

**ICS Calendar Title:** Religion, Life, and Society: Reformational Philosophy  
**ICS Course Code:** ICS 1107AC/2107AC F10  
**Instructor:** Dr. James Olthuis, jimO@icscanada.edu  
**Term and Year:** Wednesdays, 9:00am-12:00pm, Fall 2010  
**Last Updated:** September 24, 2010

### 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 of text(s), both raising questions as response to text(s) and identifying questions of importance for Christian philosophy, and, in particular, for one’s own philosophical project;
- 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 paper articulating the writer’s own take on doing philosophy Christianly, both its joys and perils, with particular focus on topics or questions of special attraction and intrigue.

### Required Texts:

[After Philosophy: End or Transformation?](#) Edited by Kenneth Baynes, James Bohman, and Thomas McCarthy. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1987. (ICS Library Reserve Shelf: B804 .A34)  
Dooyeweerd, Herman. [Roots of Western Culture: Pagan, Secular, and Christian Options](#). Translated by John Kraay. Edited by Mark Vander Vennen and Bernard Zylstra. Toronto: Wedge, 1979. (Glossary from 2003 edition is last reading in Reformational Reader 2010) (ICS Library Reserve Shelf: BR115 .C5 D6613)  
[The Hermeneutics of Charity](#). Edited by James Smith and Henry Venema. Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2004. (ICS Library Reserve Shelf: BT83.597 .H47 2004)  
Vollenhoven, D. H. T. [Introduction to Philosophy](#). Sioux Center, Iowa: Dordt College Press, 2005. (ICS Library Reserve Shelf: BD28 .V65a 2005)

**Required Readings:** (alphabetical by author)

**Chaplin, Jonathan.** “Dooyeweerd’s Notion of Societal Structural Principles.” *Philosophia Reformata* 60 (1995): 16-36. (ICS Library: PER)

**Critchley, Simon.** “Deconstruction and Pragmatism: Is Derrida a Private Ironist or a Public Liberal?” 83-105. In [Ethics, Politics, Subjectivity: Essays on Derrida, Levinas, & Contemporary French Thought](#). London: Verso, 1999. (ICS Library Reserve Shelf: JC261 .C85 2009 ; ROBA: JC261 .C85 1999)

- 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)
- Hart, Hendrik.** [\*Understanding Our World: An Integral Ontology\*](#). Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1984. 318-49, 361-70. (ICS Library Reserve Shelf: BD311 .H28)
- 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.** “Conceptual Understanding and Knowing *Other-wise*: Reflections on Rationality and Spirituality,” In [\*Knowing Other-wise\*](#) ed. James Olthuis New York: Fordham University Press, 1997. (ICS Library Reserve Shelf: B831.2 .K66)
- Irigaray, Luce.** “Sexual Difference,” 5-19. In [\*An Ethics of Sexual Difference\*](#) Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993. (ICS Library Reserve Shelf: HQ32 .I7513)
- 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)
- Olthuis, James H.** “Dooyeweerd on Religion and Faith,” in [\*The Legacy of Herman Dooyeweerd: Reflections on Critical Philosophy in the Christian Tradition\*](#), ed. C. T. McIntire, 21-40. Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1985.
- Olthuis, James H.** “Be(com)ing: Humankind as Gift and Call.” *Philosophia Reformata* 58 (1993): 153-72. (ICS Library: PER)
- Olthuis, James H.** “Otherwise than Violence: Towards a Hermeneutics of Connection.” In [\*The Arts, Community and Cultural Democracy\*](#). ed. Lambert Zuidervaart and Henry Luttikhuisen. New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2000, 137-164. (ICS Library Reserve Shelf: NX180 .S6 A773 1999)
- Olthuis, James H.** “Taking the Wager of/on Love: Luce Irigaray and the Caress.” In [\*Gazing Through a Prism Darkly\*](#). Ed. B. Keith Putt. New York: Fordham University Press, 2009. (ICS Library Reserve Shelf: BT50 .G38 2009)
- Olthuis, James H.** “Creatio Ex Amore,” in [\*Transforming Philosophy and Religion\*](#). Eds. Norman Wirzba and Bruce Benson. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008, pp. 155-170. (ICS Library Reserve Shelf: BD436 .T73 2008)
- Olthuis, James H.** “Where there is Love, there is Vision Towards a Christian Post-postmodern worldview,” *Christian Courier*, Sept. 14, 2009
- 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
- Sweetman, Robert.** “Of Tall Tales and Small Stories: Postmodern ‘Fragmatics’ and the Christian Historian.” *Fides et Historia* 28.2 (1996): 50-68. (ICS Library: PER)
- Sweetman, Robert.** “Epilogue: Antiquity and the Future of Reformational Tears.” In [\*In the Phrygian Mode: Neo-Calvinism, Antiquity and the Lamentations of Reformational Philosophy\*](#), 267-89. Ed. Robert Sweetman. Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 2007. 23 pp. (ICS Library Reserve Shelf: B4041 .I57 2007 )
- Vollenhoven, D. H. T.** “Calvinism and the Reformation of Philosophy” Dirk H. T. Vollenhoven Reader. Introductions and translations by John H.Kok Manuscript, 21-65
- 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.** “The Great Turning Point: Religion and Rationality in Dooyeweerd’s

Transcendental Critique.” *Faith and Philosophy* 21 (January 2004): 65-89. (ICS Library: PER)

\*Plus: Glossary from 2003 Edition *Roots of Western Culture* published by Edwin Mellen Press (ICS Library Reserve Shelf: BR115 .C5 D6613 2003)

Topic and Week	Subject	Contemporary Discussion	Reformational Input and Response
<b>Prelude: Modernity and Its Discontents</b>			
<b>1. Pluralism</b> September 22	Dooyeweerd, <i>Roots of Western Culture</i> , pp. vii-15, 28-60, 206-218	Simon Critchley, “Deconstruction and Pragmatism”(1999)	Olthuis, “Crossing the Threshold,” <i>HC</i> ; “Where there is Love, there is Vision”
<b>2. Progress</b> September 29	Dooyeweerd, <i>Roots of Western Culture</i> , pp. 61-87, 225-33 (plus Glossary from 2003 ed.)	“General Intro.” & Jean-François Lyotard, “The Postmodern Condition” (1982), AP 1-18, 67-94	Sweetman, “Of Tall Tales and Small Stories: Postmodern ‘Fragmatics’ and the Christian Historian”(1996)
<b>3. Power, Faith, Culture</b> October 6	Dooyeweerd, <i>Roots of Western Culture</i> , pp. 88-110	Luce Irigaray, <i>An Ethics of Sexual Difference</i> , pp. 5-19.	Olthuis, “Dooyeweerd on Religion and Faith” (1985); “Taking the Wager of/on Love”(2009)
<b>Exposition: Modes of Critique</b>			
<b>4. (Anti-)Thetical Critique</b> October 13	Vollenhoven, “Calvinism and the Reformation of Philosophy” (1933)	Alasdair MacIntyre, “Relativism, Power, and Philosophy,” AP, 381-411	Olthuis, “Face-to-Face,” <i>HC</i> (1996)
<b>5. Transcendental Critique</b> October 20	Dooyeweerd, “Christian Philosophy: An Exploration” (1956)	Karl-Otto Apel, “The Problem of Philosophical Foundations in Light of a Transcendental Pragmatics of Language,” AP 245-90	Zuidervaart, “The Great Turning Point: Religion and Rationality in Dooyeweerd’s Transcendental Critique” (2004)
<b>6. Transformational Critique</b> November 3	Klapwijk, “Antithesis, Synthesis, and the Idea of Transformational Philosophy” (1986); “Reformational Philosophy on the Boundary between the Past and the Future” (1987)	Hans-Georg Gadamer, “Hermeneutics as Practical Philosophy” (1976), AP319-38	Sweetman, “Epilogue: Antiquity and the Future of Reformational Tears” (2007)

<b>Development: Philosophy after Metaphysics</b>			
<b>7. God and Cosmos</b> November 10	Hart, <i>Understanding Our World</i> (1984), pp. 318-49, 360-70	Jacques Derrida, "The Ends of Man" (1972), AP 119-58	Zuidervaart, "Existence, Nomic Conditions, and God" (1985)
<b>8. Law and Subject</b> November 17	Vollenhoven, <i>Introduction to Philosophy</i> , pp. 1-20	Richard Rorty, "Pragmatism and Philosophy" (1982), AP 21-66	Hart, "Creation Order in Our Philosophical Tradition" (1995), Vollenhoven, <i>Introduction to Philosophy</i> , pp. iii-xxxii
<b>9. Societal Structures</b> November 24	Dooyeweerd, <i>Roots of Western Culture</i> , pp. 189-218	Jürgen Habermas, "Philosophy as Stand-In and Interpreter" (1983), AP 291-315	Chaplin, "Dooyeweerd's Notion of Societal Structural Principles" (1995)
<b>Recapitulation: Philosophy after Foundationalism</b>			
<b>10. Structures and Direction</b> December 1	Vollenhoven, <i>Introduction to Philosophy</i> , pp. 21-62	Hilary Putnam, "Why Reason Can't Be Naturalized" (1982), AP 217-44	Seerveld, "Dooyeweerd's Legacy for Aesthetics: Modal Law Theory" (1985)
<b>11. Creation, Fall, Redemption</b> December 8	Vollenhoven, <i>Introduction to Philosophy</i> , pp. 62-106	Paul Ricoeur, "On Interpretation" (1983), AP 357-84	Olthuis, "Otherwise Than Violence"(2000); <i>The Beautiful Risk</i> , chs.5,6
<b>12. Wisdom, Theory, Practice</b> December 15	Vollenhoven, <i>Introduction to Philosophy</i> , pp. 107-42	Charles Taylor, "Overcoming Epistemology" (1987), AP 459-88	Hart, "Conceptual Understanding and Knowing Other-wise" (1997), Olthuis, "Creatio Ex Amore"(2008)