



Course Syllabus

WINTER 2018 PHILOSOPHY FOR UNDERSTANDING THEOLOGY THEO 0539

JANUARY 8 – APRIL 2
MONDAYS, 2:15 – 5:05 PM

INSTRUCTOR: JOHN FRANKLIN

Email: jfranklin@tyndale.ca

Office Hours: By appointment only

To access your course material, please go to <http://classes.tyndale.ca>. Course emails will be sent to your @MyTyndale.ca e-mail account. For information how to access and forward emails to your personal account, see <http://www.tyndale.ca/it/live-at-edu>.

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course acquaints students with the history of philosophy from pre-Socratics to modernity, especially where the history of thought intersects with theology. It informs students of the western world's intellectual development and its influence on theological understanding and articulation, even where theologians may not have been aware of philosophy's "encroachment."

There has been a long tradition of rich and varied conversation between philosophy and theology. Theological reflection has typically engaged both the biblical narrative and the best of philosophical thought. This course is intended to acquaint students with the history of philosophy from the pre-Socratics through to contemporary themes, with particular attention to places of intersection between the two disciplines. Though there are diverse theological themes found in philosophical discourse the central question is the question of God.

The course is structured as a seminar course which will include time for lectures and where assigned readings will provide resources for student in-class presentations. The scope of the course is such that we can only highlight some of the engagements between theology and philosophy that form an important part of the Western intellectual history.

Christian theology grew and developed in the soil of Greek philosophy and that early connection set the stage for ongoing engagement between the disciplines. Often the conversation was amicable and mutually beneficial but at times it was characterized by tension and conflict. Our task is to explore key intersections between philosophy and theology that have served to give shape to theological thinking.

II. LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the end of this course, students should be able to:

- a) Appreciate and articulate the importance of philosophical study for Christian theology
- b) Draw on philosophical resources to address and constructively engage themes in Christian theology
- c) Better understand the relationship between faith and reason
- d) More readily engage intellectual challenges to Christian faith
- e) Take up more effectively the practice of theological reflection and the shaping of personal theological viewpoints

III. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A. REQUIRED TEXTS

Allen, Diogenes, and Eric O. Springsted. *Philosophy for Understanding Theology*. 2nd Edition. Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox, 2007.

Allen, Diogenes, and Eric O. Springsted. eds. *Primary Readings in Philosophy for Understanding Theology*. Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox, 1997.

B. ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Students will do in-class presentations are required to do three written assignments each about 2000 words in length. At least one – possibly more – may be on a theme/philosopher selected for your in-class presentation. It is assumed that the presentation will eventually be

shaped into a more formal paper for submission. For example one could do a presentation on David Hume’s piece *On Miracles* and then further explore challenges to belief in miracles in an age of science. The paper is to be a critical reflection on the theme chosen and an articulation of how the philosophy connects with/ shapes/ influences/differs from a biblical theology.

1. **First Paper** (Plato to Aquinas): Due February 12; 30%
2. **Second Paper** (Modern thought to Kierkegaard): Due March 19; 30%
3. **Third Paper** (late 19th and 20th century): Due April 9; 30%
4. **Reading, Attendance, Participation:** 10%

C. GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR THE SUBMISSION OF WRITTEN WORK

For proper citation style, consult the [Chicago-Style Quick Guide](#) (Tyndale e-resource) or the full edition of the [Chicago Manual of Style Online](#), especially [ch. 14](#). For citing scripture texts, refer to sections [10.46 to 10.51](#) and [14.253 to 14.254](#).

Academic Integrity

Integrity in academic work is required of all our students. Academic dishonesty is any breach of this integrity, and includes such practices as cheating (the use of unauthorized material on tests and examinations), submitting the same work for different classes without permission of the instructors; using false information (including false references to secondary sources) in an assignment; improper or unacknowledged collaboration with other students, and plagiarism. Tyndale University College & Seminary takes seriously its responsibility to uphold academic integrity, and to penalize academic dishonesty.

Students should consult the current Academic Calendar for academic polices on Academic Honesty, Gender Inclusive Language in Written Assignments, Late Papers and Extensions, Return of Assignments, and Grading System. The Academic Calendar is posted at <http://tyndale.ca/registrar/calendar>.

D. SUMMARY OF ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Evaluation is based upon the completion of the following:

First Paper	30%
Second Paper	30%
Third Paper	30%
Reading, Attendance, Participation	10%
Total Grade	100%

E. COURSE EVALUATION

Tyndale Seminary values quality in the courses it offers its students. End-of-course evaluations provide valuable student feedback and are one of the ways that Tyndale Seminary works towards maintaining and improving the quality of courses and the student's learning experience. Student involvement in this process is critical to enhance the general quality of teaching and learning.

Before the end of the course, students will receive a MyTyndale email with a link to the online course evaluation. The evaluation period is 2 weeks; after the evaluation period has ended, it cannot be reopened.

Course Evaluation results will not be disclosed to the instructor before final grades in the course have been submitted and processed. Student names will be kept confidential and the instructor will only see the aggregated results of the class.

IV. COURSE SCHEDULE, CONTENT AND REQUIRED READINGS

Jan. 8	Introduction – Faith Seeking Understanding, Why Philosophy?	
Jan. 15	Plato I	T. chap 1; R. 16-38
Jan. 22	Plato II	T. chap. 2 and 3; R. 1-15
Jan. 29	Aristotle	T. chap. 4, and 77-81; R. 59-82
Feb. 5	Anselm and Aquinas	T. chap. 6; R. 83-110
Feb 12	Descartes and Pascal	T. 129-140; R. 112-137
Feb. 19	READING WEEK; NO CLASS	
Feb. 26	Hume	T. 141-153; R. 154-171; C.S. Lewis <i>Miracles</i> chap. 8
March 5	Kant and Hegel	T. chaps 9 & 10; R.172-185, 197-199
March 12	Kierkegaard – Existentialism	T. chap 11
March 19,	Heidegger	R. 248-262
March 26	Anthony Flew and Positivism - God language and the Postmodern turn	
April 2	Final Class	

In addition to the readings noted on this list there may be some further readings made available for class preparation.

V. SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Brown, Colin. *Philosophy and the Christian Faith: Middle Ages to Present*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1969.

Copleston, Frederick. *History of Philosophy*. vols 1-11. New York: Image Books.

Edwards, Paul. Ed. *Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. MacMillan Publishing, 1967.

Kenny, Anthony, *A New History of Western Philosophy*. Oxford: Clarendon Press 2007 (single volume 2012).

Russell, Bertrand. *A History of Western Philosophy*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1945.

Zalta, Edward. Ed. [Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy](#). The Metaphysics Research Lab, 2016

Additional bibliography will be available during the course that will address specific topics covered.