

# ST517 Systematic Theology 2 Syllabus

Reformed Theological Seminary  
Fall 2018—Houston Campus

Dr. Guy M. Richard

[g-richard@rts.edu](mailto:g-richard@rts.edu)

770-952-8884

*My assistant:* Allison Knight, [aknight@rts.edu](mailto:aknight@rts.edu)

## Course Description

This course will cover a study of **Christology** (the person and work of Christ), **soteriology** (the application of Christ's work of redemption), and **eschatology** (the doctrine of the last things). It 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.* Let me tell you why. 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 a topical question that they needed counsel about. They came wanting me to walk them through what the Bible as a whole had to say about this particular topic. 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 pour yourself into your studies in this class. You really will get out of this class what you put into it.

## Prerequisites

Students in this course should be familiar with the 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.

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)

“[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

---

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

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 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>

---

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

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

## Course Requirements

### I. Required Reading

#### 1. Students will be required to read the following texts for the course:

1. John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (Westminster/John Knox, Battles translation), 464-1008. (II.12.1—III.25.12).
2. *Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms* (*WCF* 8-20, 24, 32-33; *WLC* 36-60; 67-90; and *WSC* 20-90).
3. Donald Macleod, *The Person of Christ* (InterVarsity Press).
4. John Murray, *Redemption Accomplished and Applied* (Eerdmans).
5. Guy Prentiss Waters, *Justification and the New Perspectives on Paul* (P&R).
6. Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (Eerdmans), 661-738.

### II. Evaluation

#### 1. **Interaction Papers (10%). Due date: December 8 at the end of class.**

Students will be required to prepare a one (1) page paper on each of the assigned texts for the course (that means 6 papers in total). The papers should interact with each book and specifically talk about what the student found most beneficial in that particular book. Papers should be double spaced in Times New Roman 12pt font. They should be no more and no less than one page in length.

#### 2. **Research Paper (50%). Due date: December 14.**

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 (Christology, soteriology, eschatology). 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. Then you would actually defend that thesis in your paper and show that it is in fact a correct statement or observation. You should do that based on careful exegesis of Scripture (please show your exegesis in the paper) and based 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; student email address; 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 (40%). Due Date: December 14.

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.

### 4. Extra Credit (10%). Due date: December 14.\*

Students may earn *significant* extra credit by researching and writing a 7-10 page research paper on any of the following theological topics (provided that it is a different topic from the main research paper for the course): the person of Christ, the work of Christ, effectual calling and regeneration, saving faith, faith and repentance, justification, adoption, sanctification, perseverance, assurance, glorification, death and resurrection, heaven and hell. **\*Extra Credit papers should follow the abovementioned guidelines for the research paper.**

## Course Lecture Schedule

The following is the tentative schedule for the course:

September 7, Introductions, syllabus overview, Christology  
September 8, Christology  
October 26, Christology  
October 27, Soteriology  
November 9, Soteriology  
November 10, Soteriology  
December 7, Eschatology  
December 8, Eschatology

## Office Hours

The professor is available to meet with students before or after class (depending on flight schedules) or during breaks. He is also available by email or on the phone.

## 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).

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

Course: ST517 Systematic Theology 2

Professor: Guy M. Richard

Campus: Houston

Date: Fall 2018

<b><u>MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes</u></b> <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. *As the MDiv is the core degree at RTS, the MDiv rubric will be used in this syllabus.</i>		<b><u>Rubric</u></b> ➤ Strong ➤ Moderate ➤ Minimal ➤ None	<b><u>Mini-Justification</u></b>
<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 articulating 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	All truth is in order to godliness
<b>Desire for Worldview</b>	Burning desire to conform all of life to the Word of God.	Moderate	Students are expected to think of ways the doctrines explored form a worldview
<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 urged to 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	Frequent analysis of how doctrine should/can be preached will be made
<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 produces reformed 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 outlined
<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 that are entirely counter-cultural