The Making of Modern Theology: Christianity and the Enlightenment

Meeting Information
Wednesdays, February 5 – May 6, 8:30-10:30am

Contact Information
Dr. Kevin DeYoung (kdeyoung@christcovenant.org)
My assistant at Christ Covenant is Kim Westbrook (kwestbrook@christcovenant.org)

Course Description
Everyone in the West—Christian or non-Christian—has been deeply affected by the intellectual upheaval that took place during the eighteenth century. The period often known as the Enlightenment challenged centuries-old assumptions about God, revelation, knowledge, authority, politics, and virtue. This course will look at a variety of leading thinkers from John Locke to John Witherspoon, from Thomas Hobbes to Thomas Reid. By exploring the themes and figures from the Enlightenment period—with special attention given to moral philosophy—we will better understand the history of evangelicalism, the challenge of contemporary theology, and the origin of many of our most intractable cultural debates. The intellectual currents flowing into, out of, and through the eighteenth century are still important for ministry today, for these currents let loose nothing less than the creation of the modern world.

Course Requirements
In addition to attending the class faithfully and being a joyful and active participant in discussion, there are four requirements.

1. Summary Paper (15%) – Students will write a 700-900 word summary paper on Himmelfarb’s The Roads to Modernity, explaining the difference between the British, French, and American Enlightenments and highlighting key ideas and figures. The paper is due March 11.

2. Final Exam (25%) – A “final” exam will be given during the penultimate class. The exam will be based on class lectures (supplemented by the reading) and will include factual knowledge questions and one or two short essay questions. The exam is April 29.

3. Required Reading (25%) – Reading is an important part of the class. Students are expected to read all the assigned material with reasonable care. Do your best with the Moral Philosophy book, even if you don’t understand all of it. All the required reading must be completed by the last day of class, May 6.
4. Research Paper (35%) – The goal of a research paper is to state and defend an argument, demonstrating facility with academic sources and showing that you are familiar with the major viewpoints, including those you do not agree with. In addition to grading on content, papers will be marked down for grammatical mistakes, sloppy writing, syntactical errors, improper formatting, and failure to communicate your argument clearly and cogently. The paper should be 4,000-5,000 words and is due May 14.

Notes on Papers

1. Research Paper topic: Choose 1-3 persons studied in this class and describe his/her/their impact on the modern world whether for good or for ill. The paper can lean toward history or toward theology/philosophy but be sure to make an argument rather than simply providing a biographical sketch. You may want to include comparison and contrast with other figures. If your topic is less explicitly theological, be sure to reflect on the challenges to (or opportunities for) Reformed theology and ministry that flow from his/her/their ideas. You may not choose Doddridge, Edwards, or Witherspoon unless it is to compare and contrast their ideas, practices, and legacy with the one or more of the Enlightenment figures in the class.

2. Both papers should be in 12pt., Times New Roman font, full justified, 1-inch margins on all sides, 1.5 spacing, page numbers at the bottom, a title at the top of the first page, with your name, class, and date on the right top of the first page. Provide subheadings as needed. I will not receive papers over the word limit. Include the word count at the end of your paper. Use footnotes (not endnotes) according to one of the main style guides (I prefer The Chicago Manual of Style). Scripture texts and confessional texts (i.e., Westminster Standards) can be cited parenthetically. The most important thing is to be consistent with your citation style. Your paper should include a bibliography. The bibliography does not contribute to your word count, but the footnotes do.

Required Reading


Other Class Rules
Computers and tablets are not allowed in class. Unless there is an emergency, cell phones are not allowed either. Even with the godliest, most focused student, screens are almost always a distraction. Besides, recent articles have suggested that students learn better when taking notes by hand.
(Tentative) Class Schedule

February 5
Introduction to the Enlightenment: Separating Fact from Fiction
Reworking Natural Law: Grotius, Hobbes, Pufendorf

February 12
Social Contract Theory: Locke and Rousseau

February 19
Anglican Reflections on Reason and Revelation: Clarke, Paley, Butler
Evangelicalism’s Enlightened Educator: Philip Doddridge

February 26
German Philosophy and Pietism: Leibniz, Wolff, Thomasius, Crusius

March 4
Enlightenment Enigma: Pierre Bayle
French Philosophes: Helvetius, d’Holbach, Diderot, Voltaire

March 11
Virtue and Vice, Matter and Mind: Mandeville, Malebranche, Berkeley
Calvinism’s Creative Response: Jonathan Edwards

March 18 - SPRING BREAK (no class)

March 25
Scottish Enlightenment: Shaftesbury, Hutcheson, Hume, Kames

April 1
Reformed Critique and Common Ground: John Witherspoon

April 8
Common Sense and Pure Reason: Reid and Kant

April 15 - T4G (no class)

April 22
The American Experiment: Montesquieu, Jefferson, Madison, Hamilton

April 29
EXAM

May 6
Conflict of Visions: Smith, Godwin, and Condorcet
The Birth of Right and Left: Burke and Paine
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<tr>
<th>MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes</th>
<th>Rubric</th>
<th>Mini-Justification</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Articulation (oral &amp; written)</strong></td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>Understanding and articulating key concepts will be reinforced by the exams and the research paper. The content of the class will help students address many current controversies with greater historical acumen.</td>
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<td><strong>Scripture</strong></td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>Students will be required to engage with modern controversies and test varying viewpoints against Scripture and the Reformed tradition.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Reformed Theology</strong></td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>We will focus on the interaction between Calvinism and the Enlightenment.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Sanctification</strong></td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>The relationship between reason and revelation will be explored in a way that directs the student to God and his word.</td>
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<td><strong>Worldview</strong></td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>The class will help students shape a Christian worldview that goes beyond the traditional systematic loci.</td>
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<td><strong>Winsomely Reformed</strong></td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>We will interact thoughtfully with those who have argued for different understandings of reason, revelation, political philosophy, and virtue.</td>
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<td><strong>Pastoral Ministry</strong></td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Students will be equipped to think theologically about the church and to see that played out in a local church context. Significant time will be spent examining the relationship of the church to the world.</td>
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