

COURSE PURPOSE:

It was long said that philosophy was the handmaid to theology, but now most intellectuals would regard philosophy and theology as separate (and even antagonistic) entities. This course examines the changing relations between Christian thought and philosophy up to the time of Kant in the late 1700s, in order to help students understand Christian thought more fully and express it more cogently in our world today.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

The mission of Erskine Theological Seminary is to educate persons for service in the Christian Church. As a part of that mission, one goal is that graduates be prepared to **utilize the Church's historical and theological heritage as an important resource** in their personal spiritual development and ministry. This course examines the relation between theology and philosophy as a tool to help students more fully understand and use the Church's theological resources.

It is the teacher's intention that by the end of the term, students will:

1. **Recognize** the close relation between all expressions of Christian thought and the philosophical world in which those expressions emerge.
2. **Understand** the major shifts in philosophical thought in the Christian West up to the time of Kant and the way these affect the articulation of Christian truth.
3. **Appreciate** the need to consider the thought world of one's own time in expressing Christian truth.
4. **Re-consider** the way Christian truth should be expressed (theology) and defended (apologetics) in light of both past and present philosophical mindsets.

COURSE METHOD:

The purpose and objectives of this course will be achieved through three learning components. The first is the **content component**, the student's own mastery of historical and philosophical material needed for an understanding of Christian thought. This will be accomplished through class lectures and textbook reading. This component addresses objectives 1 and 2 above.

The second component is the **reflective component**, the student's reflection on the relation between Christian thought and the prevailing philosophical ideas of the time it is articulated. This will be accomplished through the class discussions and the students' own interaction with the material of the course. This component addresses objectives 3 and 4 above.

The third is the **research component**. Each student will complete two formal research projects. This component touches on all four of the objectives above.

NOTE ABOUT TEXTBOOKS:

Please note that students are responsible for securing their own textbooks. As a convenience, there is an electronic bookstore on the Seminary's home page. To access this site and its information, locate textbooks, and compare prices, go to <http://www.erskineseminary.org/bookstore.html>

In addition, a limited number of copies of most textbooks will be available from the physical Erskine Campus Bookstore, and copies may be ordered through that Bookstore.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS for all students:

Allen, Diogenes. *Philosophy for Understanding Theology*. 2nd edition. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2007. (ISBN: 978-0664231804)

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

REQUIRED TEXTBOOK for Th.M. students:

Allen, Reginald, ed. *Greek Philosophy: Thales to Aristotle*. 3rd Edition. New York: The Free Press, 1991. (ISBN: 978-0029004951)

RECOMMENDED TEXTBOOKS:

The following are books on reserve in the library from which all students will read selections. Students may read the assigned portions in the library, rather than purchasing the books.

Anselm of Canterbury: The Major Works. Re-issue edition. New York: Oxford University Press, 2008.

St. Augustine. *Confessions*. New York: New City Press, 1990.

Boethius: The Consolation of Philosophy. Translated by Richard Green. McMillan, 1962.

St. Gregory of Nyssa. *On the Soul and the Resurrection*. Trans. Catherine Ross. Crestwood, N.Y.: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2002.

Pseudo-Dionysius: The Complete Works. Classics of Western Spirituality. New York: Paulist, 1987.

The following are books on reserve in the library from which Th.M. students will read selections. Students may read the assigned portions in the library, rather than purchasing the books.

Greek and Roman Philosophy after Aristotle. New York: The Free Press, 1994.

Medieval Philosophy: From St. Augustine to Nicholas of Cusa. New York: The Free Press, 1969.

The Philosophy of the 16th and 17th Centuries. New York: The Free Press, 1966.

18th-Century Philosophy. New York: The Free Press, 1966.

A Summa of the Summa. Ed. Peter Kreeft. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1990.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Requirement One (20 points): Each student will complete all assigned reading from the textbook, the primary-source reader, and other sources on reserve in the library. The reading guide begins on p. 6 below. Each student will be required to sign a statement at the end of the course indicating that he/she has completed this reading. Please make every effort to complete each reading assignment prior to the class when it will be discussed. Please note that Th.M. students sometimes read different (or additional) assignments than master's-level students.

Requirement Two (80 points): Each student will complete TWO research projects, one dealing with an issue of Christian intellectual history prior to the year A.D. 1000, and the other dealing with an issue from the period from 1000-1800. For each project, the student will choose a theological or apologetic issue that received significant attention during that time period. The student will research this topic using both primary and secondary sources, and will write a paper detailing the link between the prevailing philosophical ideas of that time period and the articulation of that theological or apologetic idea. The paper will also reflect on the way this theological or apologetic idea can be best expressed today, even if the philosophical underpinnings of the idea are not shared now. For master's-level students, each paper should be about 8 pages double spaced. For Th.M. students, each paper should be about 12 pages. The first research paper is due on March 25, and the second on May 10.

Seminary Policies Pertaining to Research Papers

Language about God and Humanity: Although God transcends the distinction between male and female, the Bible and the Church's historic creeds and confessions use masculine language in reference to God. Thus, the Seminary encourages all students to retain this masculine usage when speaking and writing about God. Furthermore, the Seminary recognizes that all human beings, male and female, are created equally in the image of God (Gen. 1:26-27), and believers of both sexes are fellow heirs of the grace of life (1 Pet. 3:7). Accordingly, whenever students are speaking and writing about males and females, they should use language that clearly includes both men and women (for example, by saying/writing "humanity" rather than "man" or "people" rather than "men").

Form of Written Work: The research papers must be typed/processed (twelve point type, double-spaced, with one-inch margins) and fully documented, following the guidelines found in Turabian, *Manual for Writers* (7th edition). These guidelines are summarized in the Erskine Seminary document "Style and Form Standards" (available at the link listed on p. 1 of this syllabus). Footnotes and a bibliography are required in the research papers. The paper's cover page and bibliography are not counted toward the page requirement.

Plagiarism: Plagiarism is the use in writing of wording or ideas produced by others without crediting the author and/or source from which the material was taken. Plagiarism is a serious offense that undermines both the witness and integrity of the Christian community. Any student who commits plagiarism is in violation of Seminary policy and is liable for dismissal. See the academic section of the *Catalog* for complete information.

Criteria for Grading the Research Papers:

- Writing that is grammatically correct and stylistically clear
- A form that adheres to the guidelines in Turabian, *Manual for Writers* (7th edition)
- Adherence to the parameters of the assignment (length, scope)
- Choice of a topic and a specific question that are suitable for the length of the paper
- Clear organization of material
- In the introduction, a clear statement of the topic, the specific question to be addressed, and the way the paper will address it
- In the body, evidence that the student has used relevant primary sources in addition to those read for class discussions
- In the body, evidence that the student has used relevant secondary sources

In the body, evidence that the student grasps historical and philosophical information related to the topic

In the body and the conclusion, attention to ways in which this theological or apologetic idea can be best expressed today

Depth and creativity in handling the topic

OVERALL GRADING SCALE:

100-95	A	85-84	C+	71-70	D-
94-93	A-	83-80	C		
92-91	B+	79-78	C-	69-0	F
90-88	B	77-76	D+		
87-86	B-	75-72	D		

COURSE EXPECTATIONS and SEMINARY POLICIES:

Drop/Add/Withdrawal: Once a student has completed, signed, and submitted his/her registration to the Registrar for this class, it is a binding contract, and billing will be based on this registration. If the student decides not to take this class, he/she must complete a “drop/add” form and secure the appropriate signatures prior to the drop/add deadline during the second week of the semester. If one wishes to withdraw from the course after the drop/add deadline, one must complete a withdrawal form, and tuition will be refunded on a pro rated basis. Failure to withdraw from the class properly will result in the student’s receiving a grade of “F” for the course, and full tuition charges will apply. No exceptions will be made to this policy.

Attendance: If a student misses more than one class period (3 hours), or significant time from classes totaling more than 3 class hours during the semester, he/she will be required to do make-up work. It is the student’s responsibility to consult with the professor immediately (before the missed class time if possible so that taping can be arranged) to have the extra work and “due date” assigned. All make-up work must be handed in by noon on Friday, May 14. The student cannot complete the course unless this is done. Except in extraordinary circumstances, a student cannot complete this course if he/she misses more than two class days (or 6 hours total). If this happens, the student must consult with the professor as soon as possible to see whether the reasons for the absences warrant special arrangements to complete the material for the course.

Conduct in Theological Discussions: Erskine Seminary is committed to the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church, and it expects its students to show respect for all who identify with that one Church. In all written work, oral presentations, and discussions both inside and outside the classroom, the Seminary expects students to conduct discussions of controversial issues in a context of respect for those with whom one disagrees. Please see the Community Life Statement in the *Catalog* for more information.

Return of Written Work: Federal privacy guidelines do not allow the return of student documents to an unsecured mail box *unless* the student grants permission in writing. Students who wish to have their work returned as early as possible to their student mail boxes will place their student box number on the front page of their work. This will be viewed as written permission to return documents in this manner. Students who decline to give such permission (that is, who do not write their box numbers on the work) will get their work back in person later.

Late Work: Any work not submitted by the due date will be assessed a late penalty. The final deadline for submitting all late work is noon on Friday, May 14. Any work not received by this deadline will be given a grade of “0,” unless the student has made **prior** arrangements to receive an incomplete for the course. (See the policy on incompletes just below.)

Incompletes: The grade of “I” or incomplete is given at the discretion of the professor. A grade of “I” is normally given when a student has substantially completed the requirements for a course but has been prevented by extraordinary circumstances from completing the remainder of the course requirements. A student who wishes to request an incomplete should normally fill out an incomplete form prior to the end of the semester and ask the professor to grant the request. (Under unusual circumstances, the student may communicate with the professor by phone or email rather than in person, and the professor may then agree to fill out the form at the student's request. Under exceptional circumstances, the professor may initiate the process by filling out the form on the student's behalf.) If the professor grants the request, he will sign the incomplete form and turn it in with his final grade report. An “I” in this course must be removed by August 1, 2010. Only the Dean may grant the extension of an incomplete beyond the established completion date. Otherwise, the grade automatically becomes an “F.”

Chapel Attendance Policy: All morning and afternoon on-campus classes (except for Friday and Saturday courses) carry a chapel attendance requirement. Consult the *Catalog* or registration booklet for the specifics of the chapel attendance policy. There is a per chapel fee if one attends fewer chapels than required.

COURSE OUTLINE—LECTURE/DISCUSSION SCHEDULE and READING GUIDE:

- Feb. 4** Introduction to the Course; Classical Philosophy Prior to Plato
- Feb. 11** Classical Philosophy—Plato
 All students read Allen, pp. ix-37; Reader, pp. 16-38.
 Master's-level students also read Reader, pp. 1-16.
 Th.M. students also read *Thales to Aristotle*, pp. 74-109, 197-245
- Feb. 18** Classical Philosophy—Aristotle
 All students read Allen, pp. 65-76; Reader, pp. 39-82.
 Master's-level students also read Reader, pp. 72-82.
 Th.M. students also read *Thales to Aristotle*, pp. 307-383.
- Feb. 25** Classical Philosophy— Other Greek Philosophies, Platonism
 All students read Allen, pp. 39-63.
 Th.M. students also read *Philosophy after Aristotle*, pp. 199-285.
- Mar. 4** Classical Philosophy and Christian Late Antiquity—Gregory of Nyssa
 All students read Gregory of Nyssa, *On the Soul and the Resurrection*
 (pp. 27-121).

- Mar. 11** Classical Philosophy and Christian Late Antiquity—Augustine, Pseudo-Dionysius
 All students read Augustine, *Confessions*, Book 7 (pp. 158-83).
 All students read Pseudo-Dionysius, *The Mystical Theology* (pp. 135-41).
 Th.M. students also read *Medieval Philosophy*, pp. 31-81.
- Mar. 18** Classical Philosophy and Christian Late Antiquity—Boethius
 All students read Boethius, *The Consolation of Philosophy* (pp. 3-130).
- Mar. 25** **First Paper Due;** Classical Philosophy and Byzantium—John of Damascus
 No reading assignment
- Apr. 1** No Class — Easter Break
- Apr. 8** Classical Philosophy and the High Middle Ages—Anselm
 Master's-level students read Reader, pp. 83-90.
 Th. M. students read *Anselm of Canterbury*, pp. 82-122.
- Apr. 15** Classical Philosophy and the High Middle Ages—Aquinas
 All students read Allen, pp. 77-112; Reader, pp. 91-110.
 Th.M. students also read *A Summa of the Summa*, pp. 33-50, 113-22.
- Apr. 22** Classical Philosophy and the Early Modern World—Descartes
 All students read Allen, pp. 113-53; Reader, pp. 111-39.
 Th.M. students also read *Philosophy of 16th/17th Centuries*, pp. 154-87.
- Apr. 29** Classical Philosophy and the Early Modern World—Locke, Hume
 All students read Allen, pp. 155-68; Reader, pp. 140-71.
 Th.M. students also read *18th-Century Philosophy*, pp. 28-61.
- May 6** Classical Philosophy and the Early Modern World —Kant
 All students read Allen, pp. 169-252; Reader, pp. 172-209.
 Th.M. students also read *18th-Century Philosophy*, 253-85, 298-302.
- May 10** **Second Paper Due**
- May 14** **All Make-Up and Late Work Due**