Course Syllabus

WINTER 2016
THEO 0539
PHILOSOPHY FOR UNDERSTANDING THEOLOGY

JANUARY 13 – APRIL 6
WEDNESDAYS: 2:15PM – 5:05PM

INSTRUCTOR: PROFESSOR VICTOR SHEPHERD
Office: C 409
Phone: 416 226 6620 ext. 6726
E-mail: vshep@tyndale.ca
Office Hours: as posted

Mailboxes: Every student is responsible for information communicated through the student emails.

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 endeavors to acquaint students with the history of philosophy from the pre-Socratics to modernity, especially where the history of thought intersects theology. The course seeks to inform students of the Western world's intellectual (and, to less extent, the social and political) development, and to indicate where this development has influenced theological understanding and articulation even where theologians may not have been aware of philosophy's “encroachment.”

II. LEARNING OUTCOMES
Since it has been argued (Hans Urs von Balthasar) that philosophy is most fruitful when it deliberately engages theology – i.e., philosophy that ignores theology thereby impoverishes itself – students will be able to grasp the importance of a profound, protracted dialogue between the two disciplines.
At the end of this course students will be able to:

- appreciate the importance of philosophical study for Christian theology;
- apply philosophy to elucidate certain problem areas of theology;
- assess philosophy as a means to fulfill the commandment to love God with our mind;
- demonstrate how philosophy can expose Christian declensions and distortions we might otherwise overlook;
- avoid premature simplicity that undervalues legitimate intellectual difficulties with the Christian faith.

III. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A. REQUIRED TEXTS:


B. ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

*Note: All written material may be submitted in French.*

Assignments

Students will submit three papers, approximately 2000 words each, that probe the intersection of philosophy and theology. For instance, a paper on Plato's theory of knowledge and its relation to virtue would probe the boundary between his understanding and that of biblical thought on such matters as the possibility and actuality of our knowledge of God, the role of the Holy Spirit, the difference between virtue as a natural phenomenon engendered by philosophical wisdom and grace-facilitated obedience to the living God.

The first paper is to be submitted by the conclusion of class, 17 February, and is to discuss and reflect critically on text and lecture materials of any one class session from Plato to Aquinas.

The second paper is to be submitted by the conclusion of class, 23 March, and is to discuss and reflect critically on text and lecture materials of any one class session from “The Beginnings of the Modern World...” to Hegel.
The third paper is to be submitted by the conclusion of class, 15 April, and is to discuss and reflect critically on text and lecture materials of any one class session from Kierkegaard to Flew.

Note 1: The mark on late papers will be reduced by 5% per day.
Note 2: The instructor is not permitted to accept papers after the end of the semester.

Evaluation
Respectively the papers are evaluated: 33.33 %; 33.3 %; 33.4 %.

Students are expected to appear punctually and attend all classes.

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 policies 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.

D. SUMMARY OF ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Evaluation is based upon the completion of the following assignments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment Description</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paper #1 (one class session from Plato to Aquinas)</td>
<td>33.3 %</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paper #2 (one class session from Modern to Hegel)</td>
<td>33.3 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper #3 (one class session from Kierkegaard to Flew)</td>
<td>33.4 %</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Grade</td>
<td>100 %</td>
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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.

IV. COURSE SCHEDULE, CONTENT AND REQUIRED READINGS

Note: “T” = text (Allen, Philosophy for Understanding Theology)
“R” = readings (Allen and Springsted, Primary Readings in Phil. for Und. Theol.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>TOPIC</th>
<th>READINGS</th>
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| Jan. 20 | Plato I | T: Chapt. 1  
R: 16-38 |
| Jan. 27 | Plato II | T: Chapt. 2  
R: 1-15 |
| Feb. 3 | Aristotle | T: Chapt. 4, plus 77-81  
R: 59-66 |
| Feb. 10 | Aquinas | T: Chapt. 6  
R: 92-98 |
1st paper due |
| Feb. 24 | Hume | T: 143-153  
R: 153-171 |
| Mar. 2 | Kant | T: Chapt. 9  
R: 172-185 |
| Mar. 9 | Hegel | T: Chapt. 10  
R: 210-218 |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mar. 16</td>
<td>No Class : Reading Week</td>
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<td>Mar. 23</td>
<td>Kierkegaard</td>
<td>T: Chapt. 11</td>
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<td>R: 219-227</td>
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<td>2nd paper due</td>
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<td>Mar. 30</td>
<td>Marx</td>
<td>T: Chapt. 10</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>R: 244-247</td>
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<td>Apr. 6</td>
<td>Flew and positivism</td>
<td>T: 211, last par.- 223 first par.</td>
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<td>R: 281-284</td>
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<td>« Elijah and the Empiricists » (Fackenheim)</td>
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<td>Apr. 13</td>
<td>Final paper must be submitted by 2:05 p.m.</td>
<td>3rd paper due</td>
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V. BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Useful one-volume surveys are


A multi-volume work, always reliable, whose scope is the same but gives much more detail, is:

A useful book, written from the standpoint of a Christian philosopher, indicating the role of
reason in several different schools of philosophy is:

A highly recommended book on the philosophy of thinking (i.e., thinking about thinking) is:
(This book, however, presupposes considerable familiarity with philosophy.)

For books on specific topics in the course please see the instructor.