



**KINGSWOOD EXTENDED FLAME COURSE**  
**PHILOSOPHY & ETHICS - PHX 2011**  
**SESSION 2 - 2019**

Zoom Sessions: Mondays, 6-10pm EST; March 11, 18, 25; April 1, 8, 15

Instructor: Dr. Ken Schenck

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### **SYLLABUS OVERVIEW**

What you will find in this syllabus:

- Course Description
- Course Objectives & Learning Outcomes
- Required Textbook(s)
- Assignments
- Course Calendar
- Evaluation/Grade Scale
- Policies and Expectations
- Bibliography

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course will introduce students to major thinkers and trends in Western philosophy. The bulk of the course will explore the relationship between the Platonic tradition (Plato, Aristotle, the Stoics and Neoplatonists) and Christian theology. Some attention will be given to developments in modern and contemporary philosophy.

### **COURSE OBJECTIVES AND LEARNING OUTCOMES**

During this course, the student will...

- Define philosophy.
- Name eight major philosophers/philosophical schools and explain their contributions.
- Articulate three ways of understanding Christian theology's relationship to philosophy.
- Demonstrate practices of critical reflection.

## REQUIRED TEXTBOOK(S)

- Ken Schenck, *A Christian Philosophical Journey*, Triangle Publishing, 2014, ISBN: 1931283516 (I strongly suggest buying it used or in electronic form here: <https://finelink.com/wphstorereail/dig384.html>)
- The Bible. NIV, NASB, NRSV or ESV

## ASSIGNMENTS

All assignments are due on the day indicated in this syllabus. In extenuating circumstances, an extension may be granted with the advance permission of the instructor and the director of Kingswood Extended.

Written assignments must be typed in 12-point format in a font that is easy to read. Each assignment should include at least the student's full name, course title, and date.

Kingswood Extended uses the Pathwright platform for all assignment submissions, grading, and instructor feedback. You will be sent an access link to set up a user profile for Pathwright and an invitation to join this course. If you do not receive the account and course invitation two weeks prior to the start of the first class, please check your spam folder before contacting your instructor. All assignments must be submitted through the Pathwright platform, and it is recommended that you keep a copy of all submissions for your records.

### Pre-Course Assignments

Read the following chapters in *A Christian Philosophical Journey* prior to the first session on March 11, 2019: 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, and 11. The first day of class we will especially focus on chapters 1, 2, and 3. Reporting will be on the honor system.

### In-Course Assignments

You will write a short essay after each class to solidify and apply the material for the week. The writing assignment will be due before the start of the next class session.

Reflection essay papers should be at least 300 words but sufficient in length to make it clear 1) that you have indeed read all the material assigned (i.e., fairly even representation of the material with clear understanding), and 2) that you have read the material critically, indicating points of both agreement and disagreement.

March 11: The Basic Questions

- Read chapters 1-3
- Reflection: Examples of Bad Thinking (**Due March 18**)

March 18: God and Evil

- Read chapters 5-6
- Reflection: Why does God allow evil? (**Due March 25**)

March 25: The Image of God

- Read chapters 9-10

- Reflection: What is the value of people? (**Due April 1**)

April 1: How We Should Live

- Read chapters 11-12
- Reflection: How should we then live? (**Due April 7**)

April 8: Approaches to Truth

- Read chapters 4, 7, and 15
- Reflection: What is truth? (**Due April 15**)

April 15: Science and History

- Read chapters 8, 13, and 14

### Post-Course Assignments

**Due April 29:** Worldview Paper. This paper is meant to present your overall perspectives on the key philosophical questions.

#### Guidelines for Worldview Paper

Introduction

- In this paper you will present some key elements in your worldview, drawing on the categories we will have presented throughout the course.
- The paper should be at least 5 pages in length but probably more. Any font and type is acceptable, but I interpret length by 12 pt, double-spaced, Times New Roman.
- You are free to be creative and profound with the organization of your paper, but it should be organized and cover the questions below. I have provided some of the better known answers to some key worldview questions.

The Questions

1. How does one “know” anything?

**Fideist** – You just know, whether through intuition, revelation, or blind faith.

**Rationalist** – Truth is a matter of clear thinking and the use of logic.

**Empiricist** – Truth comes through your senses and experimentation.

**Kantian** – Truth is the use of innate reason to process the data of your senses.

**Constructivist** – Truth is constructed (not absolute) as your mind organizes the data of your senses according to your culture and individual way of thinking.

**Pure postmodernist** – There is no right or wrong answer, only opinions.

2. What is real in this world?

**Idealist** – Only thoughts and ideas are truly real (perhaps we are God’s thoughts).

**Materialist** – Only matter is real (perhaps God also out there beyond the world).

**Dualist** – There are at least two kinds of stuff – material/immaterial, body/soul.

**Non-realist** – There is no essential reality, although some ways of thinking may seem to work better than others.

3. How is God involved in the world?

**Atheist/Naturalist** – There is no God. All that exists is the natural world.

**Agnostic** – We cannot know if there is a God.

**Pantheist** – Everything makes up God.

**Panentheist** – Everything is *in* God. Perhaps the world is God's body.

**Deist** – God made the world but is no longer involved.

**Theist** – God made the world and is still involved in it.

4. What is a human person?

**A Divine Creation in the image of God** – All human life is intrinsically valuable. Such a person may or may not believe in free will.

**The Pinnacle of Evolution** – Humanity is the most important species, but still a species of animal.

**A Biological Machine/Determined** – A person is a collection of atoms in motion. There is no such thing as free will since there are causes for everything you desire.

**A Maker of Meaning/Existentialist** – Although a person is ultimately determined in his or her parts, the whole person may think of himself or herself as free. There is ultimately no meaning to life, so anything one chooses to center their life around is as valuable – and just as absurd – as any other choice. Seize the day and choose a meaning for your life.

5. What makes something right or wrong?

**Duty Based Ethics** – There are certain duties that must be followed either without exception (**absolutism**) or with rare exception. Such duties can be thought to inhere in nature (**natural law ethics**), to be known intuitively (e.g. by way of conscience), or to be revealed by God.

**Relativism** – There are definite rights and wrongs, but they vary from person to person or from culture to culture. Wrong for you may not be wrong for me.

**Utilitarian Ethics** – Right and wrong are based on what is the greatest good for the greatest number.

**Egoist Ethics** – Right and wrong is based either on what is the greatest good for all individuals (**universal egoism**) or simply what is best for me (**personal egoism**).

**Nihilism** – Might makes right. If I am strong enough to get away with something, how can you say I did wrong?

6. What is the best way for people to live together?

**Theocracy** – God rules (at least in theory).

**Monarchy** – A king (or queen) rules.

**Oligarchy** – A few rule, perhaps the aristocracy.

**Social Contract** – A group come together, set up rules they hold in common.  
**Democracy** – Everybody has a vote on every issue.  
**Anarchy** – Nobody rules.

## COURSE CALENDAR

DAY & DATE	TOPIC	READING DUE	ASSIGNMENT DUE
	Pre-Course Reading	Schenck, <i>Journey</i> , chs 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 11	
March 11	The Basic Questions	Schenck, <i>Journey</i> , chs 1-3	
March 18	God & Evil	Schenck, <i>Journey</i> , chs 5-6	Reflection essay: Examples of Bad Thinking
March 25	The Image of God	Schenck, <i>Journey</i> , chs 9-10	Reflection essay: Why Does God Allow Evil?
April 1	How We Should Live	Schenck, <i>Journey</i> , chs 11-12	Reflection essay: What is the Value of People?
April 8	Approaches to Truth	Schenck, <i>Journey</i> , chs 4, 7, 15	Reflection essay: How Should We Then Live?
April 15	Science & History	Schenck, <i>Journey</i> , chs 8, 13, 14	Reflection essay: What is Truth?
April 29			Worldview Paper

## EVALUATION/GRADE SCALE

Pre-Onsite Reading	5%
Weekly Reflections	75%
Worldview Paper	20%

At the completion of the course, numerical grades are submitted to the Division of Education and Clergy Development and converted to letter grades using the following grade scale (Note: A grade of C or higher is required to pass the course):

100 to 97	A	87 to 85	B-	70 to 68	D
96 to 94	A-	84 to 81	C+	67 & below	F
93 to 91	B+	80 to 76	C		
90 to 88	B	75 to 71	C-		

## POLICIES AND EXPECTATIONS

### Attendance

- Students are expected to attend all six Zoom sessions of a course.
- In extenuating circumstances, a student may be permitted to miss one session, with the advance permission of the instructor.
- Missing more than one Zoom session of a course will result in failure of the course.

### Grades

- Grades are reported as percentages.

- Students who wish to apply this course towards credentialing requirements in The Wesleyan Church must earn a grade of at least 76%.

### **Plagiarism**

- Students of Kingswood University are expected to exhibit honesty and integrity in their personal, professional and academic life, and work. As Christians, we are called to a high standard of honesty.
- “The Senior Dictionary of Canadian English defines plagiarism as “an idea, expression, plot, etc. taken from another and used as one’s own.” Plagiarism is a serious offence in the academic community, and is especially offensive in the Christian academic community since it is an act of dishonesty, evidencing a lack of integrity. Cheating on tests, exams, and other assignments is equally offensive” (Kingswood University Academic Policy).
- Examples of plagiarism include (but are not limited to) the following:
  - Copying all or part of a theme, exam, paper, reading report, or other written work from another person;
  - Submitting as one’s own work that which was wholly or partially done by another;
  - Quoting material from any source without clearly indicating it is someone else’s work;
  - Summarizing or paraphrasing from any source clearly indicating it is someone else’s work;
  - Misrepresentation of documentation or resources
  - Submitting workbook answers copied from another person or working in a group and submitting an identical set of answers for each member of the group without explicit permission from the professor;
  - Cheating on a test by getting answers in an unauthorized manner;
  - Submitting the same work for more than one course without the prior approval of the instructor.
- An instance of plagiarism will result in an automatic “F” for the specific assignment and may also result in an automatic failing of the course.
- A repeat offense will result in an automatic failing of the course.