Reflection Prompts:

**Week 1**

**Hegel’s ‘Philosophical History’**

- After reading Hegel, read the online handout on Christian ‘Logos’. How does Hegel’s notion of ‘Reason’ or ‘Spirit’ [Geist] compare and contrast with ‘Logos’?
- Hegel argues that the history of the world is an essentially rational process aimed at actualizing freedom. Is Hegel’s argument convincing? See especially his account of “Oriental”, Greek and German Christian notions of freedom.
- Hegel also maintains that world history is intrinsically related to God’s own emerging Nature and Purpose. What objections are there, if any, with too closely relating God’s Nature and Will to the course of world history? Can those objections be met?
- Hegel also suggests that it is the philosopher’s task to translate “the language of Religion into that of Thought”. Explain what you think this task amounts to for Hegel. Is this a legitimate task for 21st century Christian philosophers? Why or why not?
- What does the term ‘freedom’ mean for Hegel? How does this differ from your own notion of freedom?

**Hegel’s ‘The Nature of Historical Change’**

- Hegel’s metaphor of the Phoenix is intended to help illuminate the dynamic process(es) that Geist undergoes in its efforts to actualize itself as a free, self-conscious being. Explain his use of this metaphor. Do you agree that the development of an individual or a Nation requires the ‘destruction’ of its previous objective manifestations? Why or why not?
- On p. 83, Hegel reports what ‘Every Englishman will say’ about the early 19th century Spirit of the English People. He also claims that an individual must take on the Spirit of their nation in order “to have a definite place in the world—to be something”. Is there a collective Spirit of 21st century America? If so, what is it? If not, why not? Do you agree that nations and individual citizens flourish only insofar as they forge a collective identity and project?