

# INDS/THEO 637: READING KIERKEGAARD TODAY HIS VISION, MESSAGE, AND CHALLENGE

C. Stephen Evans

July 11 – 15; 8:30 – 11:30 am

1 or 2 graduate credit hours; or 1 audit hour

In-person, live online & Recorded

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

Kierkegaard's writings, while influential, are not sufficiently appreciated by Christians. He has much to say both to secular society and to the Church. This course will look at both messages, which are rooted in his vision of human existence as lived "before God." Kierkegaard can help us see that modernity's view of itself as having "outgrown" religious faith is rooted, not in intellectual superiority, but in an anemic understanding of the role of the imagination and the emotions in human life. However, he also provides the basis for a critical view of "postmodernism" if this is understood as implying a rejection of objective truth. Today he helps us see what is wrong with "Christendom" and its contemporary offshoot, Christian nationalism.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

**Upon the successful completion of this course, students should have a clearer understanding of:**

1. Have a basic understanding of Kierkegaard's most important writings, and why they are important.
2. Understand Kierkegaard's relevance to contemporary issues, including the perennial issue of how the church should relate to human cultures.
3. Have a grasp of some of Kierkegaard's most important insights, including the following: (1) Kierkegaard's view of human selfhood as something to be achieved "before God." (2) Kierkegaard's view of the relation between faith and history. (3) Kierkegaard's view of the role of emotions in Christian life.

## COURSE OUTLINE

- Day 1 July 11** Session 1: Introduction to Kierkegaard's life and writings; Session 2: Introduction to major themes in Kierkegaard's authorship. Includes concepts of the "three spheres of existence," indirect communication, subjectivity and existence, faith and paradox.
- Day 2 July 12** Session 3: Kierkegaard's concept of the esthetic life: immediacy and reflection; Session 4: The ethical life and the beginning of selfhood: choice and responsibility.
- Day 3 July 13** Session 5: The limits of the ethical life: why being good isn't good enough; Session 6: Faith and the incarnation: How do we come to know God?
- Day 4 July 14** Session 7: Truth as subjectivity but not subjective; Session 8: Sin, despair, and selfhood.
- Day 5 July 15** Session 9: The Christian ethic of neighbor love: duty and divine commands; Session 10: Concluding discussion: Christian thinking in a postmodern world

## REQUIRED TEXTS

Textbook: *The Essential Kierkegaard*, ed. by Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000). ISBN 0691019401.

### Recommended Reading

C. Stephen Evans, *Kierkegaard on Faith and the Self: Collected Essays* (Waco, Texas: Baylor University Press, 2006)

C. Stephen Evans, *Kierkegaard: An Introduction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009)

Looking for textbooks? Please [contact](#) the Regent Bookstore, or check out their [direct-fulfillment website, Aerio](#).

Note: Aerio prices are in USD.

Please Note: This Course Information Sheet is meant to assist in selecting courses. The official syllabus should be consulted for more detailed information. A full syllabus with drop deadlines, policies, and course assignment details is available on Moodle for registered students: [moodle.regent-college.edu/login](https://moodle.regent-college.edu/login)

