

PH512: CHRISTIANITY AND WESTERN THOUGHT (4 Units: 160 hours). Samuel Powell.

DESCRIPTION: An introduction to philosophical thinking, exploring the historical relationship between Christianity and Western thought. The course is based on a selective study of thinkers and movements from Plato to the present day.

LEARNING OUTCOMES: Students who successfully complete the course will have demonstrated that they have: (1) increased their knowledge of the Western philosophical tradition and its relevance to Christian theology; (2) sharpened their critical thinking skills; (3) developed their writing skills; (4) enhanced their abilities to understand, analyze and critique intellectual theories and issues; and deepened their appreciation for thinkers whose views differ from their own; and (5) learned how to articulate the relationship between theories and practices for sympathetic engagement with culture(s), especially postmodern culture.

COURSE FORMAT: Guided discussion of the assigned readings, preceded by introductory lectures to provide orientation. The class will meet over three weekends for a total of 27 hours of classroom instruction for lecture and discussion. There will also be 13 hours of directed learning activities, for a total of 40 instructional hours.

REQUIRED READING: 1304 total pages of required reading.

Allen, Diogenes and Eric O. Springsted. *Philosophy for Understanding Theology*. 2d edition.

Westminster John Knox Press, 2007. ISBN: 978-0664231804, Pub. Price \$30.00 [336 pp.].

Allen, Diogenes and Eric O. Springsted. *Primary Readings in Philosophy for Understanding Theology*.

Westminster John Knox Press, 1997. ISBN: 978-0664252083, Pub. Price \$30.00 [320 pp.].

Stone, Alison. *An Introduction to Feminist Philosophy*. Polity, 2007. ISBN: 978-0745638836, Pub. Price \$26.95 [248 pp.].

Penner, Myron B., ed. *Christianity and the Postmodern Turn: Six Views*. Brazos Press, 2005. ISBN: 978-1587431081, Pub. Price \$23.95 [240 pp.].

Smith, James K.A. *Who's Afraid of Postmodernism?: Taking Derrida, Lyotard, and Foucault to Church*, 2d ed. Baker Academic, 2006. ISBN: 978-0801029189, Pub. Price \$14.45 [160 pp.].

ASSIGNMENTS AND ASSESSMENT:

1. 1304 pages of reading. [65 hours].
2. Final paper (30%). This will be a 3000 word essay in which, on the basis of your reading of *Christianity and the Postmodern Turn* and *Who's Afraid of Postmodernism?*, you 1) describe your understanding of postmodern culture and 2) discuss the challenges and opportunities that postmodern culture presents to Christian life and faith. [This assignment relates to learning outcome #2-5]. [30 hours].
3. Two essays and presentation on the assigned reading (30%). [This assignment relates to learning outcomes 1, 2 & 4]. [20 hours].

Essay #1: Referring to the assigned readings in *Primary Readings in Philosophy for Understanding Theology*, write a 1,250 word summary and analysis of the excerpt from either Plato or Aristotle. Be prepared to discuss your essay in class.

Essay #2: Referring to the assigned readings in *Primary Readings in Philosophy for Understanding Theology*, write a 1,250 word summary and analysis of the excerpt from either Descartes or Hume. Be prepared to discuss your essay in class.

4. Participation in Moodle discussion (20%). Prior to the second and third weekends I will create discussions about the assigned reading on Moodle. The assignment is to satisfactorily participate in these discussions. [This assignment relates to learning outcome #1]. [Directed Learning Activities – 13 hours].

5. 4. Final exam (20%). Write a 1,000 word critical analysis of *An Introduction to Feminist Philosophy*. [5 hours].

PREREQUISITES: None.

RELATIONSHIP TO CURRICULUM: Meets M.Div. core requirement in Philosophical Theology (PHIL).

FINAL EXAMINATION: Yes, a take-home essay exam.