

Table of Contents

STUDENT HANDBOOK.....	1
WELCOME	3
I. STUDENT LIFE	5
A. SPIRITUAL LIFE	5
B. HELP WHEN YOU NEED IT	6
C. STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES.....	6
1. <i>Privacy of Student Records</i>	6
2. <i>Sexual Harassment</i>	7
3. <i>Notice of Nondiscriminatory Enrollment</i>	7
4. <i>Student’s Role and Participation in Institutional Decision Making</i>	7
5. <i>Accreditation Complaint</i>	8
6. <i>Student Conduct</i>	8
7. <i>Student Appeals</i>	8
8. <i>Student Information</i>	9
9. <i>Student Images</i>	9
10. <i>Website</i>	9
D. FINANCIAL PROTECTION FOR STUDENTS.....	9
1. <i>Life Insurance</i>	9
2. <i>Financial Aid</i>	9
II. CAMPUS LIFE	11
A. CAMPUS BUILDING AND GROUNDS	11
1. <i>Firearms</i>	11
2. <i>Children on the Campus</i>	12
B. LIBRARY INFORMATION	12
1. <i>Hours of Operation</i>	12
2. <i>Library Staff</i>	12
3. <i>Locating Books</i>	12
4. <i>Circulation Policy</i>	13
5. <i>Reserve Policy</i>	13
6. <i>Electronic Resources</i>	13
7. <i>ATLA Journal Database</i>	13
8. <i>ATLA Religion Index</i>	13
9. <i>Access</i>	13
10. <i>Other Library Policies</i>	13
11. <i>Inter-Library Loan</i>	14
12. <i>Copier</i>	14
13. <i>Scanner</i>	14
14. <i>IT</i>	14
15. <i>Arrangement of Library</i>	15
C. STUDENT ASSOCIATIONS	15
1. <i>Student Cabinet</i>	15
2. <i>Women’s Ministry</i>	15
3. <i>The Edmiston Center</i>	16



III.	ACADEMIC LIFE.....	17
A.	COURSE INFORMATION	17
1.	<i>Scheduling</i>	17
2.	<i>Class Attendance</i>	17
3.	<i>Pedagogy</i>	18
4.	<i>Tests/exams</i>	18
5.	<i>Extensions</i>	18
6.	<i>Extended Absence</i>	18
7.	<i>Drop/Add</i>	18
8.	<i>Grades</i>	19
9.	<i>Retaking a course</i>	19
B.	ACADEMIC PRACTICES	19
1.	<i>Study Habits</i>	19
2.	<i>Confusion</i>	19
3.	<i>Books</i>	19
4.	<i>Plagiarism</i>	19
5.	<i>Lack of Payment</i>	20
6.	<i>Extraordinary Academic Requests</i>	20
7.	<i>Transcripts</i>	20
8.	<i>Recording of Courses by Students</i>	20
C.	ENGLISH BIBLE EXAM.....	20
D.	WESTMINSTER SHORTER CATECHISM EXAM.....	21
E.	GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS.....	21
F.	FIELD EDUCATION	22
IV.	RTS ATLANTA FACULTY AND STAFF.....	23

On behalf of the faculty and staff at RTS Atlanta, I would like to welcome you to our campus. We are delighted that you chose to study with us and look forward to getting to know you more personally in the months ahead. Let me briefly recommend a few things for you to focus on during your time here at RTS Atlanta. These things will not only help with your preparation now, but they will pay dividends for years to come, no matter where the Lord may call you to go.

1. Get to know the faculty.

The faculty here will, without a doubt, be one of the biggest influences on you during your time with us. Get to know your professors. Ask them to go to lunch or to get some coffee and talk. Participate in faculty prayer groups and faculty reading groups. You will feel like you don't have time for this, especially in the peak of the semester when the stresses of class will inevitably bear down upon you. But, mark my words carefully, you will regret it if you let your time in seminary pass by without getting to know your professors. Outside-of-class time is a big part of the education process that happens unofficially on campus. Take advantage of it.

2. Attend campus lectures, chapels, and conferences.

At various times, we will offer chapel services, special lectures, and even conferences. Again, the pressure of the semester will no doubt tempt you to skip these kinds of "extra" events. But, again, let me encourage you to make time for them, because they are all a part of the education process. Seminary education is about more than intellectual knowledge. It also involves the heart and the whole life. Remember that, as burdens and stresses mount up.

3. Get plugged in and build relationships.

Finally, let me encourage you to get to know your fellow students while you are here. These relationships will not only make your time in seminary more enjoyable and beneficial by giving you a sense of community and even a sounding board to discuss the things you are learning in class, but they will also help you for years after you graduate. Many of my closest friends in ministry are the people I met in seminary. Get involved in the student government association on campus. This will help you meet people and make changes on campus to allow us better to serve all of our students.

At RTS Atlanta, we believe that God is at work in our city. We are excited to have you with us for the next year or more of your life. I look forward to the opportunity to serve side by side with you for the glory of our great God and King.

In Christ,

Dr. Guy M. Richard Executive Director

Associate Professor of Systematic Theology





Welcome

Greetings students. We extend to you our warmest welcome! We are glad you have chosen to prepare for ministry at RTS Atlanta and we hope to make your adjustment to seminary life as easy and pleasant as possible. This Student Handbook is designed to help you know what to expect at RTS Atlanta and what is expected of you. Please read it carefully and keep it for future reference. The Student Handbook contains useful pointers, policies, and procedures designed to help you settle in and stay on track.

Faculty and staff are available for your convenience to answer any questions and concerns you may have. Our staff are available during campus hours of 8 am-5 pm, Monday-Friday. Faculty office hours may vary each semester. Please consult their syllabi for these details. -We are here to assist you. At RTS Atlanta, we desire to be a place where close, cordial relationships can be developed between students, faculty, and staff in the Spirit and love of Christ.

Please be patient during your first few weeks and months on campus. While the workload is substantial and challenging, you will be able to master the assignments with diligence, hard work, and fervent prayer. Refuse to let temporary discouragements tell you otherwise. Remember, we do everything in the presence of the Lord and for his glory.

We want your life at RTS Atlanta to be characterized by four commitments:

- 1) a commitment to the truth of the Scriptures and their application to all of life;
- 2) a commitment to thorough academic work offered to the Lord as your immediate vocation;
- 3) a commitment toward genuine loving relationships with God and one another, reflecting the self-sacrificing love of our Savior for us; and
- 4) a commitment to minister to the larger community and to the church as God provides the opportunity.

Student Life

Spiritual Life

"Watch your life and doctrine closely," Paul wrote to Timothy (1 Tim. 4:16a). While RTS will help you watch your doctrine, your personal walk with God merits your first priority. If your academic studies, even of Scripture and its teaching, take the place of your private devotions and personal Bible study, your spiritual life will quickly become dry and joyless. You can expect this to happen to you unless you take some steps to prevent it:

Spend time with God. Do not neglect to examine yourself, to pray, and to seek the Lord in his Word. Knowing God is not the same thing as knowing about him. As the Word of God shapes your mind, the Spirit of God is at work to shape and transform your heart. "Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life" (Prov. 4:23). How is the Holy Spirit currently at work to form Christ within you?

Develop honest relationships with others. RTS is more than an academic institution: it is a community of believers who help each other on to godliness. "But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness" (Heb. 3:13). There is no sweeter fellowship with others than that of intimate, broken-hearted prayer to the Father. Who can you pray with in this way?

Look for present ministry beyond your studies. While your studies are a high priority, they are not the only way to prepare for ministry. You will be our future pastors, missionaries, educators, ministry leaders and so much more. While at RTS we want you to put into practice what you're learning so we encourage internships for all students and require Field Education for our MDiv students. Ongoing present ministry helps to bring about a merger of your learning and your life. Those who are truly called by God cannot help speaking about what they have experienced (cf. Acts 4:20). What have you deeply learned about God that you cannot keep to yourself?

Devotional exercises in class are conducted regularly and are a key element in maintaining the emphasis of spiritual formation in our students. Singing, prayer, and Bible exposition allow us both to worship God and to be built up as a community of his people. The glory of God that draws us to study at RTS draws us first to worship him. Hearts that have received the grace of God are hungry for his praises.

The Lord's Day is set aside for worship and rest. Students are expected to participate actively in a local congregation as a member or associate member. In addition to being their community of faith, for seminarians the local church is both their ministry observatory and laboratory. The congregation where you are active should be a valuable part of your seminary experience. Invest your life in someone else: **get involved in a local church!**

Having said all this, remember that study is your immediate stewardship. Thorough preparation for class may be a spiritual exercise to the glory of God. This is the present vocation (calling) that your enrollment at RTS indicates.

Help When You Need It

Every student needs assistance from time to time. Sometimes that will be as simple as getting some information. Sometimes it will involve help with a financial, personal, or family issue which needs an objective viewpoint. Sometimes it will involve academic matters. Whatever your need, there is someone available to help. Let us know you are having difficulty.

Student Rights and Responsibilities

Privacy of Student Records

RTS maintains the security and confidentiality of student educational records.

All student records are kept in locked rooms and in locked file cabinets. In addition, all transcript information for current degree-seeking students is digitally “backed-up” at an off-site location.

Since RTS does not accept Title IV student loan monies, RTS is not bound by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). However, RTS’ confidentiality policies are generally consistent with FERPA. RTS policies are as follows:

- a. A student may inspect and review his/her academic file and transcript after a written request has been made to the Registrar’s office. The Registrar will make arrangements for access and notify the student of the time and place where the records may be inspected. The Registrar will be present during this inspection and review.
- b. If a student believes his/her academic file and/or transcript are inaccurate or misleading, the student may request to amend the file and/or transcript. The student should write the Registrar, clearly identifying the portion of the record that the student wishes to change and specifying what is inaccurate or misleading. If RTS decides not to amend, the student may use the appeal process outlined elsewhere in this Handbook.
- c. RTS will not disclose, without the student’s consent, personally identifiable information found in the student’s academic file or transcript, excepting legitimate educational interests, subpoenas, and directory information.

When presented with a subpoena request for a current or prior student’s educational records, RTS will provide the requested records only after the student in question is notified of the subpoena request. RTS will attempt to notify the student in question by: (1) sending an email to the email address currently on file and (2) sending a certified letter to the address on file. Within five business days from delivery or delivery attempt of the certified

mail, RTS will comply with the subpoena request.

- d. Directory information includes, but is not limited to, name, address, telephone number, email, date and place of birth, spouse's name, home state, previous schools attended, denomination and presbytery affiliation, grade level, dates of attendance, photo and photo of spouse, degree program, enrollment type (full-time, part-time), and degrees with date of graduation.

Sexual Harassment

The seminary expects all members of its community to apply sanctified common sense and Biblical principles to their relationships. It will not tolerate offensive or inappropriate sexual behavior and requires all faculty, staff and students to refrain from any action or conduct which could be viewed as sexual harassment. Any such harassment is contrary to and prohibited by seminary policy and will be considered grounds for disciplinary action. It should be noted that for academic purposes, some appropriate teaching and discussion of sexual information may occur, particularly in a counseling program; however, these discussions are necessary for the formation of a competent counselor or pastor and therefore does not constitute sexual harassment.

Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other offensive verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature is expressly prohibited. Examples of prohibited conduct include but are not limited to lewd or sexually suggestive comments; off-color language or jokes of a sexual nature; verbal, graphic or physical conduct inappropriately relating to an individual's gender; or any display of sexually explicit pictures, greeting cards, articles, books, magazines, photos, computer images or cartoons.

The seminary must have the cooperation of all faculty, staff and students in order to implement its sexual harassment policy. It is the individual's responsibility to report immediately any incident which they believe to constitute sexual harassment. Even if they believe the act is isolated or infrequent, they should report it to the campus Dean of Students or President. The seminary will promptly investigate the situation and take whatever corrective action is necessary and appropriate. The seminary prohibits any retaliatory action against persons reporting conduct which is believed by the reporting individual to be in violation of this policy.

Notice of Nondiscriminatory Enrollment

The Seminary admits students of any race, color, national/ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national/ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, and other school-administered programs.

Student's Role and Participation in Institutional Decision Making

The seminary recognizes that students may contribute positively to institutional decision making. Therefore, an open-door policy exists throughout the institution, through which students may



voice their concerns, suggestions, and needs. In addition, pertinent matters may be brought to the attention of the faculty, administration, or Board of Trustees.

Accreditation Complaint

Reformed Theological Seminary maintains a goal to comply fully with the standards of accreditation of the Association of Theological Schools (ATS) in the United States and Canada and the Commission on Colleges of Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS). Students who believe that RTS has violated ATS and/or SACS standards in any way should submit their complaint in writing to their respective campus Academic Dean. The Dean will consult with the Chief Academic Officer, who serves as the coordinator of matters related to institutional accreditation. The complaint will be reviewed, and a written response provided to the student in a timely fashion related to the receipt of the complaint.

At this point, if the student is not satisfied with the written response from RTS, the student may file a complaint directly with ATS and/or SACS.

Student Conduct

Students are expected to conduct themselves at all times as mature believers. Exemplary Christian conduct should control our words and our actions, both public and private. In today's technological environment our words can include texting, emails, social networking and blogging, in addition to our speech. Godly behavior, expected of all Christians, is especially required of those who are preparing themselves to become ministers of the Word or servants in the church. Classroom manners should also reflect this maturity. Students should be respectful of professors, attend all class periods, and hand in assignments on time. Classroom etiquette also includes leaving cell phones turned off, refraining from surfing the Internet and laptop computer games and communicating to your neighbor during lectures.

Student conduct is normally under the supervision of the Dean of Students. The seminary reserves the right to dismiss any student whose conduct is found to be unsatisfactory on the basis of spiritual or moral principles found in the Scriptures. If desired, the student can appeal the dismissal according to the stated policy.

Student Appeals

An appeals process exists to resolve any behavioral or academic problem that cannot otherwise be settled in a Biblical manner and assures fairness to all parties concerned. This process is rarely needed and should only be used after all other means have been exhausted. For example, in academic matters that pertain to a class or a grade, the student should first work directly with the professor and/or Registrar. Concerning behavioral or community issues, the student should first consult with the Dean of Students. In all cases, the student initiating the complaint will not be subject to adverse actions *per se* for this initiation.

If the matter cannot be resolved by the above means, the following appeals process exists:

1. The student should submit a written appeal to the Academic Dean regarding the issue. Depending on the issue, the Academic Dean may request input from the Faculty. The Academic Dean will render a written decision.
2. If the student is not satisfied with the decision of the Academic Dean, then the student may submit a subsequent written appeal to the campus President requesting a hearing. The campus President may or may not grant the request. If granted, the campus President will appoint an ad hoc committee that may consist of trustees, faculty, staff, and/or institutional officers to hear the case. This committee is authorized to meet with any or all concerned parties to resolve the issue and will render a written decision concerning the case.
3. The decision of the President or the ad hoc committee is considered final, subject only to review by the Executive Committee of the Board to affirm the appeals process was properly observed.

Student Information

Please remember to update any of your contact information that changes by using the My Profile tab in Self- Service. RTS faculty and staff use this information to make sure you get timely information.

Student Images

Students consent to and understand their image may be used in promotional and/or academic materials as needed by the institution. These materials include, but are not limited to, printed publications, electronic platforms, and social media. With the exception of images created for inclusion within the Student Directory, students may request their image not be used by submitting a written request to the Registrar prior to the image's production.

Website

RTS maintains a website at www.rts.edu with information of help to both students and the general public.

Financial Protection for Students

Life Insurance

Life insurance is desirable, though not required. Seminarians are occupationally eligible for attractive rates from Covenant Life Insurance Company (formerly, The Presbyterian Ministers' Fund) and Ministers' Life and Casualty Union.

Financial Aid

The seminary expects students both to trust God to supply their needs (Matt. 6:25-34) and to work to meet them (2 Thess. 3:6-10). The seminary experience for many students is a test both of their faith and their endurance, both qualities are essential to ministry. We challenge you, therefore, both to trust confidently in the providence of God and to work diligently.

To request financial aid, you must complete a Financial Aid Application, available online at <https://rts.edu/admissions/financial-aid/>

Consult with the Admissions Office to learn more about the many types of financial aid that exist to help you fund your seminary education.

During the year financial aid recipients **will be asked to send a letter of appreciation to donors** who have provided funds for their scholarships; recipients of financial aid are expected to write these letters when requested to do so. Failure to comply may result in loss of the student's scholarship. Even when granted, financial aid is to be considered supplementary, rather than primary, income. While the seminary will make every effort within its Scholarship Budget to assist students in need, those with accounts in arrears may not be allowed to register for additional courses, at the seminary's option, until their accounts have been brought up to date.

Campus Life

Campus Building and Grounds

CAMPUS BUILDINGS: Generally, the campus is open from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., except when campus is open later for evening courses. Enrolled students are required to have a door key for after hour's access. See the instructions below.

RTS Atlanta Key Card Policies and Procedures:

- \$20 refundable deposit, \$5 replacement fee
- Key card access is 7am-9pm (M-F) and 7am-6pm (Sat).
- There is NO access to the building on Sunday.
- The key card allows you access to the main entrance doors only.
- Please do not hold the door for those you do not know.
- Please do not lend your card to other students or guests.
- Please continue to respect our facility when staff and/or professors are not present after hours.
- Please turn off all lights to the left of the main entrance if you are the last person in the building.
- If you lose your key, please notify Katherine Longmuir so the key card can be deactivated.
- The key card is yours until you cease taking classes and/or graduate. If you do not return your key card after 3 months of not taking classes and/or your graduation, we will keep your \$20 initial deposit.

Please contact or visit Katherine Longmuir for all key card questions and replacements

We have been blessed with excellent facilities at RTS Atlanta to use and enjoy. We all bear common responsibility to maintain and treat them considerately. Each Student is expected to share that responsibility in at least the following ways:

- a) Wherever you see litter or trash, please pick it up and pitch it in.*
- b) Turn off lights that are not being used. Turn off coffee pots if you take the last cup.*
- c) Dogs, cats, and other pets that could cause damage or be an offense to others are not allowed in seminary buildings.*
- d) Alcoholic beverages are not permitted on seminary property.*
- e) Automobiles should be parked only in designated areas.*
- f) Smoking is not permitted on campus.*

Firearms

In accordance with institutional regulations as well as state law, Reformed Theological Seminary generally prohibits the possession of any firearms or other weapons on its property including within classrooms, public buildings, or on the grounds of the seminary.



Certain individuals who are authorized by applicable state law, law enforcement, or the military to carry a concealed firearm may be allowed to do so on seminary property after registering it with the appropriate institutional authority. This authority will be the Business Manager/VP of Administration on each campus unless otherwise indicated.

NOTE: Children on the Campus

Due to our seminary activities as well as the lack of childcare personnel available, students, faculty, and staff are discouraged from bringing their child(ren) on the campus. We do acknowledge the exception for campus parties and picnics in which activities for children are made available. We understand that there will be times when an individual has to have their child(ren) with them on campus. Should this occur, individuals should ensure their child(ren) is with them as we do not permit unattended children wandering on the campus. Children are welcome in the Library with close parental supervision. However, the use of library computers will not be permitted.

Library Information

“The mission of the libraries of RTS is to provide resources and services to support the curriculum of the institution, the research interests of the faculty, and the general needs of the local Christian community. The libraries seek to serve in the implementation of the seminary’s commitments to the inerrancy of Scripture and the Reformed faith as set forth in the Westminster standards.”

Website: library.rts.edu

Phone #: (770) 952-8884

Email: library.atlanta@rts.edu

Hours of Operation

Typically staffed 9am-5pm on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday and 9am – 3pm on Wednesday*
Library is accessible during evening and weekend courses

**hours subject to change during breaks and holidays.*

Library Staff

- Paula Start, Library Supervisor, pstart@rts.edu
- Eugene McKinnon, Collection Specialist, emckinnon@rts.edu
- Chris Shepherd, Library Assistant
- Joseph Matsiko, Library Assistant

Please ask a library staff member for assistance. When you need help, we encourage you to come to the front hall and chat with us. We are here to help you. You can also check out some of the libguides on our website. These provide useful research tips and detailed instructions on find and using library resources. Our libguides can be found at <http://rts.libguides.com/>

Locating Books

The online catalog (<http://library.rts.edu/>) allows you to search the library’s holdings by author, title, keyword, subject, etc. The catalog will tell you the status and location of the item as well as the call number. Please ask for assistance if you have difficulty finding what you need. An explanation of the arrangement of the library is at the end of this document.



Circulation Policy (students only)

Any circulating item may be checked out for a period of 28 days. This may be done with a staff member, or when the library is not staffed by using one of Remote Check Out Forms located at the front desk. Books may be renewed by phone, email, or in person as long as another patron has not requested it. Renew items by asking at the library desk, calling the library (770-952-8884), or emailing (library.atlanta@rts.edu). Late fees are \$.10 a day per item. A processing fee of 10 dollars plus the replacement cost of the book is charged for any lost item. Students may check out up to 15 books at a time. You must return all overdue books and pay any outstanding fine before additional books may be checked out. You may mail books back to us if necessary. Any item including reserves, Inter Library Loans (ILLs) or regularly circulating items may be recalled at any time. It is the borrower's responsibility to return any recalled item in a timely manner.

Reserve Policy

Books that are required for classes are placed on reserve near the front library desk. Patrons may check them out for 2 hours at a time and use at the campus. A \$5.00 fine is assessed for any missing or torn page or a removed staple.

Electronic Resources

The library subscribes to many electronic resources such as ATLA, ProQuest, the Karl Barth Digital Library, the Encyclopedia of Islam, and several other resources which gives you access to thousands of scholarly articles in religious studies, psychology, sociology and several other disciplines. While these courses are available for students by simply logging in, visitors on our campus can also gain access on campus without logging in.

ATLA Journal Database

The library offers you the premier theological journal database in the American Theological Library Association index. ATLA is a searchable database which indexes theological journals, books, and essays. Some full text articles are available, and the index is searchable by subject, scripture reference, author, etc. Ask a librarian for assistance on using this valuable tool.

ATLA Religion Index

These databases can be accessed in Canvas, our learning management system, by choosing "Library" on the left side of the screen.

The RTS Libraries website (<http://library.rts.edu/>) has an extensive listing of added resources for study, many of which are online. This includes a listing of periodicals owned by all three campus libraries.

Access

To access ATLA and our many other subscription databases, you can access them at this link: <https://rts.edu/academics/library/research-tools/> and click on any of the databases listed. If you are on campus, you will be automatically logged in. If you are off campus, you will be asked to enter a user ID and password. Your credentials are the same that you use for Canvas. If you forget your credentials, you will need to reset them at the RTS website. If you need assistance resetting your credentials, please contact password.reset@rts.edu

Other Library Policies

- All library policies are subject to alteration at the Library Supervisor's discretion.
- You are allowed to leave books on tables in the library overnight if you are going to be using them again when you return. You must leave a note that includes your name, the date, and a request to leave them



on the table. The library staff does not guarantee that books will remain on the tables if left.

- In order to protect the library materials, eating is not allowed in the library, but you may have drinks that are covered.
- Holds can be placed on library books that are currently checked out. Request the hold at the library desk or by calling (770-952-8884). You will be contacted for pick up when they become available.

Inter-Library Loan (students only)

- Any book or journal article that our campus library does not own may be requested through the ILL program. ILL requests are limited to the holdings within the RTS library system.
- Please check to make sure that we do not own the item before requesting it. We cannot request books that we own, even if they are currently checked out.
- You may email the author, title, and any other bibliographic information to Paula Start at pstart@rts.edu
- Items usually arrive in one week and may be held for a month. You will be contacted when the item is ordered and when the item arrives.
- This is a free service, and there is no limit to how many items you may request.
- Use ATLA to find journal articles that may be held by other libraries.
- There are many good ways to find books for your research needs. Here are a couple.
 - Find a quality book on the subject and look at its bibliography.
 - Use Google books not only to find titles, but to receive full-text access to certain titles and partial text access to other titles. <http://books.google.com/>

Copier

The photocopier is located in a small room located near the reference section. There are printers available near the wall with glass windows of the reference room as well. Instructions are by the copier.

Scanner

The library has a scanner located in the reference room near the windows (next to the printers). You can scan items for free to your email, Google docs, smart phone, or USB drive.

The library staff are available to make scans for Atlanta students that live out of the Atlanta area. To request a scan, email library.atlanta@rts.edu. Include detailed information such as the title, author and page numbers in your request. Be aware that scans are limited by copyright law and the staff will limit accordingly. Global campus students should contact Michael Farrell (mfarrell@rts.edu) for all library help related to their virtual studies.

IT

The seminary offers free wireless internet access in the library. If you have difficulty using the wireless, we cannot offer our assistance with your computer. If the wireless is down, we will contact IT to solve the problem. The library does not offer printing services, however a printer for student use is in the reference area by connecting a laptop via USB to one of the printers.



Arrangement of Library

You can find call letters **A through BS** in the South Wing of the building; call letters **BT through Z and the reference room** are found in the North Wing. Below are some of the largest sections in a theological library.

B	Philosophy (General)	BM	Judaism
BC	Logic	BP	Islam. Bahaim. Theosophy, etc.
BD	Speculative philosophy	BQ	Buddhism
BF	Psychology; for counseling see HQ, RC, and BV	BR	Christianity: church history, writings of the early church fathers
BH	Aesthetics	BS	The Bible: this is where commentaries are.
BJ	Ethics	BX	Christian Denominations Also biography. This is where things like the Westminster Confession of Faith would appear as well as the collected writings of many of the famous figures from church History.
BL	Religions. Mythology. Rationalism		
BT	Doctrinal Theology/Systematic Theology		
BV	Practical Theology Devotional books, prayer, church membership, the sacraments, preaching.		

Student Associations

Student Cabinet

The student activity fee, paid each semester, funds a variety of student activities throughout the year. The Student Cabinet, consisting of officers and representatives from the student population, conducts various campus activities and conferences.

Women's Ministry

Women students, faculty, staff, and wives of students are offered a variety of growth opportunities, fellowship activities, and community ministries. For detailed information on events or to offer input and ideas, please see our Director of Women's ministry, Kim Johnson.

- a) **RTS Courses.** Spouses of full-time students (12 credit hours or more) may take courses for credit at no charge. They may also audit courses without charge, provided there is room in the class and they have registered with the Registrar. These courses not only provide opportunity for spiritual growth, but help spouses get acquainted with professors and others in the seminary community. To take a course for credit, please apply with the Admissions Office. To audit a course, contact the Registrar.
- b) **Women of RTS.** The purpose of the *Women of RTS* program is to provide a course of training that will help prepare women for life in the ministry, to promote joy and confidence in their callings to serve Christ for the furtherance and strengthening of his kingdom, and to promote fellowship among all women on campus, married as well as single. *Women of RTS* is led jointly by a team composed of students' wives, student women, and RTS staff. Together this team leads a program of fellowship, prayer, and teaching.



Teaching is done by faculty members, faculty wives, and occasional outside speakers. Student testimonies and music are also part of the program. Small groups give student wives the opportunity to get to know and pray with one another.

- c) **Women's Bible Study.** The Women's Ministry offers a daytime Bible study to women in the community during the fall and spring terms. RTS normally offers childcare during the study. For more information, contact Kim Johnson.

The Edmiston Center (CSBE)

The Edmiston Center for the Study of the Bible and Ethnicity specializes in Christian Perseverance Studies. The Center connects the local and the global, and offers unique courses and special lectures that provide Christian leaders with skills and insight to navigate their surrounding culture. Learn more about the work of the Edmiston Center at <https://rts.edu/csbe/>

Academic Life

You may have come to RTS with a clear sense of your calling to ministry. Then again, you may have little sense of the kind of ministry for which the Lord is preparing you. Whatever your state of mind and heart, the seminary's goal is to provide an opportunity for self-evaluation and analysis before you commit yourself to a career. Several courses of study have been developed to meet a wide range of student needs for basic and advanced preparation for Christian ministry. The catalog is designed to acquaint you with the different degree programs and their requirements.

Course Information

Scheduling

Be sure to consult the catalog and the semester schedule available from the RTS website under Upcoming Classes. The Registrar is available to meet by appointment to discuss your degree progress.

Each course meets thirteen classroom hours for each semester hour of credit offered. Thus a three-credit hour course would meet for thirty-nine (39) classroom hours. As a rule, courses taught at RTS Atlanta will be offered for the same credit value and bear the same course title and description as outlined in the current catalog.

The formats most often used at RTS Atlanta are the *traditional* format, the *weekend* format, and an *intensive* format. In the *traditional* arrangement, a course meets one evening or day each week for three hours for thirteen weeks. This format is used when resident and local instructors are utilized.

When faculty members must travel greater distances, classes may be scheduled on a *weekend* format. Usually this will mean three to five "weekends" over the span of six to ten weeks. While there are variations in the schedules, a typical weekend format is:

Friday 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.
Saturday 8:30 - 11:30 a.m.
12:30 -3:30 or 4:30 p.m.

Intensive classes are normally completed within a single week. For example, a 3-credit class might meet Monday through Friday, 8:00 - noon and 1:00 – 5:00.

Class Attendance

You are responsible to attend class, even when term papers or exams are pending, or your work schedule conflicts. You should obtain the professor's permission if you must be absent from class, particularly one-week intensives.



Pedagogy

Adjust yourself to each professor's teaching method. Part of your education consists of learning how to learn. Decide what kind of notes you need for each class to master the material. All courses have a syllabus and have an aim. Find out what it is and adjust your studies to meet that goal.

Tests/exams

Tests/exams are developed and administered according to each professor's requirements. Most professors indicate their exam schedule at the beginning of the semester, but this does not preclude unscheduled exams. Ask your professor what his policy is and the kind of response he expects on his examination. And be prepared!

Extensions

Incomplete and late assignments after the course ends without approved extension requests may result in failure of the course. Students should apply for an extension through the Registrar's Office **prior to the last day of the term**. Extensions are only granted for significant emergencies or unforeseen circumstances.

- Students are required to state the reason for the extension on the form.
- Permission is obtained from both the professor and the academic dean.
- All work must be completed by the deadline given by the professor and academic dean.

Extended Absence

Extended absence of more than a week requires permission of the Academic Dean and is never granted without a written request. If you need special consideration in any course, consult the professor involved.

Drop/Add

Students may drop/add courses via MyPortal until the online drop and add deadlines. After the term begins, there is a fee for each course added. Thus, it is recommended that you finalize your schedule before the first day of the term. See the most recent Schedule of Fees for the current add fee. If a student drops a course prior to the drop deadline (through the first five weeks of a regular semester schedule, the second weekend of a weekend course, the second day of a week-long intensive, or the equivalent in other formats), the course is erased from the student's permanent record and the tuition and fees are refunded. If a student withdraws from a course after the drop deadline, the grade "W" will be entered on the student's permanent record and the tuition is not refunded. The Registrar should be consulted whenever a student considers withdrawing from a course.

Grades

Grades are posted on MyPortal as they become available. Papers and tests may be returned to you — either directly from the professor or if a visiting professor through the Registrar. For information about the RTS Grading Scale and Academic Probation, please see the RTS Catalog.

Retaking a course

Retaking a course. Students may retake a failed course. The student must pay for the course again and all grades will be recorded on the transcript, including failures.

Academic Practices

Study Habits

Study, or lack thereof, is the primary reason for success or failure in any course. Students are expected to spend at least two hours of study for each hour of class. Self-discipline is indispensable. Do not procrastinate. Get into a good study routine as quickly as possible. Take full advantage of our library resources. Schedule your work with your own deadlines well in advance of due dates. Then, work your schedule. When you do, you are most fully able to enjoy the academic, communal, and recreational aspects of your seminary experience.

Confusion

Students often express feeling bewildered by new terminology and overwhelmed by the mass of new information. Do not hesitate to ask questions, when you do not understand what a professor is talking about. The only really dumb question is the one that is not asked. Persevere in your studies, seek faculty help if necessary, and you will master the material.

Books

Books are both tools and temptations for seminarians. Get good advice before you buy. Most professors provide bibliographies of recommended works. Use the seminary Library to acquaint yourself with other authors. Then buy books which will have lasting value for you. You will probably want to keep your textbooks for future reference. Check your whole library from time to time to identify weak areas. Buy books of lasting value but watch your budget.

Plagiarism

Research papers require borrowing other people's ideas and words. However, the source of such borrowing must be acknowledged properly so that your ideas are clearly distinguished from ideas that you borrowed. If the source is not acknowledged properly, your work is plagiarism. For an excellent summary on what constitutes plagiarism, see Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations* (rev. by Wayne C. Booth, etc.; 9th ed.; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018), pp. 81-83 (section 7.9).

Plagiarism includes word-for-word copying, lifting terms, restatement of someone's argument

or line of thought, etc. – all without acknowledgment of source. Plagiarism also includes giving a source partial credit when more is taken from that source than indicated.

Plagiarism, whether intentional or unintentional, is very serious. All plagiarism cases are referred to the Academic Dean for resolution. Consequences may include some of the following:

- repeat the assignment and receive a maximum of a D on the assignment
- receive an F on the assignment
- receive an F in the course
- expulsion from the seminary

Lack of Payment

Lack of payment for tuition may result in no credit for the semester. All fees and balances must be cleared before the next semester begins. An official transcript and grades will be unavailable until all balances and fees are paid.

Extraordinary Academic Requests

Extraordinary academic requests for Atlanta students, such as directed studies, must be initiated with the Professor and approved by the Academic Dean and Registrar at the beginning of the semester. Please see the Registrar for appropriate forms.

Transcripts

Official transcripts Can be requested by visiting <https://rts.edu/campuses/atlanta/students/registrar/> and paying a \$15 fee. An unofficial student transcript may be obtained from MyPortal at no charge.

Recording of Courses by Students

The video taping of RTS courses by students is prohibited. Audio taping of classes by students is allowed if the taped material is to be used solely for personal study and spiritual edification and is not distributed privately or publicly in any manner.

English Bible Exam

Master of Divinity and Master of Arts¹ students at RTS Atlanta must take the English Bible Exam (EBE). Each student must pass the EBE in order to graduate (a grade of “C”/80% is needed to pass). The guidelines for fulfilling this requirement include the following:

The EBE is required to be taken as an exit exam during the student’s senior year (as measured by degree hours towards the MA or MDiv.) The EBE must be passed by March 31 for May graduation or November 21 for December graduation. The exam is administered by the Registrar through

¹ This does not include students in the Master of Arts (Religion) program which is in teach out status.

Canvas. The Registrar has a study guide for the Bible exam.

The best method for preparing for the EBE is for the student to familiarize himself with:

- (a) the broad flow of biblical history,
- (b) the main themes and historical setting of the books of the Bible,
- (c) the location (book and chapter) of significant biblical events, and verses, and
- (d) the life and historical circumstances of significant biblical characters.

Helpful resources include William Hendriksen, *A Survey of the Bible*, and Willem A. VanGemeren, *The Progress of Redemption*.

Westminster Shorter Catechism Exam

The Westminster Confession of Faith's **Shorter Catechism** is to be memorized as a part the M.Div. requirements. The exam is split into three parts (Qs 1-38, Qs 39-81, and Qs 82-107) and can be done with traditional or modern language versions. The Catechism exam must be passed by March 31 for May graduation or November 21 for December graduation. The catechism exams are administered by the Registrar using Canvas.

Graduation Requirements

RTS has a Commencement ceremony in May, and confers degrees in December. The procedure and requirements for graduation are detailed below.

1. Students intending to graduate in December or May must make application for graduation during their final fall semester. The application deadline is November 15. This application can be made with the Registrar. Please note that a 2.0 average is required in order to graduate. A graduation fee of \$200 is required.
2. The student should set up an appointment with the Registrar to "audit" the student academic record, confirming all course work is in process.
3. Graduation requirements must be met by March 31 for May graduation or November 20 for December graduation:
 - a. Catechism exams must be passed by all potential M.Div. graduates.
 - b. The English Bible Exam must be passed by all potential M.Div. and M.A. graduates.
 - c. Field Education (see below) must be completed by all potential M.Div. graduates.
 - d. All classes needed for graduation must be registered by the deadline.
 - e. Potential M.A.(R) graduates must submit a final copy of the Integrative Paper by the deadline.



Field Education

Field education, or “mentored ministry,” is an exciting opportunity to integrate classroom experience with life and ministry in the Church. This opportunity is required for all Master of Divinity students and is open by special approval to Master of Arts students.

The primary aims of Field Education are:

- to help students who intend to pursue pastoral or vocational ministry to test, exercise, and improve their gifts and skills;
- to provide students with firsthand experience in the services to which God has called them;
- to encourage their theological reflection on the tasks of ministry;
- and most importantly, to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ through service to His Kingdom.

At the Atlanta campus, your Field Education experience will be enriched in two unique ways. First, you will spend 25 of the 400 hours in personal evangelization. This ensures students remain intentionally involved in the lives of nonbelievers and connected to their role in His story to fulfill the Great Commission. Second, you will attend 4 workshops hosted by local and national ministry leaders. This exposes students to a variety of ministry opportunities, the life, and character of ministry leaders, and networking opportunities.

Students should consult the [Welcome to Field Education](#) guide concerning the necessary paperwork and process required for the completion of Field Education internships. Please contact the Registrar with questions about registration for Field Education and Dr. Bruce Lowe with questions about the Field Education experience and requirements.

RTS Atlanta Faculty and Staff

General Campus Line - 770.952.8884

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Student Handbook
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