
REFORMED  THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
DISTANCE EDUCATION



SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY:
CHRISTOLOGY, SOTERIOLOGY, ESCHATOLOGY
DR. DOUGLAS F. KELLY



Course Overview

Table of Contents:

Course Overview	Grades
Required Textbooks	Lessons
Meet the Professors	Research Paper
Student Learning Objectives	

Course Description:

OST517 Systematic Theology: Christology, Soteriology, Eschatology, 3 hours

Lecturing Professor: Dr. Douglas F. Kelly

Professor of Record: Dr. Mark I. McDowell

This course explores biblical doctrine from a systematic perspective. Topics include Christology, Soteriology, and Eschatology..

Course Objectives:

To familiarize the student with the theological categories of Christology, Soteriology, and Eschatology:

- For Christology, to introduce the doctrines of incarnation, the hypostatic union, and Christ's humiliation and exaltation.
- For Soteriology, to outline and explain the Ordo Salutis; included in this are discussions on the union of Christ with his people, the nature of effectual calling and regeneration, and perseverance of the saints.
- For Eschatology, to understand the exegetical basis and theological implications of Last Things; included in this are discussions of death, the intermediate state, the final rest, the final condemnation, and the Return of Christ.

Required Textbooks:

The Bible

Berkhof, Louis. *Systematic Theology*. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm B. Eerdmans Publ. Co., 1996.

Calvin, John. *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm B. Eerdmans Publ. Co., 1975.

Murray, John. *Redemption Accomplished and Applied*. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm .B. Eerdmans Publ. Co., 1992.

Torrance, Thomas F. *Incarnation: The Person and Life of Christ*. ed. Robert T. Walker. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2008.

The Westminster Confession of Faith. Greenwood, SC: The Attic Press, Inc., 1979.

[These books may also be available in ebook format through various retailers]

Online Student Handbook:

The [Online Student Handbook](#) has been designed to assist you in successfully navigating the Distance Education experience, whether you are taking a single course or pursuing a certificate or degree program. In it you will find valuable information, step-by-step instructions, study helps, and essential forms to guide you through every aspect of your distance education opportunity from registration to graduation. Please use this resource as your first-stop reference manual.

Summary of Requirements:

1. Listen to all recorded [Lectures](#)
2. Complete all [Readings](#)
3. Participate in [Forum Discussions](#) (with other students and the professor)
4. Take the [Midterm Exam](#)
5. Take the [Final Exam](#)
6. Submit [Research Paper](#)
7. Submit [Mentor Report or Course Application Paper](#)

Meet the Professors

Lecturing Professor:



Dr. Douglas Kelly is a scholar marked by profound piety as exemplified in volumes such as *If God Already Knows*, *Why Pray?* and *Preachers with Power: Four Stalwarts of the South*. His firm grasp of multiple languages and his theological competence are capably demonstrated in translating such works as *Sermons by John Calvin on II Samuel*. He is serving with David Wright of the University of Edinburgh as a general editor for a revision of Calvin's *Old Testament Commentaries*. In addition, he is co-editor for a twenty volume dogmatics series, for which he is writing a volume on the Trinity. He has written *Creation and Change: Genesis 1.1 - 2.4 in the Light of Changing Scientific Paradigms* and *Carolina Scots: An Historical and Genealogical Study of Over 100 Years of Emigration*, and is currently writing a systematic theology.

Professor of Record:



Mark Ian McDowell is associate minister at First Presbyterian Church (ARP) in Columbia, South Carolina where he has served for five years. Mark earned his PhD in Systematic Theology at Kings College, Aberdeen in Scotland in 2012 under the supervision of John Webster. His thesis is a descriptive and textual analysis of Karl Barth's first foray into reformed theology, giving particular attention to Barth's Christology. Mark also received a ThM in Systematic Theology from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in 2006 and a MDiv from RTS Charlotte in 2004. Mark is married to Monica and together they have four boys. Mark is a native of Belfast, Northern Ireland.

Grades

Forum Discussions (15%):

The student is required to interact in two (2) forums:

1. Student-Professor Posts (15 total posts)
 - A. Personal Introduction Forum: The student is required to post a brief personal introduction to the professor/class. Suggested details include your vocation, where you live, your church background, why you chose RTS, and what you hope to gain through the course (1 required post).
 - B. 5 Topical Discussion Q&A Forums: The student is required to answer each topical discussion question with one (1) response. The professor will acknowledge the student's answer and will follow up with a subsequent question to which the student must also answer with one (1) response. Each topical discussion question, therefore, requires two (2) total posts/responses from the student (Total of 5 forums x 2 posts = 10 total posts).
 - C. Student-Professor Forum: The student is required to post four (4) times in this forum. Posts in this forum should focus on course-related content such as research paper topics, lectures and reading assignments, or other academic issues related to the course.
2. Student-Student Forum (5 total posts)

A post may be either a new topic or a response to an already existing topic.

Examinations (Midterm 25%, Final 25%):

There are two examinations for this course. The midterm examination will cover all the lectures and readings from Lessons 1-8. The final examination will cover all the lectures and readings from Lessons 9-17.

The midterm and final exams for this course are to be taken online in the Learning Management System (LMS). Please note that you will need to have a proctor for your exams. Your proctor can be anyone except a relative or current RTS Student. After clicking on the exam link you will be given detailed instructions about the exam. Please read these instructions carefully before entering the exam.

Research Paper (30%):

The student will write and submit a 12-15 page research paper (12 pt. font and double spaced) with appropriate footnoting and bibliography according to Turabian style. See section titled "[Research Paper Instructions](#)" in this syllabus.

Mentor Report OR Course Application Paper (5%):

If you are enrolled in an **RTS Global** degree program, you are required to submit a mentor report at the end of the course. Every portion of the form (goals, summaries, assessments, and signatures) should be filled out completely by both the student and the mentor to receive full credit. You can download the Mentor Report form in your Canvas classroom.

If you are receiving your degree through another **RTS campus** (Orlando, Jackson, Charlotte, et. al.), or are a certificate student, or special student (e.g. from another seminary), you are asked to write a 200-word summary of how you perceive what you have learned in this course will fit into the objectives you have for your ministry, your educational goals, or other objectives you wish to achieve in life. Course Application Papers (CAP) that fall well-short of 200 words will receive a grade deduction.

Assignments:

Best practice for your time management is for you to submit all assignments at the end of the week in which they fall, using the upload links provided in the LMS. All work must be submitted by midnight of the course end date, per your course start letter. You are responsible for turning in all assignments on time; no late submissions are permitted. Any student who needs an extension must get approval from the Registrar prior to that time.

Contact Information:

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Lessons

Lesson One
Old Testament Preparation for the
Incarnation and The Names of Christ

Lesson Two
Important Passages on the
Incarnation

Lesson Three
The Hypostatic Union

Lesson Four
The Patristic Doctrine of Christ

Lesson Five
The Reformed Doctrine of Christ

Lesson Six
The States of Christ

Lesson Seven
Union With Christ

Lesson Eight
Calling

Lesson Nine
Regeneration: Part One

Lesson Ten
Regeneration: Part Two

Lesson Eleven
Conversion

Lesson Twelve
Faith

Lesson Thirteen
Justification

Lesson Fourteen
Sanctification

Lesson Fifteen
Adoption

Lesson Sixteen
Perseverance of the Saints

Lesson Seventeen
Eschatology



Course Structure

Lectures and readings will deal with three major topics:

1. CHRISTOLOGY

We study the person and work of Christ based on exegesis of Scripture with reference to relevant historical church councils and confessions.

2. SOTERIOLOGY

We study the application of Christ's work of redemption, the order of salvation and its benefits. We shall survey the exegetical basis and theological implications of:

- Union with Christ
- Calling
- Regeneration
- Conversion
- Faith
- Justification
- Adoption
- Sanctification
- Perseverance

3. ESCHATOLOGY

We study the exegetical basis and theological implications of the doctrine of Last Things, including:

- Death
- The intermediate state
- The return of Christ
- The resurrection
- The final judgment

Research Paper Instructions

Choose one topic from among the following topic options. Write a 12-15 page paper, utilizing the theological categories presented in this course and demonstrating from how scripture bears upon your subject. Significant interaction with course lectures, notes, and reading is encouraged insofar as they relate to your topic

Your paper should be 12 pt. font and double spaced, formatted according to Turabian style with single spaced 10 pt. font footnotes (not endnotes) and a properly formatted bibliography at the end. Please make sure that your paper has in the first paragraph a clearly presented thesis statement defining the aim and scope of the paper. In addition, your paper should cite at least 8 scholarly sources; 2 of these sources must be academic journal articles. For the purposes of this paper, a scholarly source is a book or article by a recognized expert in the field, not aimed at a popular level for a general audience (Wikipedia is not a scholarly source, but may be useful in locating scholarly sources.). Please consult student services (dess@rts.edu) if you have any doubts about whether a source is scholarly.

It is highly recommended that the student:

- View the Reading and Writing Tips videos before starting their research paper. These videos can be accessed on the course home page by clicking on the light bulb icon labeled Tips.
- Read the Research Paper Formatting Guide document found under Modules in the Course Resources Section.
- Access the Research Paper Helps page found under Modules in the Course Resources Section.
- Use the Historical Theology Sample Paper as a guide for formatting and writing with a clear thesis. This can be found under Modules in the Course Resources Section.
- Discuss with the Professor of Record (by phone, forums, video conference, etc.) their paper topic prior to writing, as the professor of record will be able to guide the student in their writing and help with recommending resources. (For further help with tracking down and acquiring resources please contact the Distance Education librarian David Ponter. His contact information can be found in the Research Paper Helps page.)

Choose from one of the topics below:

1. The Person of Christ in biblical perspective: One of the most promising developments in New Testament studies is the “Early High Christology” movement. Major players in this movement include Richard Bauckham and Larry Hurtado. Engage this movement, or one of its proponents, discussing both its potential contributions and shortcomings for developing a biblical understanding of the Person of Christ.

2. The doctrine of justification: In recent years, certain Protestant scholars and pastors have challenged the traditional Protestant doctrine of justification, suggesting that the Reformers misunderstood Paul's teaching on this topic. Engage one of these contemporary critics (e.g., N. T. Wright, James D. G. Dunn, a proponent of the "Federal Vision") and respond to their criticisms in light of biblical exegesis and the Reformed confessions.

3. The nature of hell: Contemporary evangelicals continue to debate both the possibility and nature of eternal punishment. Debated questions include: Who goes to hell, if anyone? How does our understanding of hell relate to our understanding of God's love and of Christ's atoning work? What is the nature of hell? Does hell involve eternal conscious punishment? Or does hell simply annihilate unbelievers?

Course Objectives Related to Student Learning Outcomes

Course: Systematic Theology: Christology, Soteriology, Eschatology

Professor: Dr. Douglas Kelly

MAR Student Learning Outcomes <i>In order to measure the success of the curriculum, RTS has defined the following as the intended outcomes of the student learning process. Each course contributes to these overall outcomes. This rubric shows the contribution of this course to the outcomes.</i>		Rubric ➤ Strong ➤ Moderate ➤ Minimal ➤ None	Mini-Justification
Articulation (oral & written)	Broadly understands and articulates knowledge, both oral and written, of essential biblical, theological, historical, and cultural/global information, including details, concepts, and frameworks.	Strong	Students will demonstrate knowledge of the material by the completion of several précis assignments and an outline of the Confession of Faith; a cumulative final exam will measure student mastery of the concepts.
Scripture	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.)	Strong	The students will argue from and prove doctrines using Scripture; the student will integrate the application of Scripture to modern circumstances throughout the course.
Reformed Theology	Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards.	Strong	By the completion of the Systematic Theology courses, the student will have a solid foundation and introduction to Reformed Theology as articulated in the Westminster Confession and Catechisms.
Sanctification	Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student's sanctification.	Strong	In addition to a discussion of the interplay between Grace and Obedience in the Christian life, the student will be exhorted to persevere in the grace that saved him.
Desire for Worldview	Burning desire to conform all of life to the Word of God.	Strong	We engage in the "science of living blessedly forever;" through the study of God's word, the student will know how better to apply the Word of God to the world of the 21st Century
Winsomely Reformed/ Evangelistic	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.)	Strong	The Gospel of Jesus Christ, rightly understood, leads those who have been transformed by it, to proclaim it; the Systematic Theology courses are designed so that the student attains a right understanding of that gospel.
Teach	Ability to teach the meaning of Scripture to both heart and mind with clarity and enthusiasm.	Moderate	This course aims to help the man of God rightly apply and divide the word of truth by studying the God who gave us His Scripture.
Church/World	Ability to interact within a denominational context, within the broader worldwide church, and with significant public issues.	Moderate	While ecclesiology is covered a different course, proper theology is essential for good and right doxology.
MAR Specific SLO	An ability to integrate such knowledge and understanding into one's own calling in society	Moderate	By studying the theology taught in God's Word, the man of God is equipped to better use his "gifts and callings," to encourage, reprove, rebuke, and exhort with complete patience and teaching.