

Boyce College of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

Worldviews I – PH 111 A
Spring, 2009
Monday, 2:30pm - 5:15 pm
Travis Kerns, Professor

“See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ.” Colossians 2:8, NASB

This syllabus contains important information relative to this class, including requirements, grading scale, and policies. Be sure to keep it and refer to it when you have any questions. You are held accountable for the information in this syllabus.

- Course Description (from the Boyce College catalog)
 - An introduction to the central issues in philosophy. This course will cover such matters as epistemology, metaphysics, aesthetics, ethics, and the problem of evil as philosophical disciplines.

- Course Objectives
 - The student will be challenged to think through his or her faith by examining Christianity from a rational and scientific perspective.
 - The student will be asked to recognize the importance of having a thoughtful perspective on the faith by recognizing the importance the Bible places on the mind.
 - The student will learn the basic components of philosophical analysis, including epistemology, metaphysics, axiology, aesthetics, and logic.
 - The student will begin to develop skills in critiquing the culture in which we live from the standpoint of the Christian worldview.
 - The student will be encouraged to integrate this material into his or her own ministry of teaching and to employ the insights learned here to enhance worship, evangelism, and devotion to God. The student will be further challenged to engage both believers and unbelievers in a rational defense of the Christian faith along the lines of the material studied in this course.

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- Professor's Objectives
 - The professor will attempt to develop in the students an appreciation for this material through well-organized and interesting lectures and group discussions. The reading assignments have been chosen for their incisiveness, not merely for the covering of perfunctory material.
 - The professor will make every attempt to demonstrate the abiding validity and importance of this material through practical applications and critical dialogue.
 - The professor will evaluate students' participation through their fulfillment of class assignments and testing.
 - The professor will attempt to meet the objectives of the students in the class.

- Required Textbooks
 - Ronald H. Nash, *Life's Ultimate Questions*. Zondervan.
 - Francis A. Schaeffer, *He Is There and He Is Not Silent*. Tyndale.
 - Francis A. Schaeffer, *Escape From Reason*. IVP.
 - Ted Cabal, ed., *Apologetics Study Bible*. Broadman and Holman.

- Assignments
 - The student will be expected to keep up with all assignments in the course schedule.
 - The student will be responsible for the material given in class lectures. There will be two exams, the questions for which will be taken from the classroom presentations and/or the textbook assignments.
 - Students will be responsible for reading and writing a short review (four to five pages) of *He Is There and He Is Not Silent* and *Escape From Reason* by Francis Schaeffer. Do not let the short lengths fool you. These books will probably challenge you as a student and as a reader. You will need to take your time reading these works as they are a very important foundation for a Christian understanding of philosophy. The review should include 2 – 2 ½ pages of summary and 2 – 2 ½ pages of critical evaluation. See handout on E-campus for review guidelines. These reviews are due November 10.
 - Students will be given regular reading assignments from the textbook which will aid the student in understanding the classroom lectures. The reading material will be referenced during the classroom lectures and some discussion will be based on the readings. There are about 500 pages of reading for this class, which averages to about 40 pages per week, though the reading is weighted

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more heavily toward the beginning of the course. Students who get behind will have a difficult time catching up.

- No examinations will be taken late unless the student has prior approval from the professor.
- No extra-credit work will be accepted or assigned in this class under any circumstances. The existing assignment schedule allows all students ample opportunity to succeed in passing the course.

- **Grading**
 - The two exams will account for 60% (30% each) of the final grade.
 - The reviews will account for 40% (20% each) of the final grade.
 - Late work will be penalized five points per weekday. Late work will not be accepted later than one week after the due date.
 - The grading scale for this course is as follows:
 - A = 98-100; A- = 95-97; B+ = 92-94; B = 89-91; B- = 86-88; C+ = 83-85; C = 80-82; C- = 77-79; D+ = 74-76; D = 71-73; D- = 68-70; F = 67 or below.
 - Boyce College awards grade points on a 4-point system. The quality point value per credit hour for each letter grade is as follows:
 - A = 4.0; A- = 3.7; B+ = 3.3; B = 3.0; B- = 2.7; C+ = 2.3; C = 2.0; C- = 1.7; D+ = 1.3; D = 1.0; D- = 0.7; F = 0.

- **Attendance**
 - Students are expected to attend class every day. Attendance will be checked at each class session. A student who misses more than twenty-five percent of class meetings will forfeit credit for the class and receive a failing grade. Students are also expected to be in class on time. If a student is late to class three times it will count the same as an absence. If a student has a legitimate reason for missing a class for an extended period of time (illness or accident), it is the student's responsibility to notify the professor so that missed tests and assignments may be made up.

- **Classroom Policies**
 - Students are expected to pay attention to the professor and not to chat in class with other students. They are also expected to be awake. Students who talk excessively or who fall asleep will be counted absent and may be asked to leave the classroom.
 - Male students are not allowed to wear facial jewelry, hats, or caps while in the classroom.
 - Students should attend class wearing proper and appropriate clothing. Remember, the classroom is not your bedroom.
 - No food or drinks in the classroom, except water.

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- Students must turn all cell phones and pagers off or to silent notification at the beginning of the class session.
- In order to assure full class participation, any student with a disabling condition requiring special accommodations (e.g., tape recorders, special adaptive equipment, special note-taking or test-taking needs) is strongly encouraged to contact the professor at the beginning of the course.
- For instructional purposes the professor may employ the use of film, readings, and outside guests, however, this use does not constitute an endorsement by Boyce College or The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary of these sources.

- Personal Note
 - The purpose of this syllabus is to give the student the best possible chance for a good grade by specifying requirements and due dates. There will be no surprises. Schedule your reading, study, and writing so as to meet the deadlines. Late work will be penalized.
 - I and my Garrett Fellow want you to succeed: in your Christian walk, your home, your academic career, your ministry, and in this course. I will be fair and will help you whenever I can. Please do not hesitate to contact me whenever you need help or clarification.
 - Contact Information:
 - E-mail: tkerns@sbts.edu
 - Office: Carver 203
 - Office phone: (502) 897-4460

- Course Schedule
 - January 26
 - Syllabus
 - February 2
 - Introduction to the course / Why Study Philosophy?
 - February 9
 - Loving God with all your mind / Basic concepts and terminology
 - Reading assignment: Nash pp. 13-33
 - February 16
 - Systems of philosophy: Naturalism / Plato
 - Reading assignment: Nash pp. 37-95
 - February 23
 - Systems of philosophy: Aristotle / Plotinus
 - Reading assignment: Nash pp. 96-139

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- March 2
 - Systems of philosophy: Augustine / Thomas Aquinas
 - Reading assignment: Nash pp. 140-190
- March 9
 - Mid-term exam
- March 16
 - Logic and the law of non-contradiction.
 - Reading assignment: Nash pp. 193-208
- March 23
 - Possible worlds / epistemology
 - Reading assignment: Nash pp. 209-288
- March 30
 - No class. Spring reading days.
- April 6
 - The existence of God, the nature of God, the problem of evil.
 - Reading assignment: Nash pp. 289-325.
- April 13
 - Video: *Atheism vs. Christianity*.
- April 20 – SCHAEFFER REVIEWS DUE
 - Schaeffer discussions
 - Metaphysics, Ethics in philosophy.
 - Reading assignment: Nash pp. 326-368.
 - Mind-body problem, conclusions.
 - Reading assignment: Nash pp. 369-385.
- April 27 – May 1
 - Final exams. See scheduled posted in Carver Hall.