2ST504, History of Philosophy and Christian Thought

**Course Handbook**

RTS/Orlando, Spring Term, 2012

# Meetings

Wednesdays, 8-10 AM, 11-12 AM.

# Instructor

John M. Frame

My stated office hours this term are Tuesdays, 8-11 AM, others by appointment. I’m in my office most mornings, and if my door is ajar I’ll be happy to see you. Feel free to write me at [jframe@rts.edu](mailto:jframe@rts.edu). I will probably give a better answer to your question by email than in person, but I realize that sometimes face-to-face meetings are better.

**Teaching Assistant**

Louis Schieferdecker, [mirrorimage1018@gmail.com](mailto:mirrorimage1018@gmail.com). Louis is also available to help you. He will be evaluating your written assignments and will be available to help you prepare for exams.

# 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.

# Assignments

1. Regular attendance, preparation of assigned material each day for discussion. Students who are often late, absent, or unprepared may be penalized. At present I don’t expect to have a lot of discussion in class, but if you ask questions they should be well-informed.

2. One paper of roughly 3000 words, due Fri., May 18, at 11 AM. Put it in the bin marked with our course name in the area near the Administrative Assistants.

a. Choose some thinker discussed in this course.

b. Read some of the thinker’s own works, plus some secondary sources, both assigned and unassigned.

c. Describe and explain briefly one of his distinctive theses (one for which he is known in distinction from other thinkers).

d. Note one or more of his main arguments for that thesis.

e. Evaluate those arguments.

f. Compare his position with that of Reformed Christian Theism.

3. First MidTerm Exam, March 19-24: covering the first six assignments (through the assignment of March 14). The exam will be given in the library. You can go there to take it any time between its opening Mon., Mar. 19 to its closing Sat., March 24. You are responsible to know the library’s opening and closing hours.

4.Second Mid Term Exam, Apr. 16-21: same format as the first. Covers all assignments of March 21 through April 11. Take it in the library between its opening April 9 to its closing April 14.

5. Final Exam: covering the assignments from that of Apr. 18 to the end of the course. It will be given during the official exam period, at a place to be announced by the Seminary.

**N. B.: In your preparation for the exams, do not make use of any exam used for this course in an earlier year. If you do, it will be considered cheating, for which RTS applies draconian penalties.**

**Grading**

Individual assignments 1-5 will be graded on a pass-fail basis. Your final grade will be calculated as follows:

Passing work on all five assignments—A.

Passing work on four of five assignments—B.

Passing work on three of five assignments—C.

Passing work on two of five assignments—D.

Passing work on one or no assignment—F.

# Required Texts

Papers by Frame and Edgar can be found at [www.reformedperspectives.org](http://www.reformedperspectives.org). Click on “Hall of Frame,” then this course.

Diogenes Allen and Eric Springsted, *Primary Readings in Philosophy for Understanding Theology* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1992). **ISBN-13:** 978-0664252083.

Edgar, “No News is Good News”

Frame, “Certainty”

--, “Christianity and Contemporary Epistemology”

--, “God and Biblical Language”

--, “Greeks Bearing Gifts”

--, “Infinite Series”

--, “Ontological Argument”

--, “Transcendental Arguments”

--, “Van Til Reconsidered”

Donald Palmer, *Looking at Philosophy* (NY; McGraw-Hill, 2009). ISBN-13: 978-0073407487.

**Recommended, Supplementary Texts**

Andrew Hoffecker, ed., *Revolutions in Worldview* (Phillipsburg: P&R, 2007). An excellent survey of worldviews from the Greek philosophers to the present. My “Greeks Bearing Gifts” is included. Other contributors include present and former RTS professors and other well-known Reformed scholars like Vern Poythress, Peter Leithart, Carl Trueman, Richard Lints.

William Placher, *Readings in the History of Christian Theology*, 1 and 2 (Phila.: Westminster Press, 1988). Primary source readings for many of the thinkers we discuss in the course.

Robert Strimple, “Roman Catholic Theology Today” in John Armstrong, ed., *Roman Catholicism* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1994), 85-117. I have assigned this as an accurate and concise summary of post Vatican 2 Roman Catholicism.

Samuel Enoch Stumpf, *Socrates to Sartre and Beyond*: *A History of Philosophy* (NY: McGraw-Hill, 2003). Dr. MacKenzie used this book as his main text. Excellent, detailed account. I have thought that it is perhaps too technical for most seminarians, but I could be wrong.

## Course Schedule

This schedule indicates *roughly* how the readings correlate with the lectures. I will not test you on them during the week, but it would be good for you to have completed the readings in order better to follow the lectures. I will not usually discuss the readings in class. They will cover some thinkers I may not mention in class. Mastering these texts is your responsibility. The final exam will cover both lectures and readings.

All dates are Wednesdays.

## Feb. 8: Introduction; Early Greek Philosophy

Lecture Outline (henceforth LO), 1-8.

Frame, “Greeks Bearing Gifts”

Palmer (henceforth P), 1-51.

**Feb. 15: Mature Greek Philosophy**

LO, 9-14.

Allen and Springsted (henceforth AS), 1-82.

P, 52-108.

**Feb. 22: Early Christian Thought**

LO, 14-22.

**Feb. 29: Augustine and Medieval Christian Thought**

LO, 23-34

AS, 83-110

Frame, “Ontological Argument”

--“Infinite Series”

P, 109-160.

**Mar. 7: Early Modern Thought: Secular**

LO, 35-39.

AS, 111-171.

Frame, “Certainty.”

P, 160-218.

**Mar. 14: Early Modern Thought: Christian**

LO, 39-49.

**MAR. 19-24: FIRST MIDTERM:** Covering lectures and readings through the assignment of Mar. 14. Take it in the Library any time from opening Monday, Mar. 19, till closing Saturday, Mar. 24. You are responsible to find when the library is open.

**Mar. 21: Early Liberal Theology; Kant and His Successors**

LO, 49-64.

AS, 172-218, 228-247.

P, 235-304.

**Mar. 28: Spring Break; No Class**

**Apr. 4: Nineteenth Century Theology**

LO, 64-83.

AS, 219-228.

**Apr. 11: Phenomenology, Pragmatism, Existentialism**

LO, 84-93

AS, 248-262.

P, 305-318, 359-384.

**Apr. 16-21: SECOND MIDTERM:** Covering lectures and readings assigned through the assignment of April 4. Take it in the library any time from its opening Monday, 4/16, to its closing Saturday, 4/21. You are responsible to determine when the library is open.

**Apr. 18: Theology, 1920-1950**

LO, 93-146.

**Apr. 25: From Hermeneutics to Postmodernism; Theology 1950-2000**

LO, 146-185

AS, 263-280

Edgar, “No News is Good News”

P, 384-416.

**May 2: Process Thought, Open Theism, Narrative Theology**

LO, 185-222

**May 9: Language Analysis**

LO, 223-237.

AS, 281-303.

Frame, “God and Biblical Language.”

“Christianity and Contemporary Epistemology.”

P, 318-359.

**May 16: Recent Reformed Philosophy**

LO, 237-end.

Frame, “Transcendental Arguments.”

--, “Van Til Reconsidered.”

### Bibliography

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Hoffecker, W. Andrew, Revolutions in Worldview (Phillipsburg: P&R, 2007).

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Kuitert, H. M., The Reality of Faith (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968). 5.50. 209. H.

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Theology (NY: Harper, 1967). 5.95. 249. h.

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Van Buren, Paul, The Secular Meaning of the Gospel (NY: Macmillan, 1963). 1.95. 205. P.

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### “Reformed Epistemology”

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Arguments of Plantinga and Van Til,” forthcoming.

Clark, Kelly James, Return to Reason (Grand Rapids:

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Hart, H., Vander Hoeven, Johan, and Nicholas Wolterstorff,

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(Lanham, MD: Univ. Press of America, 1983). Includes some earlier

discussions of “Reformed epistemology,” and Frame’s essay, “Rationality

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Hoitenga, Dewey J., Jr., Faith and Reason from Plato to

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(Albany: SUNY Press, 1991). All historical roads lead to Plantinga.

Plantinga, Alvin, Warranted Christian Belief (NY: Oxford University Press,

2000). See also his *Warrant* and *Warrant and Proper Function*.

--, and Wolterstorff, Nicholas, ed., Faith

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--, Perceiving God : the Epistemology of Religious Experience (Ithaca:

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Geivett, R. Douglas, and Sweetman, Brendan, Contemporary

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Helm, Paul, Belief Policies (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1994). Frame’s review is in your SD.

--, The Varieties of Belief (NY: Humanities Press, 1973). Helm is a

Reformed Christian, well respected in secular philosophical circles.

--, ed., Objective Knowledge: A Christian Perspective (Leicester: IVP,

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Hick, John, Philosophy of Religion (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1963).

High, Dallas M., New Essays on Religious Language (NY: Oxford Univ. Press, 1969). Reviewed by Frame in WTJ.

Holmer, Paul, The Grammar of Faith (San Francisco: Harper,

1978). Frame’s advisor at Yale. Sympathetic to Kierkegaard, Wittgenstein,

and evangelicalism.

Kaufman, Gordon D., The Theological Imagination (Phila.: Westminster Press, 1981).

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See Frame’s review in DKG. Lindbeck is now known as the founder of

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Lonergan, Bernard, Method in Theology (NY: Crossroad, 1979).

Mavrodes, George, Belief in God (NY: Random House, 1970). Evangelical.

Important to recent discussions of religious epistemology.

Mitchell, Basil, ed., Faith and Logic (Boston: Beacon Press, 1957).

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(Notre Dame: UND Press, 1988).

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Murray, Michael, ed., Reason for the Hope Within (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans,

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Peterson, Michael, et al., Reason and Religious Belief (NY and Oxford: Oxford

University Press, 1991).

Phillips, Dewi A., Faith After Foundationalism (London: Routledge, 1988).

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Plantinga, Alvin, God and Other Minds (Ithaca: Cornell Univ.

Press, 1967).

‑‑, God, Freedom, and Evil (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans,

1974). These titles were published before Plantinga developed his

“Reformed epistemology,” but he considers them still valid as providing

supplementary argumentation for the rationality of Christian belief.

Ramsey, Ian, Religious Language (NY: Macmillan, 1957).

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(Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973).

Stump, Eleonore, and Murray, Michael J., eds., Philosophy of Religion: The Big

Questions (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999).

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1981).

Torrance, Thomas F., Theological Science (NY: Oxford University Press, 1969,

1978).

Van Buren, Paul M., The Edges of Language (NY: Macmillan, 1972). Reviewed by Frame in WTJ. Wittgensteinian, more or less.

Yandell, Keith, The Epistemology of Religious Experience (Cambridge:

Cambridge University Press, 1993).

**Postmodernism**

Allen, Diogenes, Christian Belief in a Postmodern World

(Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press,

1989). 238. p.

Altizer, Thomas, et al., Deconstruction and Theology (NY: Crossroad, 1982). 14.95. 178. H.

Anderson, Walter Truett, Reality Isn’t What It Used to Be (San Francisco: Harper, 1990).

Burnham, Frederic B., ed., Postmodern Theology: Christian Faith in a Pluralist World (NY: Harper, 1989).

Cahoone, Lawrence, ed., From Modernism to Postmodernism: an Anthology (Cambridge. MA: Blackwell, 1996).

Derrida, Jacques, Writing and Difference (London and NY: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978).

Dockery, David S., ed., The Challenge of Postmodernism

(Wheaton: Victor Books, 1995). 428. p.

Edgar, William, “No News is Good News,” WTJ (Fall, 1995), 359-82. Good intro. by knowledgeable Van Tillian.

Grenz, Stanley J., A Primer on Postmodernism (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996). Probably the best general introduction to the subject, but I would be more critical of the postmodern movement.

Gunton, Colin, The One, the Three, and the Many: God, Creation, and the

Culture of Modernity (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

Harvey, David, The Condition of Postmodernity (Oxford: Blackwell, 1989).

Lundin, Roger, The Culture of Interpretation (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993).

Lyotard, Jean-Francois, The Postmodern Condition (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1984).

--, The Postmodern Explained (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1992).

McCallum, Dennis, ed., The Death of Truth (Minneapolis: Bethany House, 1996). Postmodernism.

McHale, Brian, Constructing Postmodernism (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1992).

Middleton, J. Richard, and Walsh, Brian J., Truth is Stranger than it Used to Be (Downers Grove: IVP, 1995). Christians who are more friendly than most toward some postmodern ideas.

Murphy, Nancey, and McClendon, James W., “Distinguishing Modern and Postmodern Theologies,” in Modern Theology 5:3 (April, 1989), 191-214.

Phillips, Timothy R., and Okholm, Dennis, Christian Apologetics in the Postmodern World (Downers Grove: IVP, 1995).

Taylor, Mark, Deconstructing Theology (NY: Crossroad, 1982).

Tilley, John, Postmodern Theologies (NY: Orbis, 1994).

**Course Objectives Related to MDiv Student Learning Outcomes**

Course: 2ST504, History of Philosophy and Christian Thought

Professor: John M. Frame

Campus: Orlando, FL

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **MDiv Student Learning Outcomes** | | **Rubric**   * Strong * Moderate * Minimal * N/A | **Mini-Justification** |
| **Articulation**  **(oral & written)** | Broadly understands and articulates knowledge, both oral and written, of essential biblical, theological, historical, and cultural/global information, including details, concepts, and frameworks. | Strong | Discusses the forms of Christian and non-Christian thought through history, promoting understanding and articulation in all these ways. |
| **Scripture** | 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.) | Moderate | Not a course in exegesis, but the intent is to present and defend a biblical worldview as it applies to historical and modern circumstances. |
| **Reformed Theology** | Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards. | Moderate | Teaches a worldview that is distinctively Reformed, notes a number of significant Reformed thinkers. Doesn’t focus on Reformed standards. |
| **Sanctification** | Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student’s sanctification. | Moderate | This is certainly one goal in the course. I am trying to show that the biblical worldview is best for the intellect, will, and passions. |
| **Desire for Worldview** | Burning desire to conform all of life to the Word of God. | Moderate | The worldview presented in the course is comprehensive, pertaining to all of life, and therefore motivating our greatest passion. |
| **Winsomely Reformed** | 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.) | Strong | Presents positively Christian thinkers of all traditions and tried to model a winsome approach to non-Christian thinkers. |
| **Preach** | Ability to preach and teach the meaning of Scripture to both heart and mind with clarity and enthusiasm. | Moderate | Not a preaching course. But I hope the course will help students to understand better the needs of the world today and will help them to think and speak more clearly about those needs. |
| **Worship** | Knowledgeable of historic and modern Christian-worship forms; and ability to construct and skill to lead a worship service. | N/A |  |
| **Shepherd** | 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. | Moderate | The course ought to encourage concern for non-Christians, since it will present their epistemological situation as hopeless. I hope to present the material in a way that will model Christian maturity. |
| **Church/World** | Ability to interact within a denominational context, within the broader worldwide church, and with significant public issues. | Moderate | The course focuses on a worldview held essentially in common by all Christians, and it seeks to show how differences of worldview affect all discussions of public issues. |

