

**Reformed Theological Seminary,
Houston, Texas**

**History of Philosophy and Christian Thought ST504
Fall 2017**

Instructional Information - TIME AND DATE

The class will meet on Thursday evening (6:30 to 9:30 pm) on the following dates, September 14, 2017 through December 7, 2017 (no class will be held on Thursday, November 23, 2017)

Instructor:

Dr. Robert M. Ferguson
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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 philosophy. Each school of thought is evaluated from a distinctively Reformed perspective.

Course Overview

- Unit # 1 - Introduction to Philosophy and Worldviews
- Unit # 2 - The Pre-Socratics and First Order Questions
- Unit # 3 - Socrates, Plato and Aristotle
- Unit # 4 - Later Greek/Roman Philosophers,
- Unit # 5 - Early Christian Philosophers
- Unit # 6 - Renaissance and Reformation:
- Unit # 7 - Early Modern Philosophy
- Unit # 8 - Modern Era Philosophy
- Unit # 9 - Utilitarian Philosophy, Existentialism, and Nihilism.
- Unit #10 - Analytical Philosophy, Phenomenology, and Postmodernism
- Unit #11 - Twentieth Century Christian Philosophy
- Unit #12 - Reformed Approaches to Philosophy

Grading and Evaluation

Grading

The grading structure will be as follows:

Two tests - each carries 10 points	= 20 points
Class attendance and thoughtful participation	= 10 points
Final Examination (Essay Format)	= 30 points
One Research Paper	= 40 points

TOTAL

= 100 points

Evaluation

Two tests

At the beginning of class in Weeks # 4, and #8 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.

Class attendance and thoughtful participation

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.

There will be opportunity for class participation and questions during the lectures.

You will be expected to use the Internet in the classroom *only for appropriate class-related activities*, and you will be asked to sign an honor pledge to that effect.

A proportion of your final grade (see Examination below) will depend on your attendance record and your participation in the classes (thoughtful interaction with the professor and other students).

One Take Home Final Examination

The take home Final Examination will require typing three short essays, each of about one or two pages (the detailed requirements for answering these essay questions will be explained in Class on weeks #11 and 12)

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 question will be outlined in class at the end of week #11.

NOTE: In addition to addressing the three questions in the examination, you will be required to submit a statement indicating which of the required reading assignments (textbooks and on-line readings) you have *completed*, and to sign a declaration to that effect.

Arrangements for submitting your take home Final Examination will be handed out in class in week 11.

One Research Paper

Each student will need to submit a Research Paper which will contain 3500–4500 words, excluding footnotes. This paper will examine how the philosophical views of one of the philosophers discussed in class has impacted both Christian and non-Christian thought today. You may select any one of the major philosophers discussed in class during this course.

The paper should address a single philosophical issue identified with your chosen philosopher which you show has impacted both Christian and non-Christian thought. Issues such as “the one and many”, the nature of the soul, change and non-change, time, personal identity, the reality of matter, the reality of universals, the possibility of knowledge, and the goal of history. This list is not intended to be exhaustive.

You will be required to discuss your chosen philosopher and the selected philosophical issue in class during week #8, and to obtain the instructor’s approval to continue with that philosopher and issue. Please note that no two students will be permitted to do research on the same topic for the same philosopher.

In setting forth the views of your chosen philosopher, your paper will include a citation for the original sources for the philosopher’s views, and will then cite examples of where the philosopher’s views may be seen to be impacting today’s philosophy, theology and culture. Also include some indication of the significance of the philosophical issue for Christian doctrine or practice.

In addition, your paper is to contain a critical evaluation of the philosopher’s position on the issue, and the evaluation needs to be made in relation both reason and Scripture. You are also required to give an explanation of *your own* position on the issue (compared and contrasted with that of your chosen thinker).

The paper will be typed (not hand written) double spaced 12 point for the main text. The paper will be typed in either MS Word, or be presented in a PDF file. As noted above the paper will contain between 3500–4500 words, excluding footnotes, and it will conform to the Chicago Style Manual, and it will attach a detailed Bibliography. In citing texts in the Bibliography and “in-text” references the paper will use recognized scholarly style for citations following in the Chicago Style Manual.

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).

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

Your paper is due two weeks after the last week of class. It may be submitted on or prior to this date. Ensure that the paper is stamped with the date of submission. Late

submissions will be penalized. Arrangements for submitting your Research Paper will be handed out in class in week 11.

Course Documents

A. Course outline.

1. Other than the syllabus, a more detailed outline of topics and required reading in preparation for each week's class is available on the home page for this course. The outline is entitled, "*Reading List for History of Philosophy and Christian Thought ST504*" which outlines topics and required reading for each week.
2. In addition, you find on the home page for this course, "*Readings – Original Sources*". You will need to read over these sources before the assigned class, and make a copy these papers (either electronic or printed) to have in front of you throughout the class.
3. As needed a more detailed "Unit Outline" will be uploaded to the course home page before class for that Unit. You are strongly encouraged to supplement these unit outlines with your own notes.

B. Supplementary documents.

1. The reading schedule and one of the required reading items (see below) will be available on the course home page.
2. Additional documents and notes will be added to the course home page from time to time and you are encouraged to check for new items during the course.

C. Required information and reading in preparation for Week #1.

1. The "Course Overview" (see above) shows the course divided into twelve units, with each unit approximating one week of classes.
2. Please download and review the syllabus and other outline documents in preparation for week #1.
3. Also, please read the following from the textbooks listed below in preparation for week 1:

Craig G. Bartholomew and Michael W. Goheen, *Christian Philosophy: A Systematic and Narrative Introduction* (Baker Academic, 2013).

Read: Part 1 (pages 1-12)

W. Andrew Hofferger, ed., *Revolutions in Worldview* (P&R, 2007).

Read: Chapters 1-3

Required Reading

You should obtain copies of all the items below. You are also required to read the other required readings posted on the course home page. These additional readings will mainly be primary source texts, which will be discussed in class.

1. Craig G. Bartholomew and Michael W. Goheen, *Christian Philosophy: A Systematic and Narrative Introduction* (Baker Academic, 2013).

2. W. Andrew HOFFECKER, ed., *Revolutions in Worldview* (P&R, 2007). [Note the helpful glossary at the back of the book.]
3. 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.]
4. Edwards, Jonathan, *A Jonathan Edwards Reader*, Edited by John E. Smith, H. S. Stout, and K. P. Minkema, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003). [Paperback] Selected readings (see assigned readings for each weekend)

Recommended Supplemental Reading

- 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)
- B. Colin Brown, *Christianity & Western Thought, Volume 1* (IVP, 1990). [Covers figures and movements from the pre-Socratics to Kant that have influenced Christian thought.] Volume II by Wilkins - see below.
- Calvin, John, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, any complete edition. Selected readings (see supplemental readings for each week)
- 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.]
- F. James Fieser and Bradley Dowden, eds., *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. [A free, online, peer-reviewed encyclopedia of philosophy; contains good articles on many of the figures and concepts discussed in the course.
<http://www.iep.utm.edu>]
- Pearcey, Nancy, *Total Truth: Liberating Christianity from Its Cultural Captivity*. (Crossway Books, 2004). [Paperback] Chapters Pages 1-152, and 251-380
This book provides an introduction to ways of connecting philosophy with theology and culture.
- 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.
- Steve Wilkens and Alan G. Padgett, *Christianity & Western Thought, Volume 2* (IVP, 1990). [Sequel to Brown's book (see above); extends the survey to the turn of the 20th century.]
- Wills, Garry, *Saint Augustine*. [Penguin Lives] (NY: Penguin, 1999) [Paperback] This short book will give an excellent overview of the life and views of the first major Christian philosopher whose work still impacts philosophy and theology today.
- Edward N. Zalta, ed., *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. [A free, online, peer-reviewed encyclopedia of philosophy; contains good articles on many of the figures and concepts discussed in the course. <http://plato.stanford.edu>]