



**PHIL 310: Contemporary Philosophy**  
**Cincinnati Christian University**  
**Foster School of Biblical Studies, Arts & Sciences**

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**3 Semester Credit Hours**

**Fall 2018**

**Meeting Times: MW 1:30-2:45**

**DESCRIPTION:** This is an advanced philosophy course that will introduce students to 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century philosophy, with an emphasis on the philosophy of religion, ethics, and culture. The goal is to help students develop their own cohesive and functional views of reality within the contemporary landscape of secular and Christian thought.

**RATIONALE:** To understand the various philosophical structures upon which contemporary thought and society are based, students must be made aware of the leading schools of thought of the past two centuries, in both the secular realm, and religious.

**ARTS & SCIENCES DEPARTMENTAL OUTCOMES**

CCU's Arts & Sciences program is designed to prepare students to

1. communicate effectively in both oral and written forms in a variety of rhetorical contexts, including Standard English,
2. adeptly utilize modern research and writing tools,
3. identify decisive events and ideas in the human experience and assess their influences on modern culture and thought,
4. employ critical and creative thinking and mathematic and scientific principles for problem solving, literary and socio-cultural analysis, intercultural understanding, and research in the sciences and humanities,
5. demonstrate the integration of academic insights and experiences by constructing and employing a personal framework in which ethical decisions can be made in light of societal values and a Christian worldview.

**OBJECTIVES:** The student will...

1. Be able to identify, describe, and explain the central concepts and tenets of the leading thinkers and schools of thought of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. (A&S Outcome #3)
2. Recognize, identify, and explain the similarities and fundamental differences between the various schools of thought covered in the course and those of the Christian worldview. (A&S #3 & 5)
3. Utilize their understanding of contemporary philosophy as a tool for evaluating culture and society from a Christian perspective. (A&S #4)
4. Develop analytical reading, writing, and listening skills. (A&S #1 & 2)

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

1. Attendance – Absences are strongly discouraged. Excessive absences will result in the lowering of your grade (see the college catalog for attendance requirements).
2. **Canvas Summaries** (Objectives 1, 2, 4) – On Canvas the student will find files that contain 12 different articles or videos that correlate with the school of thought to be discussed that week. Of the 12, the student is to pick 7 articles to summarize. These summaries will be  $\frac{3}{4}$  to 1 page in length for each article, no less and no more. The student is to write a thesis statement at the top of each summary that captures the essence of the article. These theses are to be in **BOLD** and UNDERLINED, and separate from the body of the paper. Please note that these are not to be opinions, nor are they outlines. Summaries take paragraph format (no numbers or bullet points) and are to be an objective analysis of the reading. Below, in the course schedule section, you will find that each school of thought is assigned a date. Next to the school of thought is the name of the author the student is to read and summarize for that day of class. **These are due every Wednesday** by the time class begins. These summaries are worth 5 percentage points apiece, 35% together.
3. **Book Summaries** (Objectives 2, 3, 4) – Similar to the Canvas Summary described above, the student is to read and summarize a different chapter from William Hordern's A Layman's Guide to Protestant Theology each week. There are 10 chapters in all that will be covered (chapters 1-10), students must summarize 7. These summaries will be  $\frac{3}{4}$  to 1 page in length for each chapter, no less and no more. The student is to write a thesis statement at the top of each summary that captures the essence of the philosopher/theologian/school of thought covered. These theses are to be in **Bold** and Underlined, and separate from the body of the paper. Again, these are not to be opinions, nor are they outlines. Summaries take paragraph format (should be roughly 2-3 paragraphs per summary) and are to be an objective analysis of the reading. **These are due every Monday** by the time class begins. These summaries are worth 5 percentage points apiece, 35% together.
4. **Final Paper** (Objectives 1-4) – The student is to choose one philosopher, theologian, or school of thought discussed in class and write an 8-12 page essay. The essay may take one of three forms: (1) Critical Response, (2) Supportive Response, or (3) Creative Response. The Critical Response is one where the student must argue against an idea presented by the philosopher/school of thought in question. A Supportive Response is an essay for which the student must argue in favor of a particular idea that the philosopher/school of thought maintains. The Creative Response is simply an essay where the student takes an idea generated by the philosopher/school of thought and expands upon it in some creative way; this may be through more abstract reasoning, further application, or a blend of the two. All three are research essays, and students are expected to use at least 4 sources to support their papers (only 1 internet source, not Wikipedia). Papers must be double-spaced, times new roman, 12 point font. The paper must have a works cited page. This paper is worth 30% of the final grade.

**GRADING PROCEDURE:** Letter grades will be determined in accordance with the percentages listed in the college catalog. Individual grades will be based on the following criteria:

- |                         |               |
|-------------------------|---------------|
| a. Canvas Summaries (7) | 35% (5% each) |
| b. Book Summaries (7)   | 35% (5% each) |
| c. Final Paper          | 30%           |

**TEXT MATERIALS:**

William Hordern, A Layman's Guide to Protestant Theology, Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1955.

**ISBN:** 978-1579109257

**Assignment Schedule**

August

27 – Monday – Nothing Due

29 – Wednesday – Nothing Due

September

3 – Monday – NO CLASS – LABOR DAY

5 – Wednesday – Nothing Due

10 – Monday – Nothing Due

12 – Wednesday – Canvas Summary 1 – Modern Pantheistic Monism

17 – Monday – Book Summary – Chapter 1 – Growth of Orthodoxy

19 – Wednesday – Canvas Summary 2 – Materialism

24 – Monday – Book Summary – Chapter 2 – Threat to Orthodoxy

26 – Wednesday – Canvas Summary 3 – Scientism

October

1 – Monday – Book Summary – Chapter 3 – Fundamentalism & Conservative Christianity

3 – Wednesday – Canvas Summary 4 – Naturalism

8 – Monday – Book Summary – Chapter 4 - Liberalism

10 – Wednesday – Canvas Summary 5 – Christian Existentialism

15 – Monday – Book Summary – Chapter 5 – Neo-Orthodoxy

17 – Wednesday – Canvas Summary 6 – Atheistic Existentialism

22 – Monday – Book Summary – Chapter 6 – Karl Barth

24 – Wednesday – Canvas Summary 7 – Postmodernism

29 – Monday – TOPIC FOR FINAL PAPER DUE

31 – Wednesday – Canvas Summary 8 – Critical Theory

#### November

5 – Monday – Book Summary – Chapter 7 – Reinhold Niebuhr

7 – Wednesday – Canvas Summary 9 – Liberation Theology

12 – Monday – Book Summary – Chapter 8 – Paul Tillich

14 – Wednesday – Canvas Summary 10 – Feminist Theory

19 – Monday – NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING BREAK

21 – Wednesday – NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING BREAK

26 – Monday – THESIS FOR FINAL PAPER DUE

28 – Wednesday – Canvas Summary 11 – Queer Theory

#### December

3 – Monday – Book Summary – Chapter 9 – Rudolf Bultmann

5 – Wednesday – Canvas Summary – 12 – Technique

10 – Monday – Book Summary – Chapter 10 – Dietrich Bonhoeffer

12 – Wednesday – Final Paper Presentations

17 – EXAM WEEK STARTS – Final Paper Presentations