Introduction to Pastoral and Theological Studies[[1]](#footnote-1)

Reformed Theological Seminary, Houston

Fall 2017

# Details

* 1. Dates:
     1. September
        1. Friday Sept 15—6:30-9:30 PM
        2. Saturday, Sept 16—9:00-4:00 PM
     2. October
        1. Friday, Oct 20—6:30-9:30 PM
        2. Saturday, Oct 21—9:00-4:00 PM
     3. November
        1. Friday, Nov 10—6:30-9:30 PM
        2. Saturday, Nov 11—9:00-4:00 PM
     4. December
        1. Friday, Dec 1—6:30-9:30 PM
        2. Saturday, Dec 2—9:00-4:00 PM
  2. Instructor: Dr. Gabriel N.E. Fluhrer
  3. Contact: gabef@fpcjackson.org
  4. Availability: If you wish to discuss some aspect of the course, please speak to me after class or email me.

# Goals

* 1. To familiarize the student with the basics of Reformed theology (specifically, the Reformation *Solas* and the Doctrines of Grace) in their historical context.
  2. To familiarize the student with the core biblical arguments for Reformed theology.
  3. To encourage the student to reflect on some of the hermeneutical and practical implications of Reformed theology.
  4. To help the student appreciate the significance of a Reformed worldview for pastoral and theological studies.

# Course Overview

* 1. Introduction: What is Theology?
  2. Foundations: The Doctrine of Scripture
  3. Background: The Reformation
  4. The Reformation *Solas*
  5. The Reformed Doctrines of Providence and Predestination
  6. The Doctrines of Grace (“Five Points of Calvinism: TULIP”)

# Course Requirements

* 1. *Class attendance and thoughtful participation*.
     1. As per seminary policy, you are required to attend all the lectures. If you know that you will be unable to attend class on a particular date, please inform me in advance, otherwise you may be penalized for your absence.
     2. There will be opportunity for class participation and questions during the lectures.
     3. You will be expected to use the Internet in the classroom *only for appropriate class-related activities*, and you will be asked to sign an honor pledge to that effect.
     4. A proportion of your final grade (see below) will depend on your attendance record and your participation in the classes (thoughtful interaction with the professor and other students).
  2. *Reading assignments*.
     1. You will be required to write a 500 word response to all three assigned books.
     2. These responses must evidence correct grammar, spelling, and structure.
     3. All three reading assignments are due by December 31, 2017
  3. *Final exam*.
     1. The final exam will be a take home exam, due by Dec 31, 2017
     2. The format of the exam will be a series of short-answer questions plus two longer essay questions. You will have three hours to complete it.
     3. You may refer to an English translation of the Bible (but not one with study notes, etc.). You may not refer to any class notes or other study resources.
     4. You will be asked to sign a declaration that you have not discussed the content of the exam with anyone who has previously taken the exam.
     5. You will also be asked to indicate which of the required reading assignments you have *completed* and to sign a declaration to that effect.

# Grading

* 1. Class attendance and participation — 10%
  2. Reaction papers — 40%
  3. Final exam (including credit for reading assignments) — 40%

# Required Reading

You should obtain copies of all the items below. You should also bring an English translation of the Bible to class. ESV is preferred, since that is what I’ll be using. NIV, NASB, and HCSB are acceptable; KJV and *The Message* are not!

* 1. Michael Lawrence, *Biblical Theology in the Life of the Church* (Crossway, 2010).
  2. Michael Reeves, *The Unquenchable Flame* (B&H, 2010).
  3. R. C. Sproul, *What Is Reformed Theology?* (Baker Books, 2005).

# Recommended Supplementary Reading[[2]](#footnote-2)

You are not *required* to read any of the items below, but you may find them useful to consolidate the course material and for further study as your interests dictate. For many of these, the table of contents can be viewed on Amazon.com or Google Books.

* 1. Theological Foundations
     1. John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John T. McNeill, trans. Ford Lewis Battles (Westminster John Knox, 1960).  
        [An overview of Christian doctrine from the original Calvinist; a classic of Reformed theology. Battles’ translation is widely considered to be the best. Henry Beveridge’s earlier translation is available online in various places (e.g., [here](http://www.ccel.org)).]
     2. John M. Frame, *Salvation Belongs to the Lord* (P&R, 2006).  
        [An accessible introduction to systematic theology from a Reformed perspective.]
     3. Abraham Kuyper, *Lectures on Calvinism* (Hendrickson, 2008).  
        [In six lectures delivered at Princeton in 1898, Kuyper argues that Calvinism is not merely a set of doctrines but an entire “life system” (i.e., worldview) with implications for all areas of human life.]
     4. J. I. Packer, *‘Fundamentalism’ and the Word of God* (IVP, 1958; multiple reprints).  
        [A classic defense of the orthodox doctrine of Scripture against its liberal critics. Packer argues that the evangelical view of God’s Word is not a modern innovation but just the view of Christ and his apostles. The book is as relevant today as ever.]
     5. John Wenham, *Christ and the Bible* (Wipf & Stock, 3rd ed., 2009).  
        [A classic treatment of Jesus’ high view of Scripture.]
  2. Reformational Theology
     1. J. V. Fesko, *Justification: Understanding the Classic Reformed Doctrine* (P&R, 2008).  
        [An excellent historical, exegetical, and theological treatment of the doctrine.]
     2. Steve Jeffrey, Mike Ovey, and Andrew Sach, *Pierced For Our Trangressions* (IVP, 2007).  
        [A comprehensive biblical defense of a penal substitutionary understanding of the atonement in the face of recent attacks on the doctrine. Highly recommended.]
     3. John Murray, *Redemption: Accomplished and Applied* (Eerdmans, 1984).  
        [A classic exposition of the Reformed view of the atonement and the *ordo salutis*.]
     4. Thomas Schreiner, *Faith Alone: The Doctrine of Justification* (Zondervan, 2015).  
        [A solid exposition and defense of *Sola Fide*. Addresses various recent challenges.]
     5. David VanDrunen, *God’s Glory Alone: The Majestic Heart of Christian Faith and Life* (Zondervan, 2015).  
        [A good introduction that covers historical, biblical, and pastoral perspectives.]
     6. James R. White, *The God Who Justifies* (Bethany House, 2001).  
        [A thorough exegetical defense of the doctrine of justification by faith alone.]
     7. James R. White, *Scripture Alone* (Bethany House, 2004).  
        [An insightful defense of the sufficiency of Scripture; responds to RC objections.]
  3. Providence and Predestination
     1. Paul Helm, *The Providence of God* (IVP, 1993).  
        [A classic exposition of the doctrine of providence by a Reformed philosophical theologian.]
     2. Paul Helm, Bruce A. Ware, Roger E. Olson, and John Sanders, *Perspectives on the Doctrine of God* (B&H Academic, 2008).  
        [A four-way debate over the doctrines of providence and foreknowledge between a classical Calvinist (Helm), a fuzzy Calvinist (Ware), a classical Arminian (Olson), and an Open Theist (Sanders). Unlikely to change anyone’s mind, but still useful for understanding the basic differences between the positions and the typical rationales for holding them. Not as exegetical as one might wish.]
     3. Dennis W. Jowers, ed., *Four Views on Divine Providence* (Zondervan, 2011).  
        [A four-way debate over the doctrine of providence between a Calvinist (Paul Kjoss Helseth), a Molinist (William Lane Craig), a quasi-Calvinist (Ron Highfield), and an Open Theist (Gregory A. Boyd). Useful for understanding the key differences between the positions represented. Helpful introductory and concluding essays by Jowers.]
     4. Douglas F. Kelly, *If God Already Knows Why Pray?* (Christian Focus, 2005).  
        [A practical and encouraging (and deceptively profound) introduction to the theology of prayer by a Reformed scholar, powerfully illustrated from personal experience.]
     5. J. I. Packer, *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God* (IVP, 1961; multiple reprints).  
        [A classic treatment by a Reformed Anglican theologian.]
     6. John Piper and Justin Taylor, eds., *Suffering and the Sovereignty of God* (Crossway, 2006).  
        [A collection of essays from a broadly Reformed perspective based on talks given at the 2005 Desiring God National Conference. Not sophisticated treatments, but for the most part theologically sound and pastorally sensitive. The book can be read online at the Desiring God website.]
  4. The Doctrines of Grace (Calvinism)
     1. David L. Allen and Steve W. Lemke, eds., *Whosoever Will: A Biblical-Theological Critique of Five-Point Calvinism* (B&H Academic, 2010).  
        [Various essays targeting “Five-Point Calvinism”—yes, even Total Depravity.]
     2. Matthew Barrett, *Salvation by Grace: The Case for Effectual Calling and Regeneration* (P&R, 2013).  
        [A thorough biblical defense of the doctrine of efficacious grace.]
     3. D. A. Carson, *The Difficult Doctrine of the Love of God* (Crossway, 2000).  
        [A helpful little study on the love of God and its relation to God’s sovereignty and wrath, from a broadly Calvinist perspective. PDF available online [here](http://s3.amazonaws.com/tgc-documents/carson/2000_difficult_doctrine_of_the_love_of_God.pdf).]
     4. David Gibson and Jonathan Gibson, eds., *From Heaven He Came and Sought Her: Definite Atonement in Historical, Biblical, Theological, and Pastoral Perspective* (Crossway, 2013).  
        [An impressive multi-author defense of the doctrine of definite/limited atonement.]
     5. Michael S. Horton, *For Calvinism* (Zondervan, 2011).  
        [A winsome and articulate defense of Calvinism, pitched at the popular level. Note also the companion volume, *Against Calvinism*, by Roger Olson.]
     6. Roger E. Olson, *Arminian Theology: Myths and Realities* (IVP, 2006).  
        [Not so much a defense of Arminianism against Calvinism as an attempt to correct common misconceptions and misrepresentations of classical Arminian theology and to clearly present its disagreements with Calvinism. Probably the best book of its kind.]
     7. Roger E. Olson, *Against Calvinism* (Zondervan, 2011).  
        [Olson is one of the most prominent Arminian critics of Calvinism writing today, although I find many of his criticisms to be quite superficial. Note the companion volume, *For Calvinism*, authored by Michael Horton.]
     8. Robert A. Peterson, *Election and Free Will* (P&R, 2007).  
        [A solid and workmanlike defense of unconditional election; rather dry in style.]
     9. Clark H. Pinnock, ed., *The Grace of God, the Will of Man* (Academia Books, 1989).  
        [An influential collection of essays in defense of (versions of) Arminianism.]
     10. Robert E. Picirilli, *Grace, Faith, Free Will* (Randall House, 2002).  
         [A defense of Arminianism from historical, systematic, and exegetical perspectives.]
     11. Sam Storms, *Chosen for Life: The Case for Divine Election* (Crossway, 2007).  
         [A lucid and thorough case for the doctrine of unconditional election.]
     12. Jerry L. Walls and Joseph R. Dongell, *Why I Am Not a Calvinist* (IVP, 2004).  
         [A responsible case for classical (Wesleyan) Arminianism; stronger philosophically than exegetically.]

1. The syllabus and course notes for this class have been adapted from Dr. James Anderson’s ST 502 documents and used by permission. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Again, these are Dr. Anderson’s recommendations, but I agree with his assessment. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)