

REFORMED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

SYSTEM

Course: Modern Theology
Professor: James Eglinton
Campus: Washington, D.C.
Date: April 19-20, 2024

Modern Theology
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Description: This course covers a range of key thinkers and ideas in the development of modern theology, a movement that emerged in Western Europe in the aftermath of the Enlightenment. It will help students understand the ideas and connections between the likes of Kant, Schleiermacher, Feuerbach, Nietzsche, and Freud, as well as providing a backdrop to interpret the contributions of figures like Herman Bavinck and Karl Barth.

Class format: The class will be held in the style of a postgraduate seminar, with a mixture of lecture content and seminar discussion of set texts. Students are expected to have read the assigned texts prior to the course, and to come with questions and points of discussion.

Assessment: Each student is required to submit a 3,000 word essay on a topic related to the key figures and themes of the course. Students are encouraged to consult the professor as they choose their research topics. The submission date for essays is Friday, June 31, 2024.

Friday

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| 13.00-13.50 | Lecture 1: introduction to modern theology, Immanuel Kant |
| 14.00-14.50 | Seminar: Kant's 'how to orient yourself in thinking'
Set text: Immanuel Kant, <i>Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason</i> , 'What Does It Mean to Orient Oneself in Thinking?'. |
| 15.00-15.50 | Lecture 3: Friedrich Schleiermacher |
| 16.00-16.50 | Lecture 4: Feuerbach and Strauss |
| 17.10-18.00 | Seminar: Strauss's 'The Old Faith and the New'
Set text: David Friedrich Strauss, <i>The old faith and the new: a confession</i> (1837), 'Are we still Christians?' (pp. 13-107). |
| 18.00-19.00 | Dinner break |

- 19.00-19.50 Lecture 5: Friedrich Nietzsche
- 19.50-20.30 Seminar: Nietzsche's 'David Strauss, the Confessor' and 'Twilight of the Idols'
 Set texts: Friedrich Nietzsche, *Untimely Meditations* (1997), 'David Strauss, the Confessor and Writer' (pp. 1-56), and *The Anti-Christ, Ecce homo, Twilight of the idols, and other writings* (2005), 'Twilight of the Idols, or How to Philosophize with a Hammer' (pp. 154-229).

Saturday

- 9.00-9.50 Lecture 6: Adolf von Harnack and Ernst Troeltsch
- 10.00-10.50 Seminar: von Harnack and Troeltsch
 Set texts: Adolf von Harnack, *What is Christianity?* (1986), lectures 1 and 5-8, and Ernst Troeltsch, *Protestantism and Progress: A historical study of the relation of Protestantism to the modern world* (1912), chapter 6, 'Protestantism and Modern Religious Feeling'.
- 11.00-11.45 Lecture 7: Bavinck and Barth
- 11.45-13.00 Lunch
- 13.00-13.50 Lecture 8: Sigmund Freud
- 14.00-14.50 Seminar: Freud's *Civilization and Its Discontents*
 Set text: Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents* (1963)
- 15.00-15.50 End of course Q&A

Bibliography

1. Required reading

Immanuel Kant, *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*, 'What Does It Mean to Orient Oneself in Thinking?'

David Friedrich Strauss, *The old faith and the new: a confession* (1837), 'Are we still Christians?' (pp. 13-107)

Friedrich Nietzsche, *Untimely Meditations* (1997), 'David Strauss, the Confessor and Writer' (pp. 1-56), and *The Anti-Christ, Ecce homo, Twilight of the idols, and other writings* (2005), 'Twilight of the Idols, or How to Philosophize with a Hammer' (pp. 154-229)

Adolf von Harnack, *What is Christianity?* (1986), lectures 1 and 5-8

Ernst Troeltsch, *Protestantism and Progress: A historical study of the relation of Protestantism to the modern world* (1912), chapter 6, 'Protestantism and Modern Religious Feeling'

Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents* (1963)

2. Suggested reading

NB. A number of these resources are handbooks, which contain numerous chapters and possible avenues into further research.

George Pattison, Nicholas Adams, Graham Ward, 'Introduction,' *The Oxford Handbook of Theology and Modern European Thought* (2013)

Joel Rasmussen, Judith Wolfe, Johannes Zachhuber (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Nineteenth Century Christian Thought* (2017)

David Fergusson (ed), *The Blackwell Companion to Nineteenth Century Theology* (2010)

Owen Chadwick, *The Secularisation of the European Mind in the Nineteenth Century* (1990)

Hugh McLeod, *Secularisation in Western Europe, 1848-1914* (2000)

Jacqueline Mariña, *The Cambridge Companion to Friedrich Schleiermacher* (2005)

Karl Barth, *Protestant Theology in the Nineteenth Century: Its Background and History* (2002)

James Eglinton and George Harinck (eds), *Neo-Calvinism and the French Revolution* (2014)

Zachary Purvis, *Theology and the University in Nineteenth Century Germany* (2017)

<u>MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes</u> <i>In order to measure the success of the MDiv curriculum, RTS has defined the following as the intended outcomes of the student learning process. Each course contributes to these overall outcomes. This rubric shows the contribution of this course to the MDiv outcomes.</i> <small>*As the MDiv is the core degree at RTS, the MDiv rubric will be used in this syllabus.</small>		<u>Rubric</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong • Moderate • Minimal • None 	<u>Mini-Justification</u>
Articulation (oral & written)	Broadly understands and articulates knowledge, both oral and written, of essential biblical, theological, historical, and cultural/global information, including details, concepts, and frameworks. Also includes ability to preach and teach the meaning of Scripture to both heart and mind with clarity and enthusiasm.	Strong	Students will read and discuss a selection of complex primary sources, and will use these to better understand the development of Modern Theology as an historical umbrella term.
Scripture	Significant knowledge of the original meaning of Scripture. Also, the concepts for and skill to research further into the original meaning of Scripture and to	Moderate	By reading a selection of figures from the 19 th and

	apply Scripture to a variety of modern circumstances. (Includes appropriate use of original languages and hermeneutics; and integrates theological, historical, and cultural/global perspectives.)		20 th century 'Modern Theology' movement, students will gain a better understanding of how 19 th century theologians went about reading Scripture.
Reformed Theology	Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards.	Moderate	The course helps students understand a key element of the backdrop to the revival of confessional Reformed theology from the late 19 th century onwards.
Sanctification	Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student's sanctification.	Moderate	Readings help students consider questions of sanctification by exploring a range of starkly different contrasts in late 19 th and early 20 th century theology: from Adolf von Harnack's ultra-minimalist account of the positive message of Christianity, to Herman Bavinck's expansively doxological picture of the theological task.
Worldview	Burning desire to conform all of life to the Word of God. Includes ability to interact within a denominational context, within the broader worldwide church, and with significant public issues.	Strong	The course provides students with historical tools with which to ask whether it is possible to be orthodox in the modern age.
Winsomely Reformed	Embraces a winsomely Reformed ethos. (Includes an appropriate ecumenical spirit with other Christians, especially Evangelicals; a concern to present the Gospel in a God-honoring manner to non-Christians; and a truth-in-love attitude in disagreements.)	Strong	The course predominantly covers theologians beyond confessional Reformed orthodoxy. It teaches students to approach those figures with appropriate intellectual curiosity, while using that knowledge to better understand the development of Reformed orthodoxy in the 20th century.
Pastoral Ministry	Ability to minister the Word of God to hearts and lives of both church and unchurched, to include preaching, teaching, leading in worship, leading and	Minimal	Many intuitions common to Western

	shepherding the local congregation, aiding in spiritual maturity, concern for non-Christians.		culture today are simplified versions of the ideas offered by figures studied in this course.
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