Systematic Theology
Scripture, Theology Proper, Anthropology

Meeting Information
Meeting Time: Thursdays, 9:00 AM–12:00 PM (August 23 – November 29)
Meeting Place: D1

Contact Information
Prof.: D. Blair Smith (office: lower level in E building)
Office Phone: 704-366-5066 (x4223)
Email: bsmith@rts.edu
Hours: Tuesdays 2:00 PM–4:00 PM and by appointment
Teacher Assistant: Nate Groelsema (ngroelsema@rts.edu)

Course Description
This course will systematically present biblical teaching on the topics of Scripture, God, and Humanity as understood and taught within the Reformed tradition, demonstrating that these formulations (1) represent the proper understanding of Scripture, (2) inherit and carry forward the best of the ancient teachings of the Church, and (3) provide the people of God the doctrine needed in order to thrive as disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ in the twenty-first century.

Course Objectives
1. To base all of our theology in God’s revelation of Himself while highlighting our capacity to know and commune with Him.

2. To give reasons for confidence in the absolute authority of Scripture as God’s inspired, inerrant, and perspicacious Word.

3. To provide the Scriptural basis and historical development of the doctrine of the Trinity as well as communicate the names and attributes of God.

4. To examine the works of God in His decrees, creation, and providence.

5. To study the exegetical basis and theological implications of man in his original state in the image of God and in his state of sin after the Fall.
**Texts and Abbreviations**

*Summary (required)*

**RD:** Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics: Abridged in One Volume* (pp. 3-110; 147-390)

**ICR:** John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (Battles Translation: pp. 35-47; 183-196)

**ST:** Douglas F. Kelly, *Systematic Theology, Volume 1: The God Who is the Holy Trinity* (pp. 315-385; 447-518)

*Confession (required)*

**WCF:** *The Westminster Confession of Faith* (chapters 1-4, 6, 7, 9, 19)

*Supplemental Readings (required)*

**CC:** Douglas Kelly, *Creation and Change: Genesis 1:1 – 2:4 in the Light of Changing Scientific Paradigms* (We will be reading out of the Revised & Updated version published in 2017), 9-74 (chapters 1-3).

**CPA:** *Class Packet on Anthropology (Available on Canvas)*

**CPS:** *Class Packet on Scripture (Available on Canvas)*

**CPT:** *Class Packet on the Trinity (Available on Canvas)*

*Recommended Readings*

In addition to systematic theological works that would be helpful to consult, such as those by Turretin, Hodge, Berkhof, Frame, and Bray, the following books will assist further study of the doctrinal topics discussed in this course.

- Richard Gaffin, *No Adam, No Gospel Adam and the History of Redemption*
- Stephen Holmes, *The Quest for the Trinity: The Doctrine of God in Scripture, History, and Modernity*
- Martin Luther, *The Bondage of the Will*
- Hans Madueme, “‘The Most Vulnerable Part of the Whole Christian Account’: Original Sin and Modern Science” in *Adam, the Fall, and Original Sin: Theological, Biblical, and Scientific Perspectives* (pp. 225-249)
- John Murray, *The Imputation of Adam’s Sin*
- Fred Sanders, *The Deep Things of God: How the Trinity Changes Everything*
- ________, *The Triune God (New Studies in Dogmatics)*
Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *The Drama of Doctrine: A Canonical-Linguistic Approach to Christian Theology*


B. B. Warfield, *The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible*


__________. *The Domain of the Word: Scripture and Theological Reason*

---

**Requirements**

1. **Attend and be ready to participate in every class.**

2. **Weekly Reading Response (10%)**
   Students will upload to Canvas by noon of the day before class meets (Wednesday) a document containing *two elements*: (1) three quotes from the week’s required reading, which you found interesting or challenging. You are also to provide (2) a 200 word response (approximately 12 typed lines) to one of the three listed quotes. The quote should not be included in the response. This response is an opportunity to interact with the idea and/or author in a critical (positive or negative or questioning) manner.

3. **Reading report (10%)**
   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.

4. **Term Paper (30%)**
   Students will write an 8-12 page term paper (typed and double-spaced) with appropriate footnoting and bibliography. Make sure you (1) present a clear thesis; (2) have a proper introduction and conclusion and a clear structure for your essay; (3) deal with the relevant information competently and fairly to all sides; (4) where necessary, engage primary-sources; (5) offer critical analysis (and not merely summary) of the positions and views you engage; (6) where relevant, consider the implications and significance of your investigation for the life of the church; (7) use Turabian formatting; and (8) use at least 8 scholarly sources. If it would be helpful, please consult with the professor on initial bibliography. Your paper should be on one of the following topics:
   a. Evaluate and critically engage (including biblical exegesis and theological rationale) a recent proposal for adjusting the traditional evangelical doctrine of Scripture. Some authors to consider: Carlos Bovell, Peter Enns, A.T.B. McGowan, John Walton, and N.T. Wright.
b. Explore the formation of doctrine, analyzing the relationship between biblical exegesis and systematic theology. Reflect on how doctrine and exegesis are integrated or ought to be integrated so that the former is firmly rooted in the latter.

c. Discuss the doctrine of *circumincession* or *perichoresis* or ‘mutual indwelling’ within Trinitarian theology. What is its biblical basis, historical development, theological import, and practical relevance (if any)?

d. Describe the resources the doctrine of God’s providence holds for understanding the blessings and difficulties of one’s own past. How can this be effectively utilized in personal spirituality as well as the discipleship and counseling of others?

e. Explain what resources Christian anthropology provides for thinking through current issues in human sexuality. These resources could be found in our doctrine of Creation, theological reflection upon the *imago dei*, the New Testament, and natural theology. You can also suggest ways our theological anthropology needs to be bolstered in order to address the present (and coming) challenges.

f. Evaluate and critically engage (including biblical exegesis and theological rationale) the supposed problems evolutionary theory poses for the doctrine of Original Sin. Some authors to consider: Denis Alexander, Henri Blocher, Oliver Crisp, Peter Enns, Ian McFarland, Ted Peters, and Gregory Peterson.

5. Exams (50%)

Students will take two exams which will test your grasp of doctrinal topics covered in class lectures and readings as well as your ability to communicate doctrinal topics in a clear and cogent manner.

**On Laptops and Smartphones in Class**

It is my strong recommendation that you take notes by hand using the hardcopy outlines I will provide before class. If you have an equally strong inclination to use your laptop, I require you to put your word processing program in “full screen” mode or use the “do not disturb” function so that other applications on your computer do not grab your attention (Facebook, Twitter, etc.).

Please keep your smartphone in your pocket on vibrate. If you do not have a pocket, put it facedown on your desk. Only check them on breaks or if you are receiving repeated notifications indicating an emergency.
Schedule, Reading Schedule, and Assignments

Class 1 – Thursday, Aug 23
Topic: Introduction: the Knowledge of God and His Word
RD: pp. 3-62
ICR: pp. 35-47
Eugene H. Peterson, “The Forbidding Discipline of Spiritual Reading” and “The Holy Family at Table with Holy Scripture” in Eat This Book: A Conversation in the Art of Spiritual Reading (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2006), 1-22 (chapters 1-2).
*Other than RD, these should be read before the first day of class. The Bavinck reading is on theological prolegomena. Feel free to spread it over the coming weeks of the class. All must be read by the Final Exam, of course.

Class 2 – Thursday, Aug 30
Topic: Revelation & Scripture
RD: pp. 62-89
WCF: Chapter 1
J.I. Packer, “Authority” and “Scripture” in “Fundamentalism” and the Word of God (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1958), 41-114 (chapters 3-4).
*Assignment: Reading Response 1

Class 3 – Thursday, Sept 6
Topic: Scripture & Canon
RD: pp. 90-110


*Assignment: Reading Response 2

Class 4 – Thursday, Sept 13

Topic: The Lordship & Names of God
RD: pp. 147-186
ST: pp. 315-385
WCF: Chapter 2

*Assignment: Reading Response 3

Class 5 – Thursday, Sept 20

Topic: The Doctrine of the Trinity 1
RD: pp. 217-245


*Assignment: Reading Response 4

Class 6 – Thursday, Sept 27

Topic: The Doctrine of the Trinity 2
ST: pp. 447-518

*Assignment: Reading Response 5

Class 7 – Thursday, Oct 4

Topic: The Attributes of God
RD: pp. 186-216
*Assignment: Reading Response 6

Oct 11 – FALL BREAK – No Class

Class 8 – Thursday, Oct 18
Topic: *The Works of God (The Divine Decrees)*
RD: pp. 245-262
WCF: Chapter 3

*Take Midterm Exam in the Library between Oct 15-19.*

Class 9 – Thursday, Oct 25
Topic: *The Works of God (Creation & Providence)*
RD: pp. 263-307
CC: pp. 9-74
WCF: Chapters 4-5, 9
*Assignment: Reading Response 7

Class 10 – Thursday, Nov 1
Topic: *Anthropology & the Image of God*
RD: pp. 311-339
ICR: 183-196
*Assignment: Reading Response 8

Class 11 – Thursday, Nov 8
Topic: *Anthropology & Sin*
RD: pp. 340-368
WCF: Chapter 6, 19

*Assignment: Reading Response 9

Nov 15 – ETS Week – No Class

Nov 22 – Thanksgiving – No Class

Class 12 – Thursday, Nov 29
Topic: The Consequences of the Sin and the Hope of Humanity
RD: pp. 369-390
WCF: Chapter 7
*Assignment: Term Paper

*The Final Exam will be taken during the exam period: December 6–11.
# Course Objectives Related to MDiv Student Learning Outcomes

**With Mini-Justification**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>MDiv Student Learning Outcomes</strong></th>
<th><strong>Rubric</strong></th>
<th><strong>Mini-Justification</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Articulation (oral &amp; written)</strong></td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>Emphasis on learning and articulating foundational truths about God and man.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<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></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Scripture</strong></td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>Students not only explain theological truths, but will understand the exegetical process essential to arriving at those truths.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<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></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reformed Theology</strong></td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>While Scripture is the predominant focus of the class, there is also significant emphasis upon Reformed Theology and the Westminster standards.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sanctification</strong></td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>Students will not only learn theological truths about God, but will also be taught these truths with an emphasis upon personal holiness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student’s sanctification.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Desire for Worldview</strong></td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Stresses the relation between who God is as Creator, and who we are as the creation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burning desire to conform all of life to the Word of God.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Winsomely Reformed/ Evangelistic</strong></td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>While other views are considered, engaged, and expounded, this course focuses on Reformed Theology without alienating those</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<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></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role</td>
<td>Ability</td>
<td>Level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<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>
</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>N/A</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>Moderate</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>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>