04M513 – THE CHRISTIAN LIFE  
Reformed Theological Seminary  
Fall Term, 2014  
Professor: Samuel H. Larsen, D.Min., Ph.D.  
(rev. 7/17/14)

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

2 hours. The purpose of this course is to assist the student in growth toward a deeper relationship with the Lord and more mature Christian interaction with the world in which we live.

COURSE OBJECTIVES: Students will demonstrate the following understandings, motivations, and skills:

1. Students will be able to trace biblical and theological foundations for personal growth in Christian maturity.

2. Students will be able to identify key issues and obstacles to their growth in personal holiness and love for Christ and others.

3. Students will demonstrate an understanding of important principles of maintaining balance with respect to attending to their personal devotional life, family needs and discipleship, ministry demands, and the needs of the world around them.

4. Students will demonstrate an awareness of, and productive reflection upon, their own strengths and weaknesses and their areas of personal needed growth in Christ.

REQUIRED TEXTS: (1440 pp.)


DeYoung, Kevin. 2012. The Hole in Our Holiness. Wheaton: Crossway. (192 pp.)


**COURSE ASSESSMENT:**

1. Class participation (includes attendance and contribution to class discussions): 20%

2. Course project (see below) as previously approved by the professor: 40% (due Friday, December 4, 2014)

Course project options:

A. Thematic personal spiritual journal (at least four one-paragraph entries per week for eight weeks) [“Do I discern a **spiritual and ministry trajectory** in my life with respect to the theme I am engaging, such as forgiveness, eagerness to share Christ, being a “light” in my own neighborhood or workplace, opening my eyes to the marginalized, etc.? What biblical instructions inform my understanding and actions, how am I endeavoring to apply those in my life, and what emerging outcomes may I begin to discern?”]

B. Personal family and ministry inventory and reflective paper (12-15 pages plus appendices) [“What unmet needs do I discern in balancing my **marriage, family and ministry**? What does God say about them in His Word? How does the Gospel apply to how I approach them? What will I now do, and where do I start?”]

C. Personal devotional journal from daily Bible readings and reflection (at least four one-paragraph entries per week for eight weeks) [“What is God addressing in my **own life and relationships** in order to conform me to Christ? (for example, my lack of self-discipline, or perfectionism, or need for anger management, etc.) How am I responding to Him?”]

NOTE: Spelling and grammar of written submissions must be accurate and will be taken into account in course assessment. Format must comply with the standards of Reformed Theological Seminary. Submissions which are submitted late will be reduced one letter grade for each week or partial week beyond the date due. Course work turned in after December 4, 2014, will not be accepted without an extension granted in accordance with RTS/Atlanta’s academic policy.

**Extension Policy**

All assignments and exams are to be completed by the deadlines announced in this syllabus or in class.

Extensions for assignments and exams due within the normal duration of the course must be approved beforehand by the Professor. Extensions of two weeks or less beyond the date of the
last deadline for the course must be approved beforehand by the Professor. A grade penalty may be assessed.

Extensions of greater than two weeks but not more than six weeks beyond the last deadline for the course may be granted in extenuating circumstances (i.e. illness, family emergency). For an extension of more than two weeks the student must request an Extension Request Form from the Student Services Office. The request must be approved by the Professor and the Academic Dean. A grade penalty may be assessed. (RTS Catalog p. 42 and RTS Atlanta Student Handbook p. 14)

Any incompletes not cleared six weeks after the last published due date for course work will be converted to a failing grade. Professors may have the failing grade changed to a passing grade by request. (RTS Catalog p. 42)

**OFFICE HOURS:**

Dr. Larsen is available before or after class by appointment and may also be contacted by e-mail (slarsen@rts.edu).

**COURSE SCHEDULE:**

Classes meet for eight three-hour sessions (Thursday evenings as scheduled) during the Fall semester, 2014, at the RTS/Atlanta campus. (Students are encouraged to interact with one another and with the professor during class breaks.)

(Note: This course is taught on a graduate level. Readings are supplemental to the Lectures and provide either background or amplifying viewpoints or information. Lectures do not necessarily reprise all the readings, nor are they scheduled with a corresponding list of particular pages in assigned texts, although suggested texts for preparation for each topic are suggested below. Required Reading must be completed by the end of the course.)

**Intended Class Lecture Schedule** (may be adjusted):

**Integrating theme:** “What I wish I had been taught about the Christian Life while at Seminary”

Session # (Date) & Topic(s):

1 (August 21) – Why take this course? The privilege and perils of Seminary study. *(How to Stay Christian in Seminary)*

2 (September 4) – How narrow (or broad) should be my theological “category width”? Challenges for Christian unity. *(Mere Christianity)*
3 (September 11) – What is “winsomely Reformed”? (putting Eph. 4:15 into practice) (*The Mark of the Christian*)

4 (September 18) – Passionate love for Christ, for His Word, and for His People. (“Will I die for them?”) (*The Mark of the Christian*)

5 (September 25) – Home “vs.” ministry? (Must they be a dichotomy?) (*The Pastor’s Family*)

6 (October 16) – Burnout!! Staying refreshed in my calling. (*The Hole in Our Holiness*)

7 (October 23) – What do holiness, freedom, usefulness, and a disciplined lifestyle have to do with each other? (*The Discipline of Grace*)

8 (October 30) – Sharing the Gospel authentically. (*Counterfeit Gods*)