



## **Class Information**

**Day and Time:** T/TR: 1:45pm-3:00pm

**Room Number:** E211

## **Contact Information**

**Instructor Name:** Tyler Sherron

**Instructor Email:** tsherron@criswell.edu

**Instructor Phone:** 317-691-8140

**Instructor Office Hours:** By appointment.

## **Course Description and Prerequisites**

This course introduces students to Western philosophy, exploring the works of thinkers and ideas from the modern to contemporary period.

## **Course Objectives**

- The student will become acquainted with the major thinkers, ideas, and terminology of early modern-contemporary philosophy.
- The student will learn how to read and analyze difficult philosophical texts.
- The student will learn how to formulate critical questions that facilitate discussion and inquiry.
- The student will be able to evaluate philosophical arguments with Scripture and theology.
- The student will develop a critical understanding of the relationship between philosophy and the Christian faith.
- The student will distinguish those philosophical categories that are commensurate with the Christian faith from those that are not.
- The student will be prepared to formulate a Christian philosophy that assists in perceiving the world for the sake of the Gospel.

## **Required Textbooks**

*Modern Philosophy: An Anthology of Primary Sources.* Roger Ariew and Eric Watkins, eds., Third Edition  
Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, 2019. ISBN-13: 978-1-62466-8060-7

Russell, Bertrand. *History of Western Philosophy.* 1946; reprint. New York: Routledge, 1996. ISBN-13: 978-0-415-32505-9

Selected readings, obtained via Canvas.

## Course Requirements and Assignments

- 1. Reading (20%)** The student will read the assigned portions of the required reading before the class period in which they are due. Students will report the percentage of reading completed at the midterms and before finals week. ***Thursday, March 7; Tuesday, May 7.***
- 2. Critical Questions and Participation (20%)** To augment interaction with the readings, lectures, and classroom discussions, the student will come to each class prepared with one well-crafted critical question. Good questions require time and thought with the material and go beyond simple questions of fact (i.e., Was Descartes an empiricist or rationalist?). They also avoid being too open and vague (i.e., What was Locke's theory of knowledge?). On the contrary, quality questions are specific and often forced, forced in the sense that they present a thesis that must be accepted or rejected. A good example is as follows: "Descartes' intent was to put knowledge from sensory experience on surer epistemological grounds by applying radical methodological doubt. But in doing so, did he offer an adequate explanation of matter (i.e., extension) as opposed to mind in his dualistic theory?" With these questions, students are especially encouraged to apply Scripture and theology as this assignment is fruitful for evaluating whether philosophical ideas are commensurate with the Christian faith. ***One question will be due per class period. Yet for the sake of logistics, students will submit them as a pair in Canvas on Thursdays by 11:59pm.***
- 3. Précis & Presentation (15%)** The student will select one of the primary readings and craft a one-page, single-spaced summary of the philosophical argument, to be presented (5 minutes long) at the beginning of the class in which we discuss the respective thinker (the student will also print enough copies for everyone). The outline of the précis should include an introductory paragraph that introduces and contextualizes the philosopher, a brief main body summarizing the philosopher's main argument and thus contribution to philosophy, and then a conclusion that poses two critical/discussion-leading questions. To give the student an example of the format and expectation of content, I will write, distribute, and present a précis for the first lecture on Descartes's *Meditations*, I-II.
- 4. Position Paper (20%)** "What has Jerusalem to do with Athens," Tertullian exclaimed as he posited a strict relationship of conflict between Christianity and philosophy. Justin Martyr, on the contrary, argued that philosophy is only a secularized form of the wisdom of Moses (i.e., the Pentateuch), simply emancipated from revealed revelation and grounded instead in naturalistic or rationalistic reasoning. In 5-7 pages, select one philosopher as a lens to address this question of the relationship between Christianity and philosophy. Decide whether their philosophy aligns with the argument of Tertullian or Martyr. ***A hard copy of the position paper will be due in class on Thursday, April 18.***
- 5. Final Examination (25%)**  
Your final examination will be cumulative, testing your knowledge of the contents of the course. It will consist of three sections: Identifications, fill-in-the-blank, and short essays. With the identification section, the student will be asked to identify a thinker or philosophical idea in three or four sentences. The fill-in-the-blank will provide a sentence or two that require completion. And the short essays, of a

page or two double-spaced, will answer the broader, more synthetic questions of the course material.  
***The final exam will be available to take in Canvas on Thurs., May 2, and will be due on Thurs., May 9.***

### **Weightings:**

Reading:	20%
Reading Questions:	15%
Précis & Presentation:	20%
Position Paper:	20%
Final Examination:	25%

### **Class Attendance**

Students are responsible for enrolling in courses for which they (1) anticipate being able to attend every on-campus class session on the day and time appearing on course schedules, or (2) participating in academically related activities as identified in online-course schedules including synchronous class sessions conducted remotely by video, and then making every effort to do so. When unavoidable situations result in absence or tardiness, students are responsible for acquiring any missed information. Professors are not obliged to allow students to make up missed work. Per their independent discretion, individual professors may determine how attendance affects students' ability to meet course learning objectives and whether attendance affects course grades. Professors apprise students of such information in course syllabi.

Students receiving grants, loans, or scholarships must meet specified requirements of various departments at the college and should consult relevant sections of the *Academic Catalog*. To ensure such funds will not be forfeited, students are responsible for contacting the proper departments to ascertain any specific course participation requirements and consequences of not meeting such requirements. Students receiving grants, loans, or scholarships should consult the Financial Aid office.

While Criswell College is a non-attendance taking institution, it nevertheless must demonstrate that students begin their courses in order to comply with Federal Aid regulations. Accordingly, students must participate in academically related activities during census periods. Failure to meet this requirement will result in students being administratively dropped from courses.

Academically related activity is defined as any course-related activity that may be used as evidence of attendance. Examples include:

- physical presence in a classroom during a class session with the instructor present,
- participation in a synchronous remote video class session with the instructor present,
- submission of an academic assignment, quiz, or exam,
- participation in an interactive tutorial or computer-assisted instruction,
- participation in a study group or discussion board that is assigned by the instructor,
- documentation showing that the student and a faculty member corresponded about the academic subject of the course.

**NOTE:** Logging into a Canvas course alone and logging into a Synchronous Online class session without active participation or with the camera off are not considered attendance.

**NOTE:** A census period begins on the first day of a semester/term and runs through the end of the last day to drop courses. During the census period, attendance data is collected in order to demonstrate compliance with Federal Aid regulations. There is no census period for winter terms since there is no last day to drop courses.

## Campus Closure

To ensure the health and safety of students and employees, college administrators may decide it is necessary on rare occasions to close the campus. Once this decision is announced, instructors will contact students to provide further details regarding the campus closure's impact on those courses. Students are responsible to watch for communication from their instructors and respond appropriately. (Unless otherwise specified by the instructor in this syllabus, this communication will be sent to the student's Criswell College e-mail account.)

In order to make progress toward the courses' objectives, instructors have the freedom during most campus closures to require students to participate in activities as alternatives to meeting on campus. An instructor may, for example, hold class remotely (through Zoom) at the scheduled time, provide a recording of a class or presentation for students to watch independently, or assign other activities that students are to accomplish before returning to campus. Students are responsible for accomplishing these alternative activities as well as any course requirements listed in this syllabus during the period of the campus closure. If, during the period of the campus closure, personal circumstances prohibit a student from accomplishing these alternative activities or course requirements and assignment listed in the syllabus during the campus closure, the student is responsible for communicating with the instructor as soon as possible. Instructors will not penalize students who do not have the means to accomplish the alternative activities during the period of the campus's closure and will work with students whose circumstances during the campus closure prohibited their timely completion of course requirements and assignments in the syllabus.

## Grading Scale

A	93-100	4.0 grade points per semester hour
A-	90-92	3.7 grade points per semester hour
B+	87-89	3.3 grade points per semester hour
B	83-86	3.0 grade points per semester hour
B-	80-82	2.7 grade points per semester hour
C+	77-79	2.3 grade points per semester hour
C	73-76	2.0 grade points per semester hour
C-	70-72	1.7 grade points per semester hour
D+	67-69	1.3 grade points per semester hour
D	63-66	1.0 grade point per semester hour

D-	60-62	0.7 grade points per semester hour
F	0-59	0.0 grade points per semester hour

## Incomplete Grades

Students requesting a grade of Incomplete (I) must understand that incomplete grades may be given only upon approval of the faculty member involved. An “I” may be assigned only when a student is currently passing a course and in situations involving extended illness, serious injury, death in the family, or employment or government reassignment, not student neglect.

Students are responsible for contacting their instructors prior to the end of the semester, plus filing the appropriate completed and approved academic request form with the Registrar’s Office. The “I” must be removed (by completing the remaining course requirements) no later than 60 calendar days after the close of the term or semester in which the grade was awarded, or the “I” will become an “F.”

## Academic Honesty

Absolute truth is an essential belief and basis of behavior for those who believe in a God who cannot lie and forbids falsehood. Academic honesty is the application of the principle of truth in the classroom setting. Academic honesty includes the basic premise that all work submitted by students must be their own and any ideas derived or copied from elsewhere must be carefully documented.

Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to:

- cheating of any kind,
- submitting, without proper approval, work originally prepared by the student for another course,
- plagiarism, which is the submitting of work prepared by someone else as if it were his own, and
- failing to credit sources properly in written work.

## Institutional Assessment

Material submitted by students in this course may be used for assessment of the college’s academic programs. Since programmatic and institutional assessment is done without reference to specific students, the results of these assessments have no effect on a student’s course grade or academic standing at the college. Before submitting a student’s work for this type of assessment, the course instructor redacts the work to remove anything that identifies the student.

## Institutional Email Policy

All official college email communications to students enrolled in this course will be sent exclusively to students’ institutional email accounts. Students are expected to check their student email accounts regularly and to respond in an appropriate and timely manner to all communications from faculty and administrative departments.

Students are permitted to setup automatic forwarding of emails from their student email accounts to one or more personal email accounts. The student is responsible to setup and maintain email forwarding without assistance from college staff. If a student chooses to use this forwarding option, he/she will continue to be responsible for responding appropriately to all communications from faculty and administrative departments of the college. Criswell College bears no responsibility for the use of emails that have been forwarded from student email accounts to other email accounts.

## **Disabilities**

Criswell College recognizes and supports the standards set forth in Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, and similar state laws, which are designed to eliminate discrimination against qualified individuals with disabilities. Criswell College is committed to making reasonable accommodations for qualifying students, faculty, and employees with disabilities as required by applicable laws. For more information, please contact the Student Services Office.

## **Intellectual Property Rights**

Unless otherwise specifically instructed in writing by the instructor, students must neither materially nor digitally reproduce materials from any course offered by Criswell College for or with the significant possibility of distribution.

## **Research and Writing Standards**

The default writing style for written assignments in Criswell College Courses is the latest edition of *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses and Dissertations* by Kate Turabian. However, instructors are free to require alternative writing styles in their courses. These styles include but are not limited to the American Psychological Association (APA), Chicago Manual of Style, Modern Language Association (MLA), and Society of Biblical Literature (SBL) writing guides.

## **Resources and Supports**

Canvas and SONIS: Criswell College uses Canvas as its web-based learning tool and SONIS for student data. Students needing assistance with Canvas should contact the Canvas Help Support line at (844) 358-6140. Tech support is available at this number, twenty-four hours a day. Students needing help with SONIS should contact the Campus Software Manager at [studenttechsupport@criswell.edu](mailto:studenttechsupport@criswell.edu).

Student Services: The Student Services Office exists to foster and encourage success in all areas of life—physical, intellectual, spiritual, social, and emotional. Students are encouraged to reach out for assistance by contacting the office at 214.818.1332 or [studentservices@criswell.edu](mailto:studentservices@criswell.edu). The Student Services Office also works with local counseling centers to ensure that every student has access to helpful mental health resources. More information is located on the college website at [Criswell College Mental Health Resources](#), and students may contact the Director of Student Services if they have any questions.

Wallace Library: Students can access academic resources and obtain research assistance by contacting or visiting the Wallace Library, which is located on campus. For more information, email the Wallace Library at [library@criswell.edu](mailto:library@criswell.edu). Login credentials are emailed to students near the beginning of the semester.

Tutoring Center: Students are encouraged to consult with tutors to improve and enhance their skills and confidence in any subject matter taught at the college. Tutors have been recommended by the faculty to ensure that the tutor(s) are qualified to serve the student body. Every tutor brings experience and expertise in an effort to provide the proper resources for the subject matter at hand. To consult with a tutor, students can schedule

an appointment through Calendly (<https://calendly.com/criswell-tutoringcenter>) or by visiting the Tutoring Center located on the second floor in room E203. For questions, call 214.818.1373 or email at [tutoringcenter@criswell.edu](mailto:tutoringcenter@criswell.edu).

## Course Outline/Calendar

Date	Lecture Topic	Reading	Assignments
Week 1			
Tues, 1/16	Introduction		
Thurs, 1/18	Renaissance and Reformation	Russell, 453-83	
Week 2			
Tues, 1/23	The Rise of Science and Francis Bacon	Russell, 484-500	
Thurs, 1/25	Thomas Hobbes	Russell, 501-10	
Week 3			
Tues, 1/30	René Descartes	Descartes, <i>Meditations</i> , I-II	
Thurs, 2/1	René Descartes	Descartes, <i>Meditations</i> , III	
Week 4			
Tues, 2/6	Blaise Pascal	Pascal, <i>Pensées</i> , "The Wager"	
Thurs, 2/8	Baruch Spinoza	Russell, 521-30	
Week 5			
Tues, 2/13	G. W. Leibniz	Leibniz, <i>The Principles of Philosophy, or the Monadology</i>	
Thurs, 2/15	Nicolas Malebranche	Malebranche, <i>The Search for Truth</i> , Book III. Part II	
Week 6			
Tues, 2/20	Robert Boyle and John Locke	Boyle, <i>Of The Excellency and Grounds of the Corpuscular or Mechanical Philosophy</i>	
Thurs, 2/22	John Locke	Locke, <i>An Essay Concerning Human Understanding</i> , Book II, chs. I:1-5, II:1, III, V-VII, XI, XII:1-7	
Week 7			
Tues, 2/27	George Berkeley	Berkeley, <i>A Treatise Concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge</i> , Part I	
Thurs, 2/29	David Hume	Hume, <i>An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding</i> , Sections IV-V	
Week 8			
Tues, 3/5	Thomas Reid	Reid, <i>Essays on the Intellectual Powers of Man, "of Judgment," Chapter 2: Of Common Sense</i>	
Thurs, 3/7	Jean-Jacques Rousseau	Russell, 615-36	<b>Reading Report Due</b>
Spring Break			
Tues, 3/12	Spring Break		
Thurs, 3/14	Spring Break		
Week 9			
Tues, 3/19	Immanuel Kant	Kant, <i>Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics</i> , sections 1-4	
Thurs, 3/21	Immanuel Kant	Russell, 637-51	
Week 10			
Tues, 3/26	Hegel	Russell, 661-74	
Thurs, 3/28	Byron, Schopenhauer	Russell, 675-86	
Week 11			
Tues, 4/2	Kierkegaard	Selection from <i>Fear and Trembling</i> (Handout)	
Thurs, 4/4	Nietzsche	Russell, 687-97	
Week 12			
Tues, 4/9	Bentham, Mill	Russell, 698-705	
Thurs, 4/11	Marx	Russell, 706-13	
Week 13			
Tues, 4/16	Peirce	Peirce, "The Fixation of Belief" (Handout)	
Thurs, 4/18	James	Russell, 723-29 "What Pragmatism Means" (Handout)	<b>Position Paper Due</b>
Week 14			
Tues, 4/23	Dewey	Russell, 730-37	
Thurs, 4/25	Frege and Husserl	No Reading	
Week 15			
Tues, 4/30	Wittgenstein and Russell	Russell, 738-44	
Thurs, 5/2	Heidegger and Sartre	No Reading	<b>Final Exam Distributed</b>
Week 16			
Tues, 5/7	Finals Week	No Reading	<b>Reading Report Due</b>
Thurs, 5/9	Finals Week	No Reading	<b>Final Exam Due</b>