REFORMED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
DISTANCE EDUCATION

Systematic Theology: Ecclesiology & Sacraments

Dr. Scott R. Swain

Course Overview

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Course Description:

0ST5250 Systematic Theology: Ecclesiology and Sacraments, 2 hours
Lecturing Professor: Dr. Scott R. Swain
Professor of Record: Dr. Michael Allen

This course explores biblical doctrine from a systematic perspective. Topics include Ecclesiology and Sacraments.

Course Objectives:

To contemplate, appreciate, and apply the doctrines of Church and Sacraments as they are revealed in Holy Scripture and summarized in the Reformed Confessions to the end that God might be glorified "in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations" (Ephesians 3:21).

The study of the doctrines of the Church will include:

- Its ontological and epistemological foundations.
- The unity and progression of the church in redemptive history in its promissory form, pattern and prophesy form, and perfect eschatological form.
- The modes, marks, and ministry of the Church.

The study of the Sacraments of the Church will include:

- Examining them as the signs and seals of the covenant of grace.
- Identification and number of sacraments in the Protestant and Roman Catholic churches.
- A careful study of Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

Required Textbooks:

Ephesians (students are required to read Ephesians slowly and prayerfully at least four times)

Bavinck, Herman. ***Holy Spirit, Church, and New Creation***. Vol. 4 of *Reformed Dogmatics*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008.

Clowney, Edmund P. ***The Church***. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1995.

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Genderen, J. van and W.H. Velema. *Concise Reformed Dogmatics*. Philipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 1992.

Grudem, Wayne A. editor. *Are Miraculous Gifts for Today? Four Views*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996.

Strawbridge, Gregg. editor. *The Case for Covenantal Infant Baptism*. Philipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 2003.

Venema, Cornelis. "The Doctrine of the Lord's Supper in the Reformed Confessions," *MTJ* 12 (2001): 81-145.
(Available on the LMS)

Venema, Cornelis. "Sacraments and Baptism in the Reformed Confessions," *MTJ* 11 (2000): 21-86.
(Available on the LMS)

Webster, John. "On Evangelical Ecclesiology," *Ecclesiology* 1 (2004): 9-35.
(Available on the LMS)

[These books may also be available in ebook format through various retailers]

Online Student Handbook:

The Online Student Handbook (can be downloaded here) has been designed to assist you in successfully navigating the Distance Education experience, whether you are taking a single course or pursuing a certificate or degree program. In it you will find valuable information, step-by-step instructions, study helps, and essential forms to guide you through every aspect of your distance education opportunity from registration to graduation. Please use this resource as your first-stop reference manual.

Summary of Requirements:

1. Listen to all recorded Lectures
2. Complete all Readings
3. Participate in Forum Discussions (with other students and the professor)
4. Take the Midterm Exam
5. Take the Final Exam
6. Submit Research Paper
7. Submit Reading Report
8. Submit Mentor Report or Course Application Paper

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Meet the Professors

Lecturing Professor:

Dr. Scott R. Swain was born and raised in a Christian home in Jacksonville, Florida. He joined the faculty of RTS Orlando in 2006 and from 2012-2016 served as Academic Dean. In January of 2017, Chancellor Ligon Duncan and the Board of Trustees appointed Dr. Swain President and James Woodrow Hassell Professor of Systematic Theology of the Orlando campus.

Dr. Swain attended the University of North Florida (BA), Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary (MDiv; ThM), and Trinity Evangelical Divinity School (PhD). He has authored several books and articles, including Trinity, Revelation, and Reading: A Theological Introduction to the Bible and Its Interpretation, The God of the Gospel: Robert Jenson's Trinitarian Theology, and (with Dr. Michael Allen), Reformed Catholicity: The Promise of Retrieval for Theology and Biblical Interpretation. With Dr. Michael Allen, Dr. Swain serves as general editor of two series: Zondervan Academic's New Studies in Dogmatics and T & T Clark's International Theological Commentary.

An ordained teaching elder in the Presbyterian Church in America, Dr. Swain and his wife, Leigh, have four children: Carly, Sophie, Josiah, and Micah.

Professor of Record:

Dr. Mike Allen joined the faculty of RTS-Orlando in 2015 and serves as Associate Professor of Systematic and Historical Theology. He teaches core courses related to systematic theology and historical theology.

Dr. Allen's research interests range widely over the various topics of Christian doctrine and eras of church history. He is eager to guide students to grow in their ability to retrieve theological riches from the past for the sake of renewing contemporary reflection, worship, and witness. In this vein, he is committed to Reformed catholicity as a confession and a posture for doing theology and approaching ministry today. He is presently writing a volume on sanctification that is not only rooted in Reformational teaching on Christ and grace but also attuned to patristic and medieval thought about the moral life and the lived nature of Christian holiness, as well as a spin-off volume regarding the need to recover and reform patristic, medieval, and Puritan teaching on heavenly-minded eschatology and its ethical implications in an age and church so focused upon naturalistic problems and blessings. With Dr. Scott Swain, he serves as general editor of the T & T Clark International Theological Commentary series and the New Studies in Dogmatics series for Zondervan Academic. He grew up in both the South and then in South Florida. Prior to joining the faculty at RTS, he taught undergraduate and graduate students at Wheaton College and then taught at Knox Theological Seminary for five years, where he held the D. James Kennedy Chair of Systematic Theology and also served as Dean of the Faculty. He is a teaching elder in the Evangelical Presbyterian Church. Dr. Allen and his wife, Emily, have two sons, Jackson and Will. He enjoys playing and watching basketball, reading, and drinking sweet tea.

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Grades

Forum Discussions (15%):

The student is required to interact in two (2) forums:

1. Student-Professor Posts (15 total posts)
   A. Personal Introduction Forum: The student is required to post a brief personal introduction to the professor/class. Suggested details include your vocation, where you live, your church background, why you chose RTS, and what you hope to gain through the course (1 required post).
   B. 5 Topical Discussion Q&A Forums: The student is required to answer each topical discussion question with one (1) response. The professor will acknowledge the student's answer and will follow up with a subsequent question to which the student must also answer with one (1) response. Each topical discussion question ,therefore, requires two (2) total posts/responses from the student (Total of 5 forums x 2 posts =10 total posts).
   C. Student-Professor Forum: The student is required to post four (4) times in this forum. Posts in this forum should focus on course-related content such as research paper topics, lectures and reading assignments, or other academic issues related to the course.
2. Student-Student Forum (5 total posts)
   A post may be either a new topic or a response to an already existing topic.

Examinations (Midterm 20%, Final 20%):

There will be two examinations for this course. The midterm will cover all the lectures and assigned readings from Lessons 1-7, the final exam will cover all the lectures and assigned readings from Lessons 8-11.

Exams will test students' critical grasp of doctrinal topics covered in class lectures, readings, and the Reformed confessions as well as their ability to communicate doctrinal topics in a clear manner.

The student should use the Lesson Review Questions and the Topical Discussion Questions to guide them in their preparation and study for the exams. The format for the midterm and final exams will be two long essay questions and four short answer questions. The student will have two hours to complete the exam.

The exams for this course are to be taken online in the Learning Management System (LMS). Please note that you will need to have a proctor for your exams. Your proctor can be anyone except a relative or current RTS Student. After clicking on the exam link you will be given detailed instructions about the exam. Please read these instructions carefully before entering the exam

Research Paper (30%):

The student will write and submit a 10-12 page research paper (12 pt. font and double spaced) with appropriate footnoting and bibliography according to Turabian style. See section titled "Research Paper Instructions" in this syllabus.

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Reading Report (10%):

The student must complete all of the required reading. Reading assignments are broken down week by week within the LMS. The Reading Report will indicate the amount of required reading that has been completed during the semester and must be filled out and submitted at the end of the course.

*Mentor Report **OR** Course Application Paper (5%):*

If you are enrolled in an **RTS Global** degree program, you are required to submit a mentor report at the end of the course. Every portion of the form (goals, summaries, assessments, and signatures) should be filled out completely by both the student and the mentor to receive full credit. You can download the Mentor Report form in your Canvas classroom.

If you are receiving your degree through another **RTS campus** (Orlando, Jackson, Charlotte, et. al.), or are a certificate student, or special student (e.g. from another seminary), you are asked to write a 200-word summary of how you perceive what you have learned in this course will fit into the objectives you have for your ministry, your educational goals, or other objectives you wish to achieve in life. Course Application Papers (CAP) that fall well-short of 200 words will receive a grade deduction.

Assignments:

Best practice for your time management is for you to submit all assignments at the end of the week in which they fall, using the upload links provided in the LMS. All work must be submitted by midnight of the course end date, per your course start letter. You are responsible for turning in all assignments on time; no late submissions are permitted. Any student who needs an extension must get approval from the Registrar prior to that time.

Contact Information:

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Lessons

Lesson One
Principles of Reformed Ecclesiology

Lesson Two
The Church Defined

Lesson Three
The Story of the Church

Lesson Four
The Modes and Marks of the Church

Lesson Five
The Ministry of the Church

Lesson Six
Signed, Sealed and Delivered:
An Introduction to the Sacraments

Lesson Seven
The Sacrament of Baptism

Lesson Eight
The Proper Subjects of Baptism

Lesson Nine
The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper

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Research Paper Instructions

The student will write and submit a 10-12 page research paper (12 pt. font and double spaced) with appropriate footnoting and bibliography according to Turabian style. The paper must also:

- Have a proper and clear thesis, introduction, structure, and conclusion
- Consider and investigate the relevant information competently and fairly to all sides
- Interact with both primary and secondary material
- Demonstrate that the student has synthesized the materials coming to their own conclusion, and has clearly thought about it 'theologically' and practically
- Cite at least five scholarly sources that are not part of the required reading of this course
- Cite at least two scholarly journal articles

Papers will be evaluated based on their ability (1) to articulate a clear thesis that rests upon sound biblical and theological argumentation and that addresses the strongest counter-arguments to the thesis; (2) to engage with appropriate scholarly resources; (3) to follow the above prescribed format.

The following rubric contains some of the key criteria by which your paper may be graded:

1. **Clear & Viable Thesis:** The paper puts forth a viable thesis that is clearly stated and can be reasonably defended in a paper of the assigned length.
2. **Structure & Argumentation:** The paper has a logical structure and provides appropriate argumentation in support of the thesis.
3. **Use of Resources:** The paper uses the proper number and types of resources. This includes using diverse, quality resources in a responsible manner.
4. **Turabian Formatting:** The paper is properly formatted according to the RTS Turabian guidelines. These guidelines can be downloaded within your course on the "Notebook" page.
5. **Depth of Paper:** The paper has depth that reflects scholarly research, critical analysis, theological insight, and creativity.
6. **Presentation of Paper:** The paper reflects good grammar, spelling, and punctuation, with clarity of expression and appropriate academic style.

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Course Objectives Related to Student Learning Outcomes

Course: Systematic Theology 519: Ecclesiology and Sacraments
Professor: Dr. Scott Swain

Student Learning Outcomes *In order to measure the success of the 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 outcomes.*		**Rubric** ➢ Strong ➢ Moderate ➢ Minimal ➢ None	**Mini-Justification**
Articulation (oral & written)	Broadly understands and articulates knowledge, both oral and written, of essential biblical, theological, historical, and cultural/global information, including details, concepts, and frameworks.	Strong	Exams, research paper
Scripture	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	Focus of all ST courses
Reformed Theology	Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards.	Strong	Focus of all ST courses
Sanctification	Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student's sanctification.	Moderate	Focus of all ST courses
Desire for Worldview	Burning desire to conform all of life to the Word of God.	Strong	Focus of all ST courses
Winsomely Reformed/ Evangelistic	Embraces a winsomely Reformed ethos. (Includes an appropriate ecumenical spirit with other Christians, especially Evangelicals; a concern to present the Gospel in a God-honoring manner to non-Christians; and a truth-in-love attitude in disagreements.)	Strong	Careful engagement with other views of church and sacraments
Teach	Ability to teach the meaning of Scripture to both heart and mind with clarity and enthusiasm.	Moderate	Sound understanding of biblical theology promotes sound teaching
Church/World	Ability to interact within a denominational context, within the broader worldwide church, and with significant public issues.	Moderate	Biblical bases for denominational distinctives are addressed to some degree.
MAR Specific SLO	An ability to integrate such knowledge and understanding into one's own calling in society	Moderate	By studying the theology taught in God's Word, the man of God is equipped to better use his "gifts and callings," to encourage, reprove, rebuke, and exhort with complete patience and teaching.

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