

ICS Calendar Title: Religion, Life, and Society: Reformational Philosophy
ICS Course Code: ICS 1715/2715 F09
Instructor: Dr. Robert Sweetman, bsweetman@icscanada.edu
Term and Year: Tuesdays, 9:30-12:30, Fall 2009
Last updated: September 16, 2009

Religion, Life, and Society: Reformational Philosophy

Course Description

An exploration of central issues in philosophy, as addressed by Herman Dooyeweerd, Dirk Vollenhoven, and the "Amsterdam School" of neoCalvinian thought. The course tests the relevance of this tradition for recent developments in Western philosophy. Special attention is given to critiques of foundationalism, metaphysics, and modernity within reformational philosophy and in other schools of thought. The course locates the concerns that motivate reformational philosophers, and it examines the arguments and texts in which these concerns surface. Seminar participants are invited to discover what is fruitful or not fruitful in the philosophical tradition that sustains the Institute for Christian Studies.

Course Requirements

Each seminar participant is expected to:

- do the required readings and join in-class discussions;
- prepare weekly questions to prime discussion 2 questions with reading of text(s) justifying questions as response to text(s) and identification of philosophical importance of question for Christian philosophy, and/or for one's own philosophical project (to be handed in weekly for comment by instructor);
- make one formal seminar presentation (4-6 pages) on all the texts for the week dealing with the connection between Reformational texts and those influential in contemporary philosophical discussion in the continental tradition, examining the ways in which classic reformational texts connect with the continental tradition at large, the problem(s) left unaddressed by those texts, the ways in which later generations have attempted to address those problems and some remarks on the success of those efforts or perhaps identification of work still to be done.
- write a comprehensive final exam.

The approximate weight assigned each component for the course mark is as follows:

(1)	Readings and Discussions	25%
(2)	Seminar Presentation	25%
(3)	Final Exam	50%

Required Texts: Participants should purchase the books and readers listed here.

After Philosophy: End or Transformation? Edited by Kenneth Baynes, James Bohman, and Thomas McCarthy. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1987. ISBN 0-262-52113-X (**MA program only**) [ICS Library Reserve Shelf: B804 .A34]

Dirk H. T. Vollenhoven Reader. Introductions and translations by John H. Kok. Manuscript, 1998.

Dooyeweerd, Herman. *Roots of Western Culture: Pagan, Secular, and Christian Options* (1945-48). Translated by John Kraay. Edited by Mark Vander Vennen and Bernard Zylstra. Newly edited by D. F. M. Strauss. Lewiston, N.Y.: Edwin Mellen Press, 2003. ISBN 0-7734-8715-8 [ICS Library Reserve Shelf: BR115 .C5 D6613 2003]

Reformational Philosophy Reader, 2009. (A detailed list of contents is given below.)

Vollenhoven, D. H. T. *Introduction to Philosophy.* Sioux Center, Iowa: Dordt College Press, 2005. ISBN 978-0-932914-65-1. [ICS Library Reserve Shelf: BD28 .V65a 2005]

A Note on Readings

Master's courses at ICS normally require around 1250 pages of reading. This course is no exception. Unlike some other courses, however, all the reading occurs in preparation for weekly sessions. No additional reading is required for research papers, because there is no research paper in this course. You will read as much as you do for other

courses, but all of it will occur during the semester. Once you hand in your essay exam, your course work is finished.

Final Exam

Description: There will be one comprehensive exam, a take-home essay that helps you synthesize what you have learned and apply this to issues and fields in which you have strong interests. It will be typed, and it should not exceed 10 double-spaced pages. The exam will be due by 5:00 p.m., Friday, December 18. We shall discuss and design the exam as the course progresses.

Evaluation: I shall assess your essay according to three equally weighted criteria: writing, reasoning, and scope. A **well-written** essay will be free from errors of spelling, punctuation, and grammar; be clear, concise, imaginative, and persuasive; and use gender-inclusive language. A **well-reasoned** essay will use valid and sound arguments; it will also be open and fair to alternative positions. An essay with **sufficient scope** will be thorough, probing beneath the surface of its subject matter.

Table of Contents, *Reformational Philosophy Reader, 2009* (alphabetical by author)

- Chaplin, Jonathan.** "Dooyeweerd's Notion of Societal Structural Principles." *Philosophia Reformata* 60 (1995): 16-36. [ICS Library: PER]
- Dooyeweerd, Herman.** "Christian Philosophy: An Exploration" (1956). In *Christian Philosophy and the Meaning of History*, 1-37. Lewiston, N.Y.: Edwin Mellen Press, 1996. [ICS Library Reserve Shelf: B4051 .D64 A5 v. B1]
- Fraser, Nancy.** "From Redistribution to Recognition? Dilemmas of Justice in a 'Postsocialist' Age." In *Justice Interruptus: Critical Reflections on the "Postsocialist" Condition*, 11-39. New York; London: Routledge, 1997. [ROBA: JC578 .F73 1997X]
- Griffioen, Sander.** "Is a Pluralist Ethos Possible?" *Philosophia Reformata* 59 (1994): 11-25. [ICS Library: PER]
- Hart, Hendrik.** "Conceptual Understanding and Knowing *Other-wise*: Reflections on Rationality and Spirituality in Philosophy." In *Knowing Other-wise: Philosophy at the Threshold of Spirituality*, ed. James H. Olthuis, 19-53. New York: Fordham University Press, 1997. [ICS Library Reserve Shelf: B831.2 .K66]
- Hart, Hendrik.** "Creation Order in Our Philosophical Tradition: Critique and Refinement." In *An Ethos of Compassion and the Integrity of Creation*, ed. Brian J. Walsh, Hendrik Hart, and Robert E. Vander Vennen, 67-96. Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1995. [ICS Library Reserve Shelf: BT78 .E74]
- Hart, Hendrik.** *Understanding Our World: An Integral Ontology*. Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1984. Pp. 318-49, 361-70. [ICS Library Reserve Shelf: BD311 .H28]
- Klapwijk, Jacob.** "Antithesis, Synthesis, and the Idea of Transformational Philosophy." *Philosophia Reformata* 51 (1986): 138-52. [ICS Library: PER]
- Klapwijk, Jacob.** "Reformational Philosophy on the Boundary between the Past and the Future." *Philosophia Reformata* 52 (1987): 101-134. [ICS Library: PER]
- Kristeva, Julia.** "Stabat Mater" (1977). In *The Kristeva Reader*, ed. Toril Moi, 160-86. New York: Columbia University Press, 1986. [ICS Library Reserve Shelf: P99 .K75]
- Olthuis, James H.** "Be(com)ing: Humankind as Gift and Call." *Philosophia Reformata* 58 (1993): 153-72. [ICS Library: PER]
- Seerveld, Calvin.** "Dooyeweerd's Legacy for Aesthetics: Modal Law Theory." In *The Legacy of Herman Dooyeweerd: Reflections on Critical Philosophy in the Christian Tradition*, ed. C. T. McIntire, 41-79. Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1985. [ICS Library Reserve Shelf: B4051 .D64 L43]
- Sweetman, Robert.** "Epilogue: Antiquity and the Future of Reformational Tears." In *In the Phrygian Mode: Neo-Calvinism, Antiquity and the Lamentations of Reformational Philosophy*, pp. 267-89. Ed. Robert Sweetman. Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 2007. 23 pp. [ICS Library Reserve Shelf: B4041 .I57 2007]
- Sweetman, Robert.** "Of Tall Tales and Small Stories: Postmodern 'Fragmentics' and the Christian Historian." *Fides et Historia* 28.2 (1996): 50-68. [ICS Library: PER]
- Wesselius, Janet Catherina.** "Points of Convergence between Dooyeweerdian and Feminist Views of the Philosophic Self." In *Knowing Other-wise*, pp. 54-68. [ICS Library Reserve Shelf: B831.2 .K66]
- Zuidervaart, Lambert.** "Earth's Lament: Suffering, Hope, and Wisdom." Inaugural Lecture, Institute for Christian Studies, Toronto, November 21, 2003. 15 pp. [.pdf file on ICS web site and ICS Library: Pamphlet]
- Zuidervaart, Lambert.** "Existence, Nomic Conditions, and God: Issues in Hendrik Hart's Ontology." *Philosophia Reformata* 50 (1985) 1: 47-65. [ICS Library: PER]
- Zuidervaart, Lambert.** "Good Cities, or Cities of the Good? Radical Augustinians, Societal Structures, and Normative Critique." In *Creation, Covenant, and Participation: Radical Orthodoxy and the Reformed Tradition*, ed. James K. A. Smith and James H. Olthuis, 135-49. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic Press, 2005. [ICS Library Reserve Shelf: BT40 .R35 2005]
- Zuidervaart, Lambert.** "The Great Turning Point: Religion and Rationality in Dooyeweerd's Transcendental

Critique." *Faith and Philosophy* 21 (January 2004): 65-89. [ICS Library: PER]

Course Schedule, MA Section (Fall 2009)

Compositional notes: The course resembles a three-voice fugue, preceded by an improvisatory, context-setting prelude on "modernity." The fugue itself begins with questions about how reformational philosophy positions itself in Western thought. This "Exposition" gets "developed" in a section on postmetaphysical ontology, and it gets recapitulated, but in a new key, in a section on "philosophy after foundationalism." As in a fugue, the texts for each week include a "subject" (sounding the main theme), a "counter-subject" (sounding with or against the main theme), and an "answer" (restating the main theme in ways that change it). The "subject" texts come mostly from Dooyeweerd and Vollenhoven, and some by Vollenhoven come from the *Vollenhoven Reader* ("VR" below) edited by John Kok. Most of the "counter-subject" texts come from *After Philosophy* ("AP" below). The "answer" texts are by contemporary reformational thinkers who have succeeded Dooyeweerd and Vollenhoven.

Topic and Week	Subject	Counter-subject	Answer
Prelude: Modernity and Its Discontents			
1. Pluralism September 23	Dooyeweerd, <i>Roots of Western Culture</i> (1945-48), pp. ix-15, 28-61, 219-24; 52 pp. [1979: vii-xii, 1-15, 28-60]	Nancy Fraser, "From Redistribution to Recognition?" (1997), 29 pp.	Griffioen, "Is a Pluralist Ethos Possible?" (1994), 15 pp.
2. Progress September 30	Dooyeweerd, <i>Roots of Western Culture</i> (1945-48), pp. 63-88, 225-33 (Glossary); 34 pp. [1979: 61-87]	"General Introduction" & Jean-François Lyotard, "The Postmodern Condition" (1982), AP 1-18, 67-94; 46 pp.	Sweetman, "Of Tall Tales and Small Stories: Postmodern 'Fragmatics' and the Christian Historian" (1996), 19 pp.
3. Power, Faith, Culture October 7	Dooyeweerd, <i>Roots of Western Culture</i> (1945-48), pp. 89-110; 21 pp. [1979: 88-110]	Julia Kristeva, "Stabat Mater" (1977), 27 pp.	Zuidervaart, "Good Cities, or Cities of the Good?" (2005), 15 pp.
Exposition: Modes of Critique			
4. (Anti-)Thetical Critique October 14	Vollenhoven, "Calvinism and the Reformation of Philosophy" (1933), VR 21-53; 33 pp.	Alasdair MacIntyre, "Relativism, Power, and Philosophy" (1984), 381-411; 31 pp.	Zuidervaart, "Earth's Lament: Suffering, Hope, and Wisdom" (2003), 15 pp.
5. Transcendental Critique October 21	Dooyeweerd, "Christian Philosophy: An Exploration" (1956), 37 pp.	Karl-Otto Apel, "The Problem of Philosophical Foundations in Light of a Transcendental Pragmatics of Language" (1975/76), AP 245-90; 46 pp.	Zuidervaart, "The Great Turning Point: Religion and Rationality in Dooyeweerd's Transcendental Critique" (2004), 25 pp.
6. Transformational Critique November 4	Klapwijk, "Antithesis, Synthesis, and the Idea of Transformational Philosophy" (1986), 15 pp.; Klapwijk, "Reformational Philosophy on the Boundary between the Past	Hans-Georg Gadamer, "Hermeneutics as Practical Philosophy" (1976), AP319-38; 20 pp.	Sweetman, "Epilogue: Antiquity and the Future of Reformational Tears" (2007), 23 pp.

	and the Future" (1987), 34 pp.		
Development: Philosophy after Metaphysics			
7. God and Cosmos November 11	Hart, <i>Understanding Our World</i> (1984), pp. 318-49, 360-70; 40 pp.	Jacques Derrida, "The Ends of Man" (1972), AP 119-58; 40 pp.	Zuidervaart, "Existence, Nomic Conditions, and God" (1985), 19 pp.
8. Law and Subject November 18	Vollenhoven, "Norm and Law of Nature" (1951), VR 103-111; Vollenhoven, "The Unity of Life" (1955), VR 146-56; Vollenhoven, <i>Introduction to Philosophy</i> (1941/1945), pp. 1-20; 28 pp. total	Richard Rorty, "Pragmatism and Philosophy" (1982), AP 21-66; 46 pp.	Hart, "Creation Order in Our Philosophical Tradition" (1995), 30 pp. Vollenhoven, <i>Introduction to Philosophy</i> , pp. iii-xxxii (optional)
9. Societal Structures November 25	Dooyeweerd, <i>Roots of Western Culture</i> (1945-48), pp. 189-217 (29 pp.) [1979: 189-218]; Vollenhoven, "Sphere Sovereignty for Kuyper and for Us" (1950), VR 89-94 (6 pp.)	Jürgen Habermas, "Philosophy as Stand-In and Interpreter" (1983), AP 291-315; 26 pp.	Chaplin, "Dooyeweerd's Notion of Societal Structural Principles" (1995), 21 pp.
Recapitulation: Philosophy after Foundationalism			
10. Structures and Direction December 2	Vollenhoven, <i>Introduction to Philosophy</i> (1941/1945), pp. 21-62; 42 pp.	Hilary Putnam, "Why Reason Can't Be Naturalized" (1982), AP 217-44; 28 pp.	Seerveld, "Dooyeweerd's Legacy for Aesthetics: Modal Law Theory" (1985), 39 pp.
11. Creation, Fall, Redemption December 9	Vollenhoven, <i>Introduction to Philosophy</i> (1941/1945), pp. 62-106; 44 pp.	Paul Ricoeur, "On Interpretation" (1983), AP 357-84; 24 pp.	Olthuis, "Be(com)ing: Humankind as Gift and Call" (1993), 20 pp. Wesselius, "Points of Convergence between Dooyeweerdian and Feminist Views of the Philosophic Self" (1997), 15 pp.
12. Wisdom, Theory, Practice December 16	Vollenhoven, <i>Introduction to Philosophy</i> (1941/1945), pp. 107-43; Vollenhoven, "Faith: Its Nature, Structure, and Significance for Science" (1950), VR 72-77; Vollenhoven, "Scripture Use and Philosophy" (1953), VR 122-30; 50 pp. total	Charles Taylor, "Overcoming Epistemology" (1987), 459-88; 30 pp.	Hart, "Conceptual Understanding and Knowing Other-wise" (1997), 35 pp.

Note: The course schedule is set up for a 13-week semester, and it presupposes one week (September 16) for introductions to the course and to one another.