

Systematic Theology

Scripture, Theology, and Anthropology

Syllabus

ST515

Fall 2015

Dr. Douglas F. Kelly

Reformed Theological Seminary

Course Overview

Systematic I-ST515

TEXTBOOKS:

The Bible

The Westminster Confession of Faith

Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*

Norman Geisler, ed., *Inerrancy*

Norman Geisler and Abdul Saleeb, *Answering Islam: The Crescent in Light of the Cross*

Herman Bavinck, *The Doctrine of God*

Douglas Kelly, *Creation and Change*

Douglas Kelly, *Systematic Theology, Volume 1*

John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*

STRUCTURE OF THE COURSE:

Lectures and readings will deal with three major topics:

A. RELIGION, REVELATION, AND SCRIPTURE

First, we study the basis of Systematic Theology in God's revelation of Himself. We discuss the capacity God has given us to know Him and thus the origin of religion. Then, we consider general and special revelation, inspiration, inerrancy and perspicuity of Scripture.

Required reading for Religion, Revelation and Scripture:

The Westminster Confession of Faith, chapter 1.

Syllabus material by D. Kelly on "Religious Language and the Canon." P. 17-ff

Norman Geisler, *Inerrancy*, pp. 3-354. You will specifically be tested on chapters 3-5, 7 of Geisler in your take home exam.

B. THEOLOGY PROPER

Here we study the essential nature of God, His knowability, His names and attributes (both communicable and incommunicable). We give special attention to the Scriptural basis and historical development of the doctrine of the Trinity. Next, we discuss the works of God in terms of His decrees, creation and providence.

Required reading for Theology Proper:

1. The Person of God

Douglas Kelly, *Systematic Theology, Vol 1*, Ch. 4, 5, 7, 8, 9 [no appendices required.]

2. The Work of God:

a. Election

Herman Bavinck, *The Doctrine of God*, 337-407.

b. Creation

Douglas Kelly, *Creation and Change*, chapters 1-3.

The Westminster Confession of Faith, chapters 2-4.

Syllabus material by D. Kelly on "Creation."

You will specifically be tested on Kelly, *Systematic Theology, Vol. I.*, chapters 4,5,7,8,9, as well as Kelly, *Creation and Change*, chapters 1,2, and 3 on the take home exam.

C. ANTHROPOLOGY

First, we study the exegetical basis and theological implications of man in his original state (his creation, nature, and relation to God), and man in his state of sin (fall and resultant condition). Second, we consider man in his state of salvation, with stress on the plan of salvation, and in particular, the covenant of grace.

Required reading for Anthropology:

John Calvin, *Institutes*: I. 1-3, 15 (pp. 35-47; 183-196; 241-316).
The Westminster Confession of Faith, chapters 4, 6, 7, 9, 19.

PROCEDURE:

It is our intention to base the content of this survey of doctrine on the exegesis of Scripture. We will be making continual reference to the Reformed Tradition, and will deal with the Patristic heritage where this has particular relevance. Reference will be made to other theological traditions and periods as well. All through, we shall attempt to relate these truths to contemporary life, thought, and ministry.

REQUIREMENTS:

A. **Attend all classes and learn the content conveyed in the lectures.**

B. **Complete the required reading.**

C. **Three exams, each worth 23.75% of the course grade.**

a. A **mid-term exam** covering what has been done up to that point. This exam should last between one and two hours **and will be taken in class on Thursday, October 1, 2014.**

b. A **take-home exam** on your readings in John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*; Norman Geisler, ed., *Inerrancy*; Douglas Kelly, *Systematic Theology, Vol 1*; and Douglas Kelly, *Creation and Change*. **Given out in class Thursday, October 15, 2015 and due at the beginning of class on Thursday, November 12, 2015.**

c. A **final exam**, covering what has been done since the mid-term, **to be taken during finals week**. It should take about two hours, though you may have more time if you wish.

D. **8 -10 page term paper** on topics listed in this syllabus, **worth 23.75% of course grade. Due by 4 PM on Friday, October 2, 2015.**

E. **5 page book review** of Norman Geisler and Abdul Saleeb, *Answering Islam: The Crescent in Light of the Cross*. This review is to be an accurate summary of the book to show that you read it, without merely quoting it; do not just string together quotes or cite large blocks of text instead of truly summarizing. **Worth 5% of course grade. Due at the beginning of class on Thursday, November 19, 2015.**

Term Paper for ST: Scripture, Theology Proper, Anthropology

This paper should be 8-10 pages in length (typed and double-spaced) with appropriate footnoting and bibliography. Do not include a string of long quotations. Make sure you (1) deal with the relevant information competently and fairly to all sides, and (2) interact with the material yourself so that you demonstrate that you have "thought about it theologically." (3) Have a proper introduction and conclusion and a clear structure for your essay. (4) Use good grammar and write clearly. (5) Use 8 sources, and footnote, where appropriate.

Choose 1 out of 5 options.

(1) Prepare an exegetically-based theological paper on relevant sections of the first two chapters of Romans, with special reference to the knowledge of God held by pagans. What are the implications of this knowledge for societal morals, for final judgment, and for the missionary enterprise?

(2) Discuss the central Trinitarian truth of *circumincession* or *perichoresis* for "mutual indwelling"). What does this mean within the Godhead? What are its wider implications for the corporate life of Christians? Be sure to deal with scriptural passages. (You may wish to consult pp. 20-22 of your Systematic Theology I syllabus; T. F. Torrance's *Trinitarian Faith* and John Ziziolas' *Being as Communion*).

(3) Discuss the basic Biblical teaching on marriage as "one flesh" (refer to appropriate Biblical texts such as Genesis 2, Matthew 19, Ephesians 5, etc.). Particularly deal with this current problem: in light of what marriage was designed to be, why do so many of them go astray? Discuss why people are attracted to one another; then why problems in their marriage develop, and especially, how to deal with such problems in light of God's grace and purpose. You may wish to refer to such works as:

R.C. Sproul, *The Intimate Marriage*
L. Crabb, *The Marriage Builder*
E. Worthington, *Counseling Before Marriage*
D. and R. Friesen, *Counseling and Marriage*
H. Hendrix, *Getting the Love You Want*

(4) Compare and contrast the Christian view of God as Triune and the Islamic view of God as one (either unipersonal or an impersonal monad).

(5) Interact with William Vandoodewaard, *The Quest for the Historical Adam*, and give your response as to whether it is important that the historical Adam did or did not exist.

RTS Charlotte Classroom Internet Usage

RTS Charlotte recognizes how essential it is for students to have reliable, campus-wide access to the internet. For that reason, we have made wi-fi available for our student body, not only in the library and student lounges, but also in the classrooms. We know that students need to use the internet to download class materials, access files on the Cloud, and to access other important information.

However, we also recognize that internet access in the classroom provides opportunity for abuse and misuse. Some students have unfortunately used their internet access to engage in many activities that distract them from the classroom lectures (e.g., surfing the web, checking sports scores, playing games). Not only does such activity hamper a student's own seminary education, but it distracts other students who can see their computer screens. In addition, donors and classroom guests (who often sit in the back) can see this inappropriate internet usage, which reflects poorly on RTS.

So, how can these challenges be addressed? One option is to turn off the internet entirely. But, we recognize that this creates problems for students who use it for legitimate reasons. Thus, we prefer to address this problem by appealing to the integrity of the students as ones who are preparing for a lifetime of ministry to Christ and his church. We are asking each student to take personal responsibility for their behavior in this area and to encourage others around them to do the same.

In order to encourage this accountability, and to change the culture of the campus as it pertains to the internet, we are asking each student to sign the pledge below at the beginning of each term. As a pledge, we ask you to sign with integrity and with an honest desire to keep it.

“On my honor as a student at Reformed Theological Seminary, and as a one preparing for the gospel ministry, I pledge that I will use the internet in the classroom only for appropriate class-related activities.”

Signed: _____

Date: _____

**Course Objectives Related to MDiv Student Learning Outcomes
With Mini-Justification**

Course: 3ST515

Professor: Douglas Kelly

Campus: Charlotte

Date: August, 2014

MDiv Student Learning Outcomes

Rubric

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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

Emphasis on learning and articulating foundational truths about God and man.

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

Students not only explain theological truths, but will understand the exegetical process essential to arriving at those truths.

Reformed Theology

Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards.

Strong

While Scripture is the predominant focus of the class, there is also significant emphasis upon reformed theology and the Westminster standards.

Sanctification

Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student's sanctification.

Strong

Students will not only learn theological truths about God, but will also be taught these truths with an emphasis upon personal holiness.

Desire for Worldview

Burning desire to conform all of life to the Word of God.

Moderate

Stresses the relation between who God is as Creator, and who we are as the creation.

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

While other views are considered, engaged, and expounded, this course focuses on Reformed Theology without alienating those who disagree.

Preach

Ability to preach and teach the meaning of Scripture to both heart and mind with clarity and enthusiasm.

Moderate

The content of this class will help students to better exegete the Word, and gives them a framework in which to understand it.

MDiv Student Learning Outcomes

Rubric

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