rise of Modern Atheism: Feuerbach, Marx, Freud, & Nietzsche ........................ Nov 19
E. Dissent: Søren Kierkegaard & Old Princeton
F. American Scene
   1. Transcendentalism
   2. Pragmatism

The Postmodern Turn ........................................................................................ Nov 26
I. Analytic Philosophy & Positivism
II. Phenomenology & Existentialism
III. Critique of Modernity: Wittgenstein & Ryle
IV. Toward a Postmodern Philosophy
   1. Sources
   2. Lyotard, Derrida, Foucault, & Rorty

Conclusion ........................................................................................................ Dec 3
Christian Philosophy in America Today: Reformed Epistemology

**Homemade Reader Content & Reading Schedule** ........................................... Due Date
1. Plato’s Cave and Divided Line ........................................................................ Sept 3
2. Aristotle’s Categories .................................................................................... 10
3. Plotinus’s The One, Descent of the Soul, and Dialectic .............................. 17
   [Augustine’s On Christian Teaching] ......................................................... 24
5. Thomas Aquinas, A Selection of Questions from ST and SCG ..................... 15
6. Descartes on Methodological Doubt ............................................................. 22
7. Reimarus on Scripture and Lessing’s Ditch
   [Hume’s Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion] ..................................... 29
   [Kant’s Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone] ................................. Nov 5
8. Schleiermacher, Intro to CF ......................................................................... 12
9. Stephen Crites on Hegel
10. Short passages from Feuerbach, Freud, Marx, and Nietzsche .................. 19
11. Kierkegaard, Mirror of the Word
12. Menand on “the Metaphysical Club”
   [Smith’s Who’s Afraid of Postmodernism] ............................................. 26
13. Alvin Plantinga on Reformed Epistemology .............................................. Dec 3
## Course Objectives Related to MDiv Student Learning Outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MDiv Student Learning Outcomes</th>
<th>Rubric</th>
<th>Mini-Justification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Articulation (oral &amp; written)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Broadly understands and articulates knowledge, both oral and written, of essential biblical, theological, historical, and cultural/global information, including details, concepts, and frameworks. Primary course objective is for students to become familiar with and gain discernment on the theologically relevant themes in the Hist. of Phil. For Christian Thought</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Scripture</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>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.) Various perspectives and proposals in the Hist. of Phil. will be critiqued in light of Scripture. Scripture is frequently brought into lectures and discussions and applied to topics at hand. See “Desire for Worldview” below.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reformed Theology</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards. The class is taught from an explicitly Reformed orthodox perspective and devotes a unit to the philosophical background to Reformed Theology.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sanctification</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student’s sanctification. The course aims at increasing students’ awareness and discernment of formative ideas for Christian thought and life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Desire for Worldview</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Burning desire to conform all of life to the Word of God. This, as it applies to the life of the mind and history of ideas, would be the <em>raison d'être</em> of the course.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Winsomely Reformed</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>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.) The professor strives to model and encourage this ethos in the course as we consider and critique various alternative ideas, values, etc. See also “Church/World” below.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Preach</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ability to preach and teach the meaning of Scripture to both heart and mind with clarity and enthusiasm. Indirect relevance as we consider the vernacular manifestation of philosophical ideas and how this impacts ministry.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Worship</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Knowledgeable of historic and modern Christian-worship forms; and ability to construct and skill to lead a worship service. N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Shepherd</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ability to shepherd the local congregation: aiding in spiritual maturity; promoting use of gifts and callings; and encouraging a concern for non-Christians, both in America and worldwide. See “Preach” above.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Church/World</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ability to interact within a denominational context, within the broader worldwide church, and with significant public issues. Students should grow in appreciation for the continuity of Christian thought over centuries. See also “Winsomely Reformed” above.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>