ST 1, The Doctrines of God and Scripture

Reformed Theological Seminary
Washington D.C.
Revised

6ST 510 (3 Credits)
Fall 2014
Wednesday 7PM-10PM, September 3—December 17 (we will not hold class on October 8 or November 26)

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703-408-3157

Office hours Wednesdays 1-2PM or by phone, 703/408-3157. I’ll buy you a cup of coffee.

Audio recording is allowed, but not sharing recording outside of the class.

Goals:

1. To give reasons for confidence in the absolute authority of Scripture as God’s Word.

2. To show that disbelief and disobedience to Scripture are inconsistent with faith in Jesus Christ.

3. To present God as covenant Lord and ways of speaking about him consistent with his Lordship as revealed in Scripture.

1 Taking the systematic theology courses in sequence—though not required—will improve your ability in theology and your grades. However, first-time students may like to look at S. Grenz, Pocket Dictionary of Theological Terms.
4. To elicit a greater love for our Triune God and his Word.

Texts


*John M. Frame, *The Doctrine of the Word of God* (DWG)

Mark D. Futato, “Because It Had Rained,” found at http://faculty.gordon.edu/hu/bi/Ted_Hildebrandt/OTeSources/01-Genesis/Text/Articles-Books/Futato_RainGen2_WTJ.pdf. This is also available other places on the web.

Richard B. Gaffin, “Some Epistemological Reflections on 1 Cor 2:6-16” (on the course homepage).


Howard Griffith, “The Churchly Theology of Basil’s De Spiritu Sancto” (on the course homepage).

Scott Oliphint, “Dripping Like a Leaky Faucet,”


*The Westminster Shorter Catechism* (SC).


* You may wish to purchase these titles.

Assignments (1-6)

Completed reading 20%, Final Exam 60%, Book Review 1, 10%, Book Review 2, 10%.

1. Class attendance is required. I will not call the roll, but students often late or absent without excuse will be penalized.

2. You are asked to complete all reading assignments by the dates indicated below. I will quiz you about them in class, using some of the questions and terms from “The Doctrine of God Study Guide,” on the course homepage.
Completed reading will be worth 20% of your final grade. I will ask, on the final exam, how much of it you completed.

For each week’s assignment, I have listed recommended readings below the dotted line, but these are not required. They are the next things I recommend on the topic.

Weekly Assignments

**September 3**  Introduction to the Doctrine of God

DG, Chapters 1-7; WC 1.1; SC 1-3.

HB 2, Editor’s Introduction, Chapters 1-2.

**September 10**  God’s Names

DG, Chapters 17-19; WC 2.1-2; SC 1-2.

HB 2, Chapter 3; R. Gaffin, “Some Epistemological Reflections on 1 Cor 2:6-16” (on the course homepage).

**September 17**  God’s Incommunicable Attributes

DG, Chapters 23-26; WC 2.1-2; SC 4.

HB 2, Chapter 4; Frame, “Does the Bible Affirm Open Theism?” (on the course homepage).

**September 24**  God’s Communicable Attributes

DG, Chapters 20-22.

HB 2, Chapter 5.

**October 1**  TBA

(October 8, Reading Week)

**October 15**  The Holy Trinity

DG, Chapters 27-29; WC 2.3; SC 5-6; Griffith, “The Churchly Theology of Basil’s De Spiritu Sancto” (on the course homepage).
October 22  God’s Eternal Decree

DG, Chapter 16; WC 3; SC 7.

October 29  Creation

DG, Chapter 15; Futato, “Because It Had Rained;” WC 4; SC 8-10.

Review of Volf due.

November 5  God’s Providence

DG, Chapters 8-9, 13-14; WC 5; SC 11.

November 12  The Islamic Doctrine of God

Brown, A New Introduction to Islam, chapter 11 (on reserve); Richard B. Gaffin, “Some Epistemological Reflections on 1 Cor 2:6-16” (on the course homepage).


November 19  Special Revelation, Scripture and The Canon


Cornelius Van Til, “Nature and Scripture” (on the course homepage); M. Kruger, Canon Revisited; R. Gaffin, “NT as Canon” (on the course homepage).
**December 3**  The Inspiration of Holy Scripture

DWG, Chapters 23-25.

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**December 10**  The Inerrancy, Authority, Necessity, Clarity, and Sufficiency of Holy Scripture

Review of Poythress due.

DWG, Chapters 26-34 and 39-46; WC 1.6-10.

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N. Geisler, ed., Inerrancy; Vern S. Poythress, Inerrancy and Worldview and Inerrancy and the Gospels.

**December 17**  Final Exam in class.

3. Final Exam, on the reading and lectures. This 3-hour exam will be given in class on December 17th. It will be worth 60% of your final grade. I will put a study guide on the course homepage.

4. Book Review 1, a five-page (no more, no less) critique of Miroslav Volf, Allah: A Christian Response, from an orthodox Reformed perspective is due at the beginning of class on October 29th. Your review should be measured in tone and display a serious engagement with Volf’s various lines of argument. It will be worth 10% of your grade.

5. Book Review 2, a five-page (no more, no less) response to either Vern S. Poythress, Inerrancy and Worldview or Inerrancy and the Gospels is due at the beginning of class on December 10th. (Both books are valuable for recommending the faith. Inerrancy and Worldview is oriented toward a series of general apologetic issues, and how these shape one’s doctrine of Scripture. Inerrancy and the Gospels answers many current questions about how the gospel accounts can be true.) Your review should be measured in tone and display a serious engagement with Poythress’s various lines of argument. It will be worth 10% of your grade.

You must use standard paper conventions found in Kate Turabian, A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations. (I will not grade the paper if you ignore this.) There is a quick version at http://www.press.uchicago.edu/books/turabian/turabian_citationguide.html. Please include a
title page with your name, but **omit headers or footers that include your name.** You may collect your graded papers at the RTS office.

I do not accept late assignments.

6. If you are in the M.Div. program, memorize and recite (to someone) Westminster Shorter Catechism, questions 1-11.² I will ask about this on the Final Exam.

**Approximate Time Investment**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Hours</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lectures</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading (includes reading for the papers)</td>
<td>64 (@ 20 pages/hour)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memorization</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Papers</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final exam (3 hours, plus preparation)</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>131</strong></td>
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These are titles that almost made the required list for this course:

Herman Bavinck, God and Creation, Reformed Dogmatics, Volume 2 (HB 2). I have used this masterpiece as required reading many times.


Richard B. Gaffin, *The Word of God in Servant-Form: Abraham Kuyper and Herman Bavinck on the Doctrine of Scripture*. Dr. Gaffin answers the contention that these Dutch theologians opposed the inerrancy of Holy Scripture.

Michael J. Kruger, *Canon Revisited: Establishing the Origins and Authority of the New Testament Books*. The outstanding presentation, both theologically and historically satisfying, of how God gave us the NT.


Vern S. Poythress, *Inerrancy and Worldview: Answering Modern Challenges to the Bible*.


B.B. Warfield, *The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible*. Classic argument, unanswered since its publication, for inspiration.

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² This will help you to prepare for the *Shorter Catechism* Exam required for graduation.
Nicholas T. Wright, *The Last Word: Scripture and the Authority of God – Getting Beyond the Bible Wars*. The only non-orthodox volume on this list. Highly influential in American evangelicalism.

**Course Objectives Related to M Div* Student Learning Outcomes**

**Course:** 06ST 510, *The Doctrines of God and Scripture*

**Professor:** Howard Griffith

**Campus:** Washington DC

**Date:** Fall 2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>M Div* Student Learning Outcomes</th>
<th>Rubric</th>
<th>Mini-Justification</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Articulation</strong> (oral &amp; written)</td>
<td>Broadly understands and articulates knowledge, both oral and written, of essential biblical, theological, historical, and cultural/global information, including details, concepts, and frameworks.</td>
<td>Strong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Scripture</strong></td>
<td>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 apply Scripture to a variety of modern circumstances. (Includes appropriate use of original languages and hermeneutics; and integrates theological, historical, and cultural/global perspectives.)</td>
<td>Strong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reformed Theology</strong></td>
<td>Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards.</td>
<td>Strong</td>
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<td><strong>Sanctification</strong></td>
<td>Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student’s sanctification.</td>
<td>Strong</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Desire for</strong></td>
<td>Burning desire to conform all of life to the Word of God.</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
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*As the M Div is the core degree at RTS, the M Div rubric will be used in this syllabus.*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Worldview</th>
<th>Winsomely Reformed</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>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.)</td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>I will seek to show the value of Reformed theology for the benefit of all Christians.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Preach</td>
<td>Ability to preach and teach the meaning of Scripture to both heart and mind with clarity and enthusiasm.</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>I urge these, but do not require the students to do preaching.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worship</td>
<td>Knowledgeable of historic and modern Christian-worship forms; and ability to construct and skill to lead a worship service.</td>
<td>None</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shepherd</td>
<td>Ability to shepherd the local congregation: aiding in spiritual maturity; promoting use of gifts and callings; and encouraging a concern for non-Christians, both in America and worldwide.</td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>Stress on the importance of these issues as people deal with life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church/World</td>
<td>Ability to interact within a denominational context, within the broader worldwide church, and with significant public issues.</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>We do consider common grace—thus the value of God’s mercy expressed beyond the elect.</td>
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