



TH 604

**PHILOSOPHY**  
**AND**  
**THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS:**  
**Understanding Worldview and the History of Ideas**

Spring 2012

Mondays 6 P.M. – 8 P.M.

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Shepherd's Theological Seminary exists to equip servant leaders for life and ministry by strategically shaping both intellect and character through biblical scholarship and personal mentoring.

**Seminary Objectives**

1. Teach an integrated body of knowledge based on the Bible, within the context of a Christian worldview, as expressed in the doctrinal statement.
2. Equip students to discern and clarify the theology and mission of the church in their generation.
3. Provide a learning environment where the supremacy of God is extolled and a personal relationship with Christ is encouraged.
4. Prepare each student in identifying a specific ministry role, using their unique abilities for effectiveness in ministry.

## **Course Description**

TH 604 is an introduction to the study of philosophy, worldview, and western thought. Students will learn about the major philosophers and philosophies that have developed, and continue to shape, modern western culture. Discussion will assess the impact, both positive and negative, of philosophy on theology. The class will define and examine the concept of worldview and its impact on all areas of academic study, including both science and religion. Additionally, the course will introduce the field of epistemology and its role in theological studies. Students will learn critical thinking skills, correct form of argument, and how to identify logical fallacies.

## **Course Objectives**

- 1) To identify major philosophers and their contribution to philosophical studies
- 2) To grasp the major schools of thought in philosophical reflection
- 3) To understand the role that faith and theology has in relation to philosophy, as well as how the development of western thought has influenced Christianity
- 4) To investigate the major shift in epistemology that came with the Enlightenment
- 5) To become familiar with various worldviews and their relation to Christian thought
- 6) To introduce the study of epistemology and address issues of knowledge
- 7) To identify ways in which popular culture exhibits various philosophies
- 8) To evaluate the language and concepts used in philosophy from a Christian perspective
- 9) To examine various logical fallacies and improper argumentation
- 10) To correlate various epistemological positions with a Christian theological method.
- 11) To develop a foundation for Christian truth claims in a changing culture
- 12) To instill in students a love for wisdom and an understanding of how the Christian worldview gives meaning to all of life

## **Reading Requirements**

- Corbett, Edward. P. J. *The Elements of Reasoning*. New York, N.Y.: Allyn & Bacon, 1991.  
[pages 1–120] 120 pages
- Cosgrove, Mark P. *Foundations of Christian Thought: Faith, Learning, and the Christian Worldview*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Kregel, 2006. [pages 13–182] 170 pages
- Sproul, R. C. *The Consequences of Ideas: Understanding the Concepts that Shaped Our World*. Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway, 2000. [pages 7–203] 197 pages
- Weaver, Richard M. *Ideas Have Consequences*. Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1948.  
[pages 1–187] 187 pages
- Wood, W. Jay. *Epistemology: Becoming Intellectually Virtuous*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1998. [pages 9–196] 188 pages

\* Total Pages of Reading: 862 pages. There is no additional research required for this class.

## Course Assignments:

### #1 – Weekly Reading Reports (12 total)

Read all four books—in their entirety—according to the syllabus schedule.

Submit a bullet-point listing of key thoughts and reflections on your reading

Font 12, Times Roman, standard indentation

1 page maximum per report

Students may e-mail up till the timing of the class itself

No late reports will be accepted.

It is suggested that you sticky-tabs or otherwise mark key thoughts as you read.

Then, return to these to write up your bullet points.

Points may include a summary of the author's ideas, but must also include some personal statements to which the student offers reflections on the reading.

What is a major lesson learned? How has this reading impacted your thinking?

Weekly reading is *roughly* 60 pages per week. Some reading will be lighter than others.

### #2 – Book Review—read the book in its entirety.

Students will submit a book review of Weaver, *Ideas Have Consequences*

Font 12, Times Roman, paragraph form

Length is 2–4 pages, single spaced, for the review itself; then up to 1 additional page for personal reflections on how the course helped to read the work *critically*.

No cover page needed, but include Review of...by..., and your name at top

Book Reviews are due at the beginning of session

Within the review, students should include the following sections:

1. What is the Thesis of the book? What is the case he is making?
2. Summarize the book. General content.
3. What is the argument given to support the thesis? How is the thesis developed and supported; what are the contributing evidences?
4. Critical Analysis: does the conclusion follow from the evidence; does the conclusion evidence any fallacies?

This book has some difficult vocabulary. Students are responsible to learn his terms on their own. A critical review does not complain about the vocabulary, but addresses the logic of the argument itself. Are the premises true, is the logic sound, or, is the deduction valid? Whether the student agrees with the overall position is part of a review, but this assignment also considers things like Weaver's own worldview, his assumptions, and how they play into his argument.

### #3 – Class Participation

Students are required to attend class per the STS Handbook and student guidelines.

Students are also expected to ask questions and be engaged in class discussion.

\* There is no research paper or additional reading required beyond the above assignments.

## Course Schedule

### Introduction

Meeting One: Jan 23<sup>rd</sup> – Introduction; overview of syllabus; Why Study Philosophy?  
No reading due

### Critical Thinking

Meeting Two: Jan 30<sup>th</sup> – Critical Thinking  
Read: Corbett, Chapters 1–3

Meeting Three: Feb 6<sup>th</sup> – Logical Fallacies  
Read: Corbett, Chapters 4–7

### Philosophy and Western Thought

Meeting Four: Feb 13<sup>th</sup> – Classic Philosophy to Medieval Era  
Read: Sproul, Intro through chapter 4

### **Reading Week – no class**

Meeting Five: Feb 27<sup>th</sup> – Seventeenth Century Philosophers  
Read: Sproul, Chapters 5–8

Meeting Six: March 5<sup>th</sup> – Eighteenth Century Philosophers  
Read: Sproul, Chapters 9–12

Meeting Seven: March 12<sup>th</sup> – Nineteenth & Twentieth Century Philosophers  
Read: Sproul, Chapters 13 through conclusion

### Worldview and Theological Method

Meeting Eight: March 19<sup>th</sup> – Worldviews and other Isms  
Read: Cosgrove, Chapters 1–6

Meeting Nine: March 26<sup>th</sup> – Philosophical Theology  
Read: Cosgrove, Chapters 7–15

Meeting Ten: April 2<sup>nd</sup> – Theological Foundations  
Read : Wood, Chapters 1–3

**Easter Break – no class**

Epistemology

Meeting Eleven: April 16<sup>th</sup> – Epistemology: Part I  
Read: Wood, Chapters 4–6

Meeting Twelve: April 23<sup>rd</sup> – Epistemology: Part II  
Read: Wood, Chapters 7–8

Meeting Thirteen: April 30<sup>th</sup> – Make-up day or additional in-class material.

Meeting Fourteen: May 7<sup>th</sup> – Class discussion on Weaver  
Read: Weaver, *Ideas*

**Grading**

Weekly Reading Reports	60%	A	96 – 98	C+	84 – 85
Weaver, <i>Ideas</i> , Review	20%	A-	94 – 95	C	80 – 83
Class Participation	20%	B+	92 – 93	C-	78 – 79
	<hr/>	B	88 – 91	D+	76 – 77
	100%	B-	86 – 87	D	72 – 75

**Administrative**

Attendance is expected for all classes. However students who miss three classes (or more) must retake the course. Students are still responsible for material even in the case of a class absence. Students must obtain any missed notes from their fellow students; please do not ask the professor. As assignments are integral to class discussion, no late assignments will be accepted.