ST 5250/01 Syllabus

Winter Hybrid 2020

Reformed Theological Seminary

**Systematic Theology**

**Ecclesiology & Sacraments**

**Meeting Information**

Meeting Time: Monday - Friday, 1:00 PM–4:00 PM (January 13 – January 17)

Meeting Place: Orlando Campus

**Contact Information**

Prof.: D. Blair Smith

Office Phone: 704-366-5066 (x4223)

Email: bsmith@rts.edu

**Course Description**

This course will systematically present biblical teaching on the topics of Ecclesiology and the Sacraments as understood and taught within the Reformed tradition, demonstrating that these formulations (1) represent the proper understanding of Scripture, (2) inherit and carry forward the best of the ancient teachings of the Church, and (3) provide the people of God the doctrine needed in order to thrive as disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ in the twenty-first century.

**Course Objectives**

1. To base all of our theology of the sacraments and ecclesiology in God’s revelation in Scripture.
2. To enable the student to better grasp related doctrines through familiarity with their exegetical and theological foundations, while also being acquainted with both relevant historical and contemporary discussions, so that they can clearly and confidently communicate them in preaching, teaching, and counseling.
3. To explore and appreciate the confessional expressions concerning ecclesiology and the sacraments within the Reformed tradition, especially in the Westminster Standards.

**Texts and Abbreviations**

*Summary (required)*

*GDAU:* Beale, G. K and Mitchell Kim, *God Dwells Among Us: Expanding Eden to the Ends of the Earth* (215 pp.)

*THS:* Sinclair B. Ferguson, *The Holy Spirit,* pp. 57-92; 191-239 (chapters 3-4; 9-10)

*BRD:* Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics: Abridged in One Volume,* pp. 589-690 (chapters 21-22)

*VRD:* Geerhardus Vos, *Reformed Dogmatics:* volume 5, *Ecclesiology, The Means of Grace, Eschatology,* pp. 1-249 (chapters 1-5)

*Scripture & Confession (required)*

*WCF:* *The Westminster Confession of Faith*(chapters 21, 25-31)

*Scripture:* The Epistle to the Ephesians

*Supplemental Readings (required – available on Canvas)*

*SR:* Herman Bavinck “The Catholicity of Christianity and the Church,” *Calvin Theological Journal* 27 (1992): 220-51

Todd Billings, “The Sacraments” in *Christian Dogmatics: Reformed Theology for the Church Catholic,* pp. 339-362 (chapter 15)

John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, pp. 1011-1041; 1276-1303 (IV.1 & IV.14)

Edmund P. Clowney, *The Church,* pp. 27-60 (chapters 2-4)

Aaron Clay Denlinger, “Baptism” in *Reformation Theology: A Systematic Summary,* pp. 609-642 (chapter 17)

Michael Horton, “The Church” in *Christian Dogmatics: Reformed Theology for the Church Catholic,* pp. 311-338 (chapter 14)

Keith A. Mathison, “The Lord’s Supper” in *Reformation Theology: A Systematic Summary,* pp. 643-674 (chapter 18)

Richard L. Pratt Jr., “Infant Baptism in the New Covenant,” in *The Case for Covenantal Infant Baptism,* pp. 156-174 (chapter 8)

Cornelis Venema, “The Doctrine of the Lord’s Supper in the Reformed Confessions,” *MTJ* 12 (2001): 81-145.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.“Sacraments and Baptism in the Reformed Confessions,” *MTJ* 11 (2000): 21-86.

John Webster, “On Evangelical Ecclesiology,” *Ecclesiology* 1 (2004): 9-35.

**Reading Schedule**

The week of **December 2nd**: Read article by Bavinck and chapter by Horton (*SR*). Be ready to answer Canvas Question #1.

The week of **December 9th:** Read chapters by Clowney (*SR*). Be ready to answer Canvas Question #2.

The week of **December 16th**: Read Paul’s epistle to the Ephesians three times and article by Webster (*SR*). Be ready to answer Canvas Question #3.

The week of **December 23rd**: Read chapters 1-5 of *GDAU.* Be ready to answer Canvas Question #4.

The week of **December 30th:** Read chapters 6-10 of *GDAU.* Be ready to answer Canvas Question #5.

By virtue of writing your Review Paper, you will also have read the chapters or articles by Denlinger, Mathison, and Venema (*SR*) by the time class starts in January. Come to class also having read the chapter by Billings (*SR*). All other reading must be completed by the time of your Final Exam.

**Requirements**

1. Attend and be ready to participate in every class.
2. December Reading Questions (15%)

Students will answer questions by the professor in Canvas each week in December. These questions are tied to your assigned reading for that week. Directions on answering questions will be given in Canvas.

1. Reading report (15%)

Attached to the Final Exam, students will turn in a reading report stating the percentage of the assigned readings that they have read with reasonable care over the course of the semester.

1. Review Paper (15%)

After reading the chapters and articles written by Denlinger, Mathison, and Venema, write a 6-7 page review paper (typed and double-spaced with one-inch margins, with references only to these assigned texts). This will first succinctly summarize the debates over Baptism and the Lord’s Supper between Roman Catholics, Lutherans, the Reformed, and Anabaptists during the Reformation period. The second half of the paper will draw out commonalities as well as differences among the *Reformed* confessions. This review paper is not a critical engagement where you provide your own opinion or interpretation. Rather, it is an opportunity to distill the core elements on various sides of the Reformation debates and analyze commonalities and differences among the Reformed in a clear way.

**\*Due: Upload to Canvas January 13th before class**

1. Term Paper (30%)

Students will write an 8-12 page term paper (typed and double-spaced, with appropriate footnoting and bibliography in Turabian style) on one of the topics treated in the course. Make sure you (1) present a clear thesis; (2) have a proper introduction and conclusion and a clear structure for your essay; (3) deal with the relevant information competently and fairly to all sides; (4) where necessary, engage primary sources; (5) offer critical analysis (and not merely summary) of the positions and views you engage; (6) where relevant, consider the implications and significance of your investigation for the life of the church; and (7) use at least 10 scholarly sources. If it would be helpful, please consult with the professor on initial bibliography. Your paper could be on one of the following topics. Other topics may be chosen in consultation with the professor.

1. The catholicity of the Church: How does the unity and universality of the Church manifest itself? How does the question of the visible/invisible Church fit into this? What biblical texts substantiate this doctrine? Is there an ecclesiology (Presbyterian, Episcopal, Congregational) that is best equipped to give expression to the Church’s catholicity?
2. The “apostolic” Church: What does it mean for the church to continue to be “apostolic”? How does this connect with Christ and the original apostles, including Paul’s teaching? How does this relate to the offices of the church?
3. The Reformed marks of the Church: What are they, why are they “limited”, and how are they rooted in Scripture? What is the best critique against them, especially from Roman Catholic theologians? How should these marks manifest themselves in the regular life of the Church?
4. The mission of the Church: How do the marks of the church relate to her mission? Are there some ministries, such as counseling and Sunday school and VBS, more closely related to the marks than others? How does the mission of the Church relate to such concerns as social justice?
5. The Holy Spirit (a variety of potential papers here): How does Pentecost relate to today’s Church? How do the gifts of the Spirit relate to the ministry of the Church today? What is the relationship between the Holy Spirit and the sacraments (both or either Baptism or the Lord’s Supper)?
6. Faith and the sacraments: How do faith and the Spirit interact in receiving the sacraments? How does this connect with those who receive or do not receive the sacraments (e.g., children)? How does the Lord’s Supper both require and strengthen faith?
7. Baptismal regeneration: Why do some churches hold to this position? Why does Reformed theology reject it? How can it be rejected while still holding that baptism is the “sign and seal of our regeneration”?
8. The theology and practice of the Lord’s Supper: How does our theology of the Lord’s Supper connect with our practice? How does a Reformed position differ from others, especially a Roman Catholic or Orthodox one? Where does ecumenicity start or stop with the Lord’s Supper?

**\*Due: Your paper must be uploaded to Canvas by February 14th.**

1. Exam (25%)

Students will take a Final Exam which will test your grasp of doctrinal topics covered in class lectures and readings as well as your ability to communicate doctrinal topics in a clear and cogent manner. A study guide will be provided by the end of the last class.

**\*Due: You must take the exam through Canvas anytime between February 10th – 14th. You will need a proctor whose information you will provide on the exam.**

*For Further Reading*

In addition to systematic theological works that would be helpful to consult, such as those by Bavinck, Calvin, Turretin, Hodge, Berkhof, Frame, and Bray, the following books will assist further study of the doctrinal topics discussed in this course.

Gregg Allison, *Sojourners and Strangers: The Doctrine of the Church*

James Bannerman, *The Church of Christ*, 2 vols.

Herman Bavinck, *Saved by Grace: The Holy Spirit’s Work in Calling and Regeneration*

G. K. Beale, *The Temple and the Church’s Mission*

J. Todd Billings, *Union with Christ: Reframing Theology and Ministry for the Church*

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*

Jonathan Bonomo, *Incarnation and Sacrament: The Eucharistic Controversy between Charles Hodge and John Williamson Nevin*

John Calvin, *Treatises on the Sacraments*

*The Catechism of the Catholic Church*

Kevin DeYoung and Greg Gilbert, *What is the Mission of the Church? Making Sense of Social Justice, Shalom, and the Great Commission*

J. van Genderen and W.H. Velema, *Concise Reformed Dogmatics* (chapter 14)

Peter Gentry and Stephen Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant: A Biblical-Theological Understanding of the Covenants*

Michael Goheen, *A Light to the Nations: The Missional Church and the Biblical Story*

Wayne Grudem, ed. *Are Miraculous Gifts for Today? Four Views*

Stanley Hauerwas and William Willimon, *Resident Aliens*

Michael Horton, *People and Place: A Covenant Ecclesiology*

Hans Küng, *The Church*

Stuart Robinson, *The Church of God as an Essential Element of the Gospel*

Thomas Schreiner and Shawn Wright, ed., *Believer’s Baptism: Sign of the New Covenant in Christ*

Gregg Strawbridge, ed., *The Case for Covenantal Infant Baptism*

Timothy Tennant, *Theology in the Context of World Christianity*

Carl Trueman, *The Creedal Imperative*

Miroslav Volf, *After Our Likeness: The Church as the Image of the Trinity*

Guy Prentiss Waters, *How Jesus Runs the Church*

Ronald Wallace, *Calvin’s Doctrine of Word and Sacrament*



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

**With Mini-Justification**

Course: ST5250

Professor: D. Blair Smith

Campus: Orlando

Date: January 2020

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **MDiv Student Learning 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 | Emphasis on learning and articulating foundational truths about the church and sacraments in exams and 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 | Students not only explain theological truths, but will understand the exegetical process essential to arriving at those truths.  |
| **Reformed Theology** | Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards.  | Strong | The course will take into view the Reformed understanding of the Church and sacraments, with emphasis upon writings of the Reformers, as well as *The Westminster Confession of Faith*, chapters 21, 25-31 |
| **Sanctification** | Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student’s sanctification. | Strong | Students will not only learn theological truths about the Church and sacraments, but also how each enriches our relationship with the Lord. |
| **Worldview** | Burning desire to conform all of life to the Word of God. Includes ability to interact within a denominational context, within the broader worldwide church, and with significant public issues. | Moderate | In a day when the church often conforms to outside forces, understanding how God has ordained the Church is critical. |
| **Winsomely Reformed** | 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 | While other views are considered, engaged, and expounded, this course focuses on Reformed Theology without alienating those who disagree.  |
| **Pastoral Ministry** | Ability to minister the Word of God to hearts and lives of both churched and unchurched, to include preaching, teaching, leading in worship, leading and shepherding the local congregation, aiding in spiritual maturity, concern for non-Christians. | Moderate | The content of this class will help students to better exegete the Word, and gives them a framework in which to understand it, making them stronger preachers and ministers of theological truth.  |