

# ST515 Systematic Theology 1 Syllabus

Reformed Theological Seminary

Fall 2018—Atlanta Campus

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Office Hours: Tuesdays 4pm – 6pm or by appointment

## Course Description

This course will cover **theological prolegomena** (introduction to theology and theological method), the **doctrine of Scripture** (revelation, inspiration, inerrancy, authority, canon), **theology proper** (God, Trinity, creation, providence), and **anthropology** (man, Fall, sin). Our study will be based on the exegesis of Scripture, but with continual reference to historical theology as well. We rely upon the Bible as our *ultimate authority* in matters of faith and life, but we also remember that we “stand on the shoulders” of approximately 2000 years of history in interpreting and applying the Bible.

Though the best men’s works be but base stuff to the pure word of God, yet the writings of holy men must not be condemned, but must be read and regarded in their place, for our furnishing and enabling to the study of the scriptures, for the helping of our knowledge and judgment in the word of God. They that hold or practise the contrary know not what helps they be and what light they yield to many dark places of scripture.<sup>1</sup>

## Rationale for the Course

*I am convinced that the most important classes that you will take in seminary are the systematic theology classes.* That may sound like an audacious claim or a self-serving one (since, after all, I am a professor of systematic theology!). But let me tell you why I can make it in good conscience. In my experience as a pastor, I can count on one hand the number of times someone came to see me to ask about the meaning of a specific Bible passage. But I cannot even begin to count the number of times people came to see me with topical questions that they needed counsel about. They came wanting me to walk them through what the Bible as a whole had to say about these particular topics. And that, my friends, is the work of systematic theology. *So, in that sense at least, the most practical and most important field of study for your future ministries within the local church is the area of systematic theology.* Let me encourage you, therefore, to take these classes in person and not online and, when you do, to pour yourself into your studies. I understand full well the challenges of busyness. We all make time for what is important. Let me assure you that you really will get out of this class exactly what you put into it.

## Prerequisites

Students in this course should be familiar with the basic concepts covered in Louis Berkhof’s *Manual of Christian Doctrine* and/or Donald Macleod’s *A Faith to Live By* before the start of class. These books will be on reserve in the library.

Students who are struggling with seeing the importance of systematic theology to pastoral ministry and to preaching will be helped by the following quotations and resources:

“To be effective preachers you must be sound theologians.” (Charles Spurgeon)

“[L]earning...is essential to a successful ministry.” (Charles Spurgeon)

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<sup>1</sup> William Perkins, *The Workes of...William Perkins* (1618), 3:104.

“[T]heology helps the preacher as the coach helps the tennis player....As the coach is the embodiment of decades of experience in playing tennis, so theology is the embodiment of centuries of study, debate and interpretative interaction as the church has sought to understand the Scriptures. One can play tennis after a fashion without ever having been coached, and one can preach from the Bible after a fashion without ever having encountered serious theology in a serious way. But, just as one is likely to play better with coaching, so one is likely to preach better—more perceptively, more searchingly, more fruitfully—when helped by theology; and so the preacher who is theologically competent will, other things being equal, be more use to the church.” (JI Packer, “The Preacher as Theologian,” p. 316)

The following three resources may also be helpful in thinking through the relevancy of this course to preaching:

Donald Macleod, “Preaching and Systematic Theology,” in *The Preacher and Preaching*, ed. Sam T. Logan (P&R, 1986), 246-272.

JI Packer, “The Preacher as Theologian: Preaching and Systematic Theology,” in *Honouring the Written Word of God: The Collected Shorter Writings of JI Packer*, vol. 3 (Paternoster, 1999), 301-316.

John Murray, “Systematic Theology,” in *Collected Writings of John Murray*, vol. 4 (Banner of Truth, 1977), 1-21.

The following quote from Carl Trueman may also be helpful in this regard:

Of course, exegesis is a basic element of all sound theology; but, like the foundations or frame of a house, if that’s all there is, you’re going to get wet, very wet, when it rains. It can lead to a fragmentary approach to the Bible which never sees the whole picture, or the priorities which exist within the overall witness of scripture. It can be profoundly anti-intellectual, eschewing all questions that a superficial reading of the text does not raise. Its frequent failure to rise to theological and ethical synthesis, and to engage modestly and thoughtfully with the priorities of the creedal and confessional trajectories of the church, leaves it inadequate to deal with really big issues in any kind of historical, social or ecclesiastical perspective. Exegesis is important; but it needs to stand in relation to other theological and ethical tasks if it is not to prove itself the basis for a highly unstable, selective and inconsistent church policy. Preachers, as well as believers, have their pick-‘n-mix priorities, against which the testimony of the centuries, embodied in the creeds and confessions, can go some way to help. *No one, therefore, should be allowed within a million miles of a pulpit who does not have a proper respect for biblical theology in terms of the overall story of redemptive history, a firm grasp of the importance of systematic theology, creeds and confessions, and a critical handle on contemporary culture. Only then can he begin to deal with the latest big thing in any kind of biblical, theological and historical perspective.*<sup>2</sup>

## Course Objectives

The principal aim of this course is to provide students with a comprehensive understanding of the main doctrines of Christianity, specifically in those areas mentioned above in the Course Description. It is expected that students will have a competent grasp of the issues involved in this course and a facility to communicate them with some fluency. Since many branches of the church require their ordained clergy not only to commit to these doctrines in a more or less strict sense but also to be able to articulate them when examined, these things are also in mind as objectives in this course as well. Most importantly, since all theology has worship as its end, this course will seek to foster deeper

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<sup>2</sup> Carl R. Trueman, *The Wages of Spin* (Mentor, 2004), emphasis added.

devotion and faithfulness to our great God and King by deepening our knowledge of Him and our reverence for Him. He is indeed worthy of all we are and have!

Charles Spurgeon once pointed out that the study of theology should lead both seminary professors and students to the same end:

Tutors [i.e., professors] should be what they wish their students to be; and what manner of men should ministers be? They should thunder in preaching, and lighten in conversation; they should be flaming in prayer, shining in life, and burning in spirit. If they be not so, what can they effect?<sup>3</sup>

## **Course Requirements**

### **I. Required Reading**

#### **1. Students will be required to read the following texts by the end of the course:**

1. John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (Westminster/John Knox, 1559 edition, Battles translation), 1:35-120 (I.1-12).
2. *Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms* (*WCF* 1-9; *WLC* 1-29; 91-152; and *WSC* 1-19).
3. Wilhelmus à Brakel, *The Christian's Reasonable Service* (Reformation Heritage Books, 1992), vol. 1, pp. 83-209.

#### **2. Students will also be required to read the following weekly assignments in preparation for 12 "Reading Seminars" which will be discussed in groups each week during class:**

- 1) J.I. Packer, *Fundamentalism and the Word of God* (Eerdmans).

**Due Date: September 10, 2018.**

- 2) John Murray, "The Attestation of Scripture" in *The Infallible Word* (WTS Faculty publication), pp. 1-55 [will be made available electronically].

**Due Date: September 17, 2018.**

- 3) Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics* I.1.§4 (T&T Clark), pp. 88-124 [will be made available electronically].

R.P.C. and A.T. Hanson, *The Bible Without Illusions* [SCM and TPI], pp. 38-65 and 114-128 [will be made available electronically].

**Due Date: September 24, 2018.**

- 4) Donald Macleod, *Shared Life* (Christian Focus).

**Due Date: October 1, 2018.**

- 5) Tertullian, *Contra Praxeas* [will be made available electronically].

Basil, *De Spiritu Sancto*, ch 1-11 and 21-27 [will be made available electronically].

Augustine, *De Trinitate*, Book I [will be made available electronically].

**Due Date: October 8, 2018.**

- 6) John Calvin, *Institutes* I.13 (Westminster/John Knox, Battles translation), 1:120-159.

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<sup>3</sup> CH Spurgeon, *Sword and Trowel* (1883), 262.

Heinrich Heppe, *Reformed Dogmatics* (George Allen & Unwin), ch. 6, pp. 105-132 [will be made available electronically].

**Due Date: October 15, 2018.**

7) Friedrich Schleiermacher, *The Christian Faith* (T&T Clark), §170-172, pp. 738-751 [will be made available electronically].

Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics* I.1. §8.3 (T&T Clark), pp. 333-347 [will be made available electronically].

Gerald Bray, *The Doctrine of God* (IVP), pp. 197-224.

**Due Date: October 22, 2018.**

8) DF Kelly, *Creation and Change* (Christian Focus), chapters 1-6, pp. 15-135.

**Due Date: October 29, 2018.**

9) John Calvin, *Institutes* I.16-18 (Westminster/John Knox), 1:197-237.

**Due Date: November 5, 2018.**

10) Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, 1aQQ90-101, pp. 458-498 [will be made available electronically].

**Due Date: November 12, 2018.**

11) John Calvin, *Institutes* II.1-8 (Westminster/John Knox), 1:241-423.

**Due Date: November 26, 2018.**

12) DA Carson, "Sin's Contemporary Significance," in *Fallen: A Theology of Sin*, CW Morgan and RA Peterson, eds. (Crossway), pp. 21-37.

Gerald Bray, "Sin in Historical Theology," in *Fallen*, pp. 163-185.

**Due Date: December 3, 2018.**

## **II. Class Attendance**

Class attendance is imperative for successful completion of this course. Students are expected to bring their copies of the *Westminster Confession of Faith* and the Bible to class with them every day.

## **III. Evaluation**

### **1. Reading Seminars (30%). Due dates given above.**

The class will be broken down into small groups for periodic reading seminars. These seminars are designed to give more opportunity for interaction and discussion between the students. They are also designed to help foster closer relationships among the students by giving an opportunity to work together and to appreciate one another's gifts and abilities. They will also serve as a check to make sure that the assigned readings are being completed and that their content is being assimilated into the lecture material.

Students will be required to complete a **Student Reading Report (will be made available electronically)** for each assigned reading and to bring it to class on the date that it is due, turning it in at the end of that class period. A schedule of seminar readings is given in the Required Reading section of the syllabus above, along with the due dates for each reading report.

### **2. Research Paper (40%). Due date: December 10.**

A 10-12 page theological research paper is required for this course. Students will select a topic that is meaningful to them (please discuss it in advance with the professor). The only requirement is

that it must examine some issue of theology covered in this class (prolegomena, Scripture, theology, anthropology). The paper must adhere to the following guidelines:

- (1) Each paper should include a clear statement of the theological issue being covered. Ideally, it will also include a clear statement of the thesis the paper will be defending or arguing for. In other words, if you are writing your paper on the doctrine of the Trinity, you might have in mind a thesis like, “Niceno-Constantinopolitan trinitarianism is biblically and theologically sound and historically practical within the church.” Then you would defend that thesis in your paper and show that it is a correct statement. You should do that based on careful exegesis of Scripture (please show your exegesis in the paper) and on historical and theological arguments as well. *Please be sure to use the original languages if you know them.*
- (2) Each paper should be a research paper. In other words, I am looking for you to read widely in the area of your proposed theological issue. You should cite *at least* 10-12 good, scholarly sources in your bibliography and interact with those sources throughout the paper, citing them in your footnotes. Use these sources to support your arguments in defending your thesis. Please note: Wikipedia is NOT a scholarly source! I am interested in published articles or books primarily. On rare occasions, a website might serve in this capacity. But this is rare.
- (3) All papers should use footnotes (NOT endnotes) and be written according to the style advocated by Kate Turabian in *A Manual for Writers*, especially for footnoting and bibliography. If you don’t own a copy of Turabian, you should consider buying one. You will use it throughout your seminary experience.
- (4) Each paper should show an awareness of at least 2 objections to your thesis and then to respond to those 2 objections biblically, theologically, and historically.
- (5) Each paper should also show how the selected theological issue applies practically to life and ministry.
- (6) Each paper should be no less than 10 pages in length and no more than 12 and should be written with one inch margins, double-spaced, 12pt Times New Roman font.
- (7) Late papers will warrant a deduction of 3 percentage points, per day late, off the final grade for the paper.
- (8) All papers should contain a title page with the following information: name and year of course; student name; professor’s name; title of the paper; and date of submission.

NB: The grade I will assign you for your paper will be based upon your fulfillment of the instructions for the assignment, the overall quality of your presentation, my assessment of your grasp of the subject matter, your skill in communicating the material, and how well you did your work in comparison with your peers in the class.

### **3. Final Exam (30%). Due Date: December 10.**

The examination will be a lengthy and detailed test of the student’s mastery of all the material covered in the course lectures and reading and will require the student to apply principles learned in the course to practical test cases.

### **5. Extra Credit (10%). Due date: December 10.**

Students may earn *significant* extra credit by researching and writing a 7-10 page comparative analysis of John Frame's *The Doctrine of the Word of God* (P&R) and RC Sproul's *Scripture Alone: The Evangelical Doctrine* (P&R).

Extra Credit papers should follow the abovementioned guidelines for the research paper.

## Course Lecture Schedule

The following is the tentative schedule for the course:

August 27	Introductions, Syllabus, Prolegomena
September 3	No class, Labor Day holiday
September 10	Scripture
September 17	Scripture
September 24	Introduction to Doctrine of God
October 1	Doctrine of God
October 8	Trinity
October 15	Trinity
October 22	Decree
October 29	Creation
November 5	Providence
November 12	Anthropology
November 19	No class, Fall Break and Thanksgiving holiday
November 26	Anthropology
December 3	Fall & Sin
December 10	Final Exam and Paper due date

## Office Hours

The professor is available to meet with students on Tuesday afternoons or by appointment at other times. Please email Allison Knight at [aknight@rts.edu](mailto:aknight@rts.edu) to schedule an appointment or stop by any time during office hours.

## Assignments

Please be sure that everything you hand in has your full name on it plus a way for me to contact you (email address, physical address, phone number...or all three).

## Recommended Books

In addition to the required reading, the following texts are recommended for your reference during this course, for your research in writing your paper, and/or for your personal library:

### Systematic Theology

- Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology* (3 vols)
- Geerhardus Vos, *Reformed Dogmatics* (5 vols)
- Wilhelmus à Brakel, *The Christian's Reasonable Service* (4 vols)
- John Owen, *Collected Works* (16 vols)
- Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology* (3 vols)
- Robert Dabney, *Systematic Theology*
- BB Warfield, *Collected Works* (10 vols)
- John Murray, *Collected Writings* (4 vols)
- Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*
- Robert Reymond, *A New Systematic Theology of the Christian Faith*
- Donald Macleod, *Faith to Live By*
- Douglas Kelly, *Systematic Theology* (2 vols)

Cornelius Van Til, *An Introduction to Systematic Theology*  
Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics* (4 vols)

#### Prolegomena

Richard Muller, *The Study of Theology*  
John Frame, *The Doctrine of the Knowledge of God*  
David Wells, *No Place for Truth*

#### Scripture

Timothy Ward, *Words of Life: Scripture as the Living and Active Word of God*  
Carl FH Henry, *God, Revelation and Authority* (vol 1)  
NB Stonehouse and Paul Wooley, eds., *The Infallible Word*  
Nigel Cameron, *Evolution and the Authority of the Bible*  
DA Carson and John Woodbridge, eds., *Scripture and Truth*  
\_\_\_\_\_, *Hermeneutics, Authority and Canon*  
ED Hirsch, Jr., *Validity in Interpretation*  
D McCartney and C Clayton, *Let the Reader Understand*  
Michael Kruger, *Canon Revisited*  
Paul Helm and Carl Trueman, eds., *The Trustworthiness of God*

#### Theology

Herman Bavinck, *Doctrine of God*  
JI Packer, *Knowing God*  
Donald Macleod, *Behold Your God*  
Sinclair Ferguson, *The Holy Spirit*  
JA Pipa, Jr., and DW Hall, eds., *Did God Create in Six Days?*  
Paul Helm, *The Providence of God*

#### Anthropology

James Hurley, *Man and Woman in Biblical Perspective*  
George Knight, *The Role Relationship of Men and Women*  
John Piper and Wayne Grudem, eds., *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*  
Iain D. Campbell, *The Doctrine of Sin*  
John Murray, *The Imputation of Adam's Sin*

#### Pastoral Theology

Richard Baxter, *The Reformed Pastor*  
Charles Bridges, *The Christian Ministry*  
Patrick Fairbairn, *Pastoral Theology*  
JI Packer, *A Quest for Godliness*  
CH Spurgeon, *Lectures to My Students*

### **Extension Policy**

All assignments and exams are to be completed by the deadlines announced in this syllabus or in class.

Extensions for assignments and exams due within the normal duration of the course must be approved beforehand by the Professor. Extensions of two weeks or less beyond the date of the last deadline for the course must be approved beforehand by the Professor. A grade penalty may be assessed.

Extensions of greater than two weeks but not more than six weeks beyond the last deadline for the course may be granted in extenuating circumstances (i.e. illness, family emergency). For an extension of more than two weeks the student must request an Extension Request Form from the Registrar's Office. The request must be approved by the Professor and the Academic Dean. A grade penalty may be assessed. (RTS Catalog p. 42 and RTS Atlanta Student Handbook p. 14)

Any incompletes not cleared six weeks after the last published due date for course work will be converted to a failing grade. Professors may have the failing grade changed to a passing grade by request. (RTS Catalog p. 42)

**Course Objectives Related to MDiv\* Student Learning Outcomes**

Course: ST515 Systematic Theology 1

Professor: Guy M. Richard

Campus: Atlanta

Date: Fall 2018

<b><u>MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes</u></b>		<b><u>Rubric</u></b>	<b><u>Mini-Justification</u></b>
<p><i>In order to measure the success of the MDiv 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 MDiv outcomes.</i></p> <p><i>*As the MDiv is the core degree at RTS, the MDiv rubric will be used in this syllabus.</i></p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Strong</li> <li>➤ Moderate</li> <li>➤ Minimal</li> <li>➤ None</li> </ul>	
<b>Articulation (oral &amp; written)</b>	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 are expected to become articulate in expressing and defending major points of doctrine
<b>Scripture</b>	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	Scriptural justification is required for the doctrinal concepts articulated in this course. Students are expected to engage in exegetical studies.
<b>Reformed Theology</b>	Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards.	Strong	This course examines the issues raised by Reformed Theology
<b>Sanctification</b>	Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student's sanctification.	Strong	Right knowing should always lead to right living
<b>Desire for Worldview</b>	Burning desire to conform all of life to the Word of God.	Moderate	Our theology should inform the way we see the world around us
<b>Winsomely Reformed</b>	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	Strong	Students are encouraged to communicate and defend their doctrinal positions winsomely

	attitude in disagreements.)		
<b>Preach</b>	Ability to preach and teach the meaning of Scripture to both heart and mind with clarity and enthusiasm.	Moderate	Class explores how doctrine should/can be preached
<b>Worship</b>	Knowledgeable of historic and modern Christian-worship forms; and ability to construct and skill to lead a worship service.	Strong	Reformed Theology should always lead to worship
<b>Shepherd</b>	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.	Moderate	Pastoral implications of truth will be discussed
<b>Church/World</b>	Ability to interact within a denominational context, within the broader worldwide church, and with significant public issues.	Moderate	At several points, doctrines are considered in light of what is going on in the world