ST 515: Scripture, Theology Proper, Anthropology

Reformed Theological Seminary
Washington, D. C.
Spring 2016

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Course description

This course explores biblical doctrine from a systematic perspective. Topics include Scripture, theology proper, and anthropology (3 hours).

Textbooks


Assignments

1. **Psalms report (5 % of final grade):** Students are required to read Psalms 1, 8, 51, 104, 119, and 145 slowly and prayerfully at least four times over the course of the semester. Students will provide a reading report on the second exam indicating whether or not they have done so.
2. **Reading report (20 % of final grade):** Attached to the second exam, students will turn in a reading report stating the percentage of the assigned readings that they have read with reasonable care over the course of the semester.

3. **Exams (50 % of final grade):** Students will take two exams which will test your critical grasp of doctrinal topics covered in class lectures, readings, and the Reformed confessions as well as your ability to communicate doctrinal topics in a clear and cogent manner.

4. **Integrative book review (10 % of final grade):** Drawing upon knowledge gained from course lectures and other assigned readings, students will offer a five page (no more, no less) critical book review of Miroslav Volf, *Allah: A Christian Response*. Your review should be measured in tone and display a serious engagement with various lines of argument.¹

5. **God of the Psalms paper (15 % of final grade):** Students will write a short theological essay (8-10 pages) on the ways in which one psalm of their choice presents God (his names, attributes, actions, etc.). Draw upon knowledge gained from lectures and readings about how the Bible “names” God (e.g., literal and metaphorical language, absolute and relative descriptions, the “three ways” of causation, eminence, and negation, etc.). The paper should contain a clear thesis statement, follow a coherent outline, and address both theological and practical dimensions of the doctrine of God as presented in your psalm.

**Academic Policies**

1. **Late assignments:** Apart from exceptional circumstances, I will not accept late assignments for credit.

2. **Plagiarism:** Plagiarism, whether intentional or unintentional, will result in a failing grade for the course.

**Schedule of assignments**

*February 26-27: First class meeting*

Read Webster, “What Makes Theology Theological?”

Read Ward, *Words of Life*

*March 18-19: Second class meeting*


*April 4: The following assignments should be uploaded in Canvas*

¹ For assistance in how to write a critical book review, see Barzun handout available from professor.
Integrative book review

Exam 1

April 8-9: Third class meeting

Read Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, chaps. 7-10, 14

April 29-30: Fourth class meeting

Read Vos, *Reformed Dogmatics*, Vol. 2

Read Madueme, “‘The Most Vulnerable Part of the Whole Christian Account’: Original Sin and Modern Science”

May 23: The following assignments should be uploaded in Canvas

Psalms report

Reading report

God of the Psalms paper

Exam 2

Select bibliography

In addition to the standard systematic theological works of Peter Lombard, Thomas Aquinas, John Calvin, Francis Turretin, Charles Hodge, Herman Bavinck, Karl Barth, etc., the following books will assist further study of the doctrinal topics discussed in this course.


Augustine, *The Trinity* (New City Press, 1991)

Basil the Great, *Hexaemeron* NPNF, Second Series, Vol. 8 (Eerdmans, n.d.)


Martin Luther, *The Bondage of the Will* (Revell, 1957)


Josef Pieper, *Happiness and Contemplation* (St. Augustine’s Press, 1998)


Dolf te Velde, ed., *Synopsis of a Purer Theology* (Brill, 2015–)


John Webster, *The Domain of the Word: Scripture and Theological Reason* (Bloomsbury, 2014)
Course Objectives Related to MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes

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<tr>
<th>MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes</th>
<th>Rubric</th>
<th>Mini-Justification</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Articulation (oral &amp; written)</strong></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>
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<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>
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<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>Moderate</td>
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<td><strong>Desire for Worldview</strong></td>
<td>Burning desire to conform all of life to the Word of God.</td>
<td>Strong</td>
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<td><strong>Winsomely Reformed</strong></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>
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<td><strong>Preach</strong></td>
<td>Ability to preach and teach the meaning of Scripture to both heart and mind with clarity and enthusiasm.</td>
<td>Minimal</td>
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<td><strong>Worship</strong></td>
<td>Knowledgeable of historic and modern Christian-worship forms; and ability to construct and skill to lead a worship service.</td>
<td>Minimal</td>
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<td><strong>Shepherd</strong></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>None</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Church/World</strong></td>
<td>Ability to interact within a denominational context, within the broader worldwide church, and with significant public issues.</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
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