



ST 510 – HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY AND LOGIC 2 Semester Hours

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I. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

To some it might seem strange that a seminary would require a course in the history of philosophy, since so much of that history is at best “secular” and at worst in stark opposition to Christian faith and teaching. Yet effectiveness in ministry requires that God’s servants not only be well trained in the Bible and theology, but also that they have a good understanding of the intellectual and spiritual challenges of our times, and many of these have their roots in the ideological citadels that have flowed from the halls of the philosophical schools of western history. The apostle Paul, writing to the Corinthian believers, who lived in a highly secularized culture that was heavily influenced by Greek and Roman thought, admonished them to engage in both spiritual and intellectual warfare:

³ For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh. ⁴ For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. ⁵ We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ, ⁶ being ready to punish every disobedience, when your obedience is complete. 2 Cor. 10:3–6 ESV

Like the Corinthians, we too are called to respond to unbelieving “arguments” and lofty ungodly “opinions” that oppose the knowledge of God and the gospel of Jesus Christ. We are called to become equipped to “take captive” not only our own thought but, as God provides opportunity, to challenge the godless thought forms of those around us who do not know Christ.

Accordingly, the purpose of this course is to give students preparing themselves for Christian ministry and service a broad overview of the contours of western philosophy from the ancient pre-Socratics to modern times, exposing them to the thought forms that have shaped the modern and postmodern eras and providing cogent responses to these thought forms from a Christian perspective. Along the way, we will discuss the foundational principles of logic that are essential to critical thinking.

II. LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. To trace the flow of western philosophy from the ancient times to the present, and to identify its key figures and their most prominent arguments and thought forms;
2. To evaluate the approaches and arguments of the most prominent philosophers in the light of biblical teaching;
3. To grasp the ways in which philosophy has intersected with and influenced Christian thought, and vice versa;
4. To provide a foundation upon which students may be able to construct a rational and coherent understanding of their Christian faith;
5. To demonstrate a clear understanding of the philosophical approach of at least one prominent philosopher, and to show an ability to evaluate his views in the light of biblical teaching and the Christian theology.

III. COURSE STRUCTURE

A. Online Component: All materials for the course will be provided online via the Canvas Learning Management System (LMS), and students will submit all assignments via Canvas. The LMS also

provides a place to raise questions for your instructor or to interact with the instructor or other students related to the course contents.

B. Class Sessions: This two-unit intensive course will meet for five consecutive three-hour weekday evening sessions, followed by a five-hour Saturday session, for a total of twenty hours of classroom instruction. Class sessions will alternate between lectures and interactive group learning workshops designed to focus on the practical application of the material covered. Attention to and meaningful interaction with the lecture contents is expected and will be assessed by a lecture test to be submitted via Canvas one week after the final class session.

C. Reading Assignments: The course textbook is designed provide you with exposure to the major figures and thought strands of western philosophy from a Christian perspective. Because of the intensive nature of this course, it is recommended that you complete as much of the reading as possible before the week of class. The table below shows a rough correspondence between the readings and the course lectures. Completion of the reading assignments will be assessed through six reading summaries to be completed and submitted via Canvas no later than one month following the final class session.

Required Reading:

John M. Frame, *A History of Western Philosophy and Theology* (P&R, 2017), 875 pages.

Recommended Supplemental Reading:

Gordon H. Clark, *Thales to Dewey: A History of Philosophy* (Trinity Foundation, 1989), 561 pages.

D. Term Paper: The required research paper will give you the opportunity to examine in greater depth the views of one of the major philosophers of western history and to evaluate his approach in the light of the Christian faith. The paper should be at least 5000 words in length, including footnotes and bibliography, and should include (1) interaction with at least five scholarly books and/or journal articles dealing directly with the apologist in question; (2) reflection on the thinker's thought forms in light of biblical teaching and Christian theology; and (3) a final section discussing the relevance of this thinker's philosophy as it relates to our current task of "taking captive" every thought to the obedience of Christ. Key questions you should address in the research paper include:

- 1) *What were this philosopher's most significant contributions to the thought forms of his generation?*
- 2) *What presuppositions about God and the world formed the foundation of the philosopher's ideas?*
- 3) *What impact has the philosopher's ideas had on our contemporary culture?*
- 4) *In what ways does a biblical worldview reinforce or challenge the philosopher's ideas?*

The paper should be submitted via Canvas in a Microsoft Word or Word-compatible electronic document showing appropriate formatting in accord with Kate Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 8th edition. An excellent online resource for formatting footnotes and bibliography can be found here:

<https://www.covenantseminary.edu/library/turabian/>.

A convenient summary of Turabian style can be found here:

<https://bethanyseminary.edu/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/TurabianGuide14.pdf>.

The deadline for the completion of the term paper is four weeks after the final class session.

IV. ACADEMIC STANDARDS

A. Grading: Your grade for the course will be based on the following elements:

- Lecture test and workshop discussion forums: 35%
- Reading reports: 35%
- Research paper: 30%

B. Attendance: Due to the intensive and interactive nature of the course, participation in each of the class sessions is essential and will be monitored. To accommodate unexpected events that may arise during the week of the course, absence from three class hours will be permitted without excuse. Unexcused absence beyond that will result in five percent deduction from your overall score per class hour missed. Excuses for absence will be granted for serious personal or family emergencies only, and not to accommodate work or vacation schedules.

C. Late Work and Incompletes: Work submitted late without excuse will be subject to a 10% downgrade per week. Those unable to complete work for the course may be granted a temporary grade of "Incomplete" for one month while the work is being completed. Unless an exception is granted for emergency situations, a deduction of 10% from the final grade will be assessed for those taking the "Incomplete" option.

Tentative Schedule of Lectures and Readings

Date	Lecture and Workshop Topics	Reading
Mon., Jan. 17	Lecture 1: <i>Presocratics, Sophists, Socrates</i> Workshop 1: <i>Early Greek Philosophy</i> Lecture 2: <i>Plato and Aristotle</i>	Ch.1, <i>Philosophy and the Bible</i> Ch. 2, <i>Greek Philosophy</i>
Tues., Jan. 18	Lecture 3: <i>Stoics, Epicureans, Neoplatonists</i> Workshop 2: <i>Early Christian Philosophy</i> Lecture 4: <i>Philo, Fathers, Augustine</i>	Ch. 3, <i>Early Christian Philosophy</i> Ch. 4, <i>Medieval Philosophy</i> Appendix C: "Ontological Argument"
Weds., Jan. 19	Lecture 5: <i>Scholastics</i> Workshop 3: <i>Medieval Philosophy</i> Lecture 6: <i>Rationalism</i>	Ch. 5, <i>Early Modern Thought</i> Ch. 6, <i>Theology in the Enlightenment</i>
Thurs., Jan. 20	Lecture 7: <i>Empiricism</i> Workshop 4: <i>Early Modern Philosophy</i> Lecture 8: <i>The Kantian Synthesis</i>	Ch. 7, <i>Kant and His Successors</i> Ch. 8, <i>Nineteenth-Century Theology</i>
Fri., Jan. 21	Lecture 9: <i>Idealism</i> Workshop 5: <i>Kant and Beyond</i> Lecture 10: <i>Irrationalism</i>	Ch. 9, <i>Nietzsche, Pragmatism, Phenomenology, and Existentialism</i>
Sat., Jan. 22	Lecture 11: <i>Liberalism</i> Workshop 6: <i>Liberal Theology</i> Lecture 12: <i>Pragmatism</i> Discussion Lunch Break Lecture 13: <i>Postmodernism</i>	Ch. 10, <i>Twentieth-Century Liberal Theology</i> , Part 1 Ch. 11, <i>Twentieth-Century Liberal Theology</i> , Part 2 Ch. 12, <i>Twentieth-Century Language Philosophy</i> Appendix L: Review of <i>The Edges of Language</i> Appendix J: Review on Logical Positivism Ch. 13, <i>Recent Christian Philosophy</i>

Instructor: Rev. Dr. Mark House is Professor of Biblical Studies at New Geneva Seminary in Colorado Springs, CO. He is an ordained minister in the Presbyterian Church in America with over twenty-five years of pastoral experience and twenty years of college and seminary teaching experience. Dr. House majored in Philosophy and Greek at Biola University and received the M.Div. degree from Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia, PA (1980). He earned the Th.M. degree from Talbot School of Theology (1994) and the Ph.D. degree in New Testament Studies from Fuller Theological Seminary (2002). He has taught as an adjunct professor at Reformed Theological Seminary, Talbot School of Theology, Fuller Theological Seminary, Zaporozhye Bible College in Ukraine, and New Geneva's Egypt Extension program in Alexandria, Egypt.