History of Philosophy and Christian Thought (6ST504)

Reformed Theological Seminary

3 credit hours

Location:

Westkirk Presbyterian Church
2700 Colby Woods Drive
Urbandale, Iowa 50322

Class dates:

April 22 – 26
Monday – Friday, 8:30am-4:30pm

Instructor:

Geoffrey M. Sackett, Lecturer in Theology and Philosophy and Dean of Students at Reformed Theological Seminary – Washington DC

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I. Course description

The general objective of this course is to introduce students to the main schools and authors in the history of philosophy. Our survey will begin with Greek philosophy and culminate with contemporary trends.

The objective of the readings and assignments is not only to convey new information, but also enhance textual, writing, reasoning and analytic skills.

II. Required reading

Plato, *Euthyphro* and *Crito*. (Any edition.)


Augustine, *Confessions*. (Any edition.)


**III. Recommended reading (not required)**


**IV. Evaluation and Assignment**

3 reading reports (20% each=60%)

Reports are due on May 3 (Aristotle), May 10 (Augustine), and May 17 (Dewey).

Final Exam (40%)

The final Exam is due on May 21.

Reports should be 3-5 pages. Address the following points in your report:

- Summarize the text’s main point(s) or thesis (theses).
- Explain why you think the author wrote this book.
- Writing style. Describe some of the devices the author uses in order to make his points (e.g., narrative, argument, dialogue). Give specific examples.
- Name one aspect of the author’s thesis you agree with. Argue your point.
- Name one aspect you disagree with. Argue your point.
- As a Christian, how could this book help you? (assuming that it could indeed be of any help).

**I. Readings and Schedule**

Note: please read all of the assigned material, but you are not required to follow the reading schedule below. You may complete the readings before, during or after class.

*Day 1*

Readings: none

- Introduction: Athens and Jerusalem/Overview
- Early Greek Philosophy: Parmenides, Heraclitus, Democritus
- Greek Philosophy: Socrates, Plato, Aristotle
- Hellenistic Philosophy: Epicurus, Epictetus

*Day 2*

• Hellenistic and Medieval Philosophy: Sextus Empiricus, Augustine, Anselm, Aquinas

**Day 3**

Readings: Plato, *Euthyphro* and *Crito*.

• Modern Philosophy: Descartes, Pascal, Spinoza, Leibniz

**Day 4**

Readings: Augustine, *Confessions*; David Hume, *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*.

• Modern Philosophy: Hobbes, Locke, Berkeley, Hume, Kant, Schleiermacher
• Late Modern Philosophy: Kierkegaard, Marx
• Philosophy and Principles of Theological Interpretation

**Day 5**


• Late Modern and Contemporary Philosophy: Mill, Nietzsche, James, Wittgenstein, Sartre
• Faith, Reason and Apologetics
• Athens and Jerusalem revisited

Final Exam Distributed