
History of Philosophy and Christian Thought

Lectures by
Professor John M. Frame, D.D.

REFORMED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
Virtual Campus

COURSE SYLLABUS

History of Philosophy and Christian Thought, OST504, 3 hours

Dr. John M. Frame

Reformed Theological Seminary, Virtual

Professor

Dr. Frame is professor of Systematic Theology and Philosophy. He has his A. B. degree from Princeton University, a B. D. from Westminster Theological Seminary, and an M.Phil. from Yale University and a D.D. from Belhaven College. An outstanding theologian, John Frame distinguished himself during 31 years on the faculty of Westminster Theological Seminary, and was a founding faculty member of WTS California. He is best known for his prolific writings including ten volumes, a contributor to many books and reference volumes, as well as scholarly articles and magazines. Dr. Frame is a talented musician and discerning media critic who is deeply committed to the work of ministry and training pastors

Course Objectives

1. To inform students about the main thinkers in the history of philosophy, Reformed theology, and liberal theology.
2. To show the interaction of philosophy and theology, especially the influence of philosophy on our theological formulations.
3. To illumine the spiritual warfare that takes place in the intellectual movements of human history.
4. To give students critical tools to evaluate, not only thinkers of past history, but future thinkers as well.

Required Textbooks

Diogenes, Allen, and Eric Springsted. *Primary Readings in Philosophy for Understanding Theology*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1992.

Frame, "Christianity and Contemporary Epistemology." (Appendix B).

_____. "God and Biblical Language." (Appendix C).

_____. "Greeks Bearing Gifts." (Appendix A).

Donald Palmer. *Looking at Philosophy*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2001.

William Placher. *Readings in the History of Christian Theology*. Vols.1 and 2. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1988.

Robert Strimple. "Roman Catholic Theology Today." In John Armstrong, ed., *Roman Catholicism*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1994, 85-117.

All required books are available through the RTS Online Bookstore at:

<http://www.mindandheart.com/>.

Course Requirements

Online Student Handbook

The online Student Handbook is a guide that contains information for participation in this course. Needed forms may be downloaded and printed from this site. You will find it located on the RTS/Virtual website under Student Services. Check here for all the latest updates.

Requirements in Brief

- Completion of Reading Assignments
- Listen to all Recorded Lectures
- Participate in Immersive Learning Simulations
- Participate in Forum Discussions (with other students and Professor)
- Midterm Exam
- Final Exam
- Course Paper
- Mentor Report

Simulations (20%)

There is an Introduction video, 5 sneak peak simulations, five immersive learning simulations and one Conclusion video in the course. Each simulation will cover a topic relevant to the topics covered in the readings and lectures for the appropriate weeks.

Examinations (Midterm 20%, Final 20%)

There are two examinations for this course, a mid-term and a final. The mid-term examination will cover the lectures and readings from Lesson One through Lesson Ten. The final examination will cover the lectures and readings from Lesson Eleven through Lesson Seventeen.

All exams are proctored. For this course, you will take your exams within the Moodle Virtual Classroom. Under Week 5 you will see links to instructions for the mid-term examination and a link to the examination itself. Under week 12, you will see links to instructions for the final examination and to the examination itself. Your mid-term examination will be in 2 sections and your final examination will be in 2 sections. In order to take your examinations, you must email student services (vcss@rts.edu) and request that the appropriate examination password be sent to your proctor, who will then open the exam for you.

Forum Discussions (10%)

The student is to participate in forum discussions in the online tutorial. 10% total (5% Student to Student, 5% Student to Professor)

Research Paper (25%)

Each student is required to submit a research paper on a topic of your choice from this course.

a. Recommended length, 4500 words (approx. 15 pp., doublespaced). The professor will not be rigid about the length, but if the paper is longer, the additional pages should be especially worth reading. If it is shorter, it should be equivalent in quality to a longer paper.

- b. For the paper, you should do some research beyond the course assigned reading and lecture material. Indicate such in footnotes and bibliography, but please use a consistent system.
- c. For a topic, see SUGGESTED PAPER TOPICS on page v, or you may choose anything in the field of Philosophy, with approval from the professor.

Hall of Frame

The professor would like to post the most excellent term papers at www.reformedperspectives.org, in the “Hall of Frame.” This will give other students an idea of my standards for theological writing, and it will honor those who have made an extra effort. If you have any objection to your paper being used in this way, please notify the professor in advance.

Be sure to follow all instructions in the Tutorial re: submission of the “Big Four” and paper. If you have not done so already, please watch the separate **Course Paper Simulation** in the Virtual Classroom on Moodle.

Mentor Report/Course Application Paper (5%)

Each MA Distance student is required to have his mentor submit a report at the end of the course. This report will contribute to 5% of the student’s grade. For students who are not registered in the MA program, you are asked to write a 200 word summary of how you perceive what you have learned in this course will fit into the objectives you have for your ministry, your educational goals, or other objectives you wish to achieve in life.

Assignments

All assignments are due at the end of the week in which they fall in the online course.

Any

student who needs an extension must get approval from the Virtual Campus before the deadline. Assignments are to be uploaded within the tutorial. Please follow the directions provided.

Time Limit

All course work, including exams, papers, reading requirements, is to be completed within twelve weeks from your course start date.

Contact Information

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SUGGESTED PAPER TOPICS

History of Philosophy and Christian Thought, OST504, 3 hours

John Frame

Reformed Theological Seminary, Virtual

1. A Comparison and Contrast Between Plato's Philosophy and the Christian Worldview
(This general topic could be adapted to any philosopher.)
2. Influences on Thomas Aquinas: Aristotle, Neoplatonism, and Scripture.
3. Augustine's Contributions to Epistemology.
4. The Nature of Anselm's Ontological Argument.
5. Anselm's Contribution to the Theology of the Atonement.
6. Aquinas's Cosmological Arguments: Do they Assume a Non-Christian Worldview?
7. Occam's Influence on Luther: May a Christian Be a Nominalist?
8. Calvin's Doctrine of the Knowledge of God.
9. Pascal's Contribution to Apologetics. 1
0. Rationalist and Irrationalist Elements in Kant's Philosophy.
11. Influences on Van Til: Hegel, Warfield, Kuyper, Orr.
12. Wittgenstein and the Bible on the Meaning of Language
13. Is Metanarrative Possible Following the Postmodern Critique?
14. Clark and Van Til: Has Their Disagreement Been Exaggerated?
15. Plantinga's Reformed Epistemology: Is it Reformed? Is it Apologetically Useful? 16. Is Barth a Good Model for Evangelical Theologians?
17. Pannenberg's Contribution to Christian Thought

(You may substitute the name of any theologian, such as Schleiermacher, Ritschl, Barth, Bultmann, Moltmann). You may propose a topic of your own choosing; however, you must get approval from the professor, via the Student to Professor Discussion Forum, in order to receive credit for your paper.

COURSE OUTLINE
History of Philosophy and Christian Thought, OST504, 3 hours
Dr. John M. Frame
Reformed Theological Seminary, Virtual

Part One: Ancient and Medieval

Reading Assignments

Allen, 1-110.

Lecture Outline, 1-34.

Frame, "Greeks Bearing Gifts"

Palmer, Chapters 1-4, 1-149.

Placher I, Entire book.

I. Why Study Philosophy?	1
II. Philosophy: General Observations	1
Greek Philosophy	4
A. The Milesians	4
B. The Eleatics	5
C. Three Early Alternatives to Parmenides	7
1. Heraclitus	7
2. Atomism	8
3. The Sophists	8
D. Plato	9
E. Aristotle	11
F. Plotinus	13
G. Gnosticism	14
Early Christian Thought	14
I. Original Opponents of Christianity	14
II. Second-Century Apologists	15
III. Irenaeus	16
IV. Tertullian	17
V. Clement of Alexandria	19
VI. Origen	20
VII. Athanasius	22
VIII. Augustine	23
Medieval Philosophy	24

I. Christian Neoplatonism	24
II. Anselm of Canterbury	25
III. Thomas Aquinas	27
IV. Later Medieval Developments	33
 Part Two: Reformation to 1900	 35
 Reading Assignments	
Allen, 111-247.	
Lecture Outline, 35-83.	
Palmer, Chapters 5-6, 150-294.	
Placher II, Chapters 1-6, 11-155.	
 I. John Calvin	 35
II. Seventeenth-Century Orthodoxy	36
 Early Modern Philosophy (1650-1800)	 37
A. Continental Rationalism	37
B. British Empiricism	38
 Early Modern Christian Thought	 39
I. Blaise Pascal	40
II. Joseph Butler	44
III. William Paley	46
IV. Thomas Reid	47
 The Beginnings of Liberal Theology	 49
I. Introduction	49
II. Enlightenment Rationalism	51
III. Gotthold E. Lessing	51
 Kant and His Successors	 52
I. Immanuel Kant	52
II. Idealism	59
III. Karl Marx	62

Nineteenth Century Theology	64
I. Friederich Schleiermacher	64
II. Albrecht Ritschl	70
III. Wilhelm Herrmann	73
IV. Adolf Harnack	75
V. Soren Kierkegaard	76
Mid-term Exam	
Part 3: Twentieth Century Thought 1	
Phenomenology, Pragmatism, and Existentialism	
I. Friedrich Nietzsche	84
II. Charles Sanders Pierce	85
III. William James	87
IV. Edmund Husserl	88
V. Martin Heidegger	89
VI. Jean-Paul Sartre	91
Theology, 1920-1970	93
I. Karl Barth	93
II. Emil Brunner	109
III. Rudolf Bultmann	113
IV. Paul Tillich	119
V. The New Hermeneutic	136
VI. Christian Atheism	138
VII. Dietrich Bonhoffer, Secular Theology	140
Part 4: Twentieth-Century Thought 2	
From Hermeneutics to Postmodernism	146
I. Hans-Georg Gadamer	146
II. Ferdinand De Saussure	146
III. Claude Levi-Strauss	147
IV. Deconstruction	147
Theology, 1950-2000	148
I. Jurgen Moltmann	148
II. The Theology of Liberation	153
III. Wolfhart Pannenberg	170

Process Thought	185
I. Process Philosophy	185
II. Process Theology	188
III. Open Theism	218
IV. Story Theology, Narrative Theology	219
V. Postliberalism	221
Part 5: Twentieth-Century Thought 3	223
The Philosophy of Language Analysis	223
Introduction	223
I. Logical Atomism	223
II. Logical Positivism	226
III. Ordinary Language Philosophy	229
IV. Topics in Contemporary Epistemology	232
Recent Reformed Philosophy	237
I. Abraham Kuyper	237
II. Herman Dooyeweerd	238
III. Alvin Plantinga	239
IV. Gordon H. Clark	241
V. Cornelius Van Til	247

COURSE BIBLIOGRAPHY
History of Philosophy and Christian Thought, OST504, 3 hours
John Frame
Reformed Theological Seminary, Virtual

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