ST1: Scripture, Theology Proper, Anthropology

Reformed Theological Seminary, Houston

Spring 2020

# Details

* 1. Dates
     1. April 20-24, 2020: 8-5 PM
     2. NOTE: Times may be adjusted during these days by consent of the class present.
  2. Instructor: Dr. Gabriel N.E. Fluhrer
  3. Contact: Executive assistant: Campbell Johnson (cjohnson@firstprescolumbia.org)
  4. Availability: If you wish to discuss some aspect of the course, please speak to me after class or email my assistant.

# Goals

* 1. To exalt the triune God through a careful study of what his entire word says on a given topic, which is the basic task of systematic theology
  2. To familiarize the student with the cardinal doctrines of the Christian faith from a historic, Confessional, Reformed perspective.
  3. To demonstrate the exegetical, historical, and Biblical-theological basis for the doctrines covered in this class.
  4. To help the student gain competency in key systematic theology texts.

# Course Overview

* 1. Introduction
  2. Prolegomena
  3. Doctrine of Scripture
  4. Doctrine of God
  5. Anthropology

# 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*. (40%)
     1. You will be required to write a 500 word response to all assigned books.
     2. These responses must evidence correct grammar, spelling, and structure.
     3. **All reading responses are due by May 25, 2020**
  3. *Paper*
     1. The final paper will be either a defense or an attempted refutation of the one of the doctrines covered in this class. For example, “A Basic Defense of the Inerrancy of Scripture”
     2. Requirements[[1]](#footnote-1)
        1. Not to exceed 4500 words (excluding footnotes).
        2. A clear statement and explanation of the article of doctrine under discussion, with supporting references.
        3. A treatment of at least two prominent objections to the position you have taken (i.e., the objections and then try to refute them). You should cite sources (either popular or scholarly) for these objections.
        4. A discussion of some of the practical applications of the position you have taken (i.e., answer the question: what real difference does it or should it make in the life of a Christian believer?).
        5. A standard bibliography (see below on sources and citations).
     3. Your paper will be graded according to the following criteria, in no particular order: responsible use of Scripture, responsible use of sources, extent of research, creativity, clarity, structure and coherence, cogency of argument, evidence of critical thinking, practical relevance, and good writing style (including grammar, spelling, and punctuation). **Your paper should cite at least 6 scholarly sources**. For the purposes of this paper, a scholarly source is a book or article by a recognized expert in the field (and not aimed at a popular level for a general audience). Please consult the professor if you have any doubts about whether a source is scholarly. You should not rely heavily on web-based sources. Use the library!
     4. The paper should be word-processed, not hand-written. Use a 12-point font and double line-spacing for the main text. Use section headings where applicable to improve readability. Use footnotes (10-point font) rather than endnotes. Use Turabian style for citations, footnoting, and bibliography. The paper should be submitted with a title page containing all of the following: the name and year of the course, your name, the professor’s name, the title of the paper, and the exact word count for the paper (obtained from your word processor’s word-count feature).
     5. 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.
     6. You will be penalized if you do not observe the requirements and guidelines above.
     7. **The final paper is due June 1, 2020. You will be penalized a letter grade for every day that it is late.**

# Grading

* 1. Class attendance and participation — 10%
  2. Reaction papers — 40%
  3. Final paper (including credit for reading assignments) — 50%

# Required Reading

You should obtain copies of all the items below. You should also bring an English translation of the Bible to class. I will use the KJV and ESV. NIV, NASB, and HCSB are acceptable. The NLT and *The Message* are not acceptable translations for this course.

* 1. Herman Bavinck, Our Reasonable Faith (Grand Rapids: Wm.B. Eerdmans, 1956),1-221
  2. Calvin, John. *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Vol. 1. Translated by Ford Lewis Battles. Edited by John T. McNeill. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1960. Chs. 1-18
  3. Packer, J.I. “The Preacher as Theologian: Preaching and Systematic Theology,” in *Collected Shorter Writings of J.I. Packer: 3 Honoring the Written Word of God*. Carlisle, Cumbria: Paternoster publications, 1999. Pp. 301-316.

# Recommended Supplementary Reading

You are not *required* to read the following but they are indispensable for further study in the areas covered in this class

1. Bavinck, Herman. *Reformed Dogmatics*. Edited by John Bolt. Translated by John Vriend. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008. Vols. 1-2.
2. Beeke, Joel R. and Smalley, Paul M. *Reformed Systematic Theology, Volume 1: Revelation and God.* Wheaton: Crossway, 2019.
3. a Brakel, Wilhelmus. *The Christian’s Reasonable Service*. Edited by Joel R. Beeke. Translated by Bartel Elshout. Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2015, 1:1-462.
4. Carson, D.A., editor. *The Enduring Authority of the Christian Scriptures*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016.
5. Frame, John M. *The Doctrine of God*. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2002.
6. Kruger, Michael. *Canon Revisited*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012.
7. Muller, Richard. *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics: The Rise and Development of Reformed Orthodoxy, ca. 1520 to ca. 1725.* Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003, vols. 1-2
8. Perkins, William. *A Golden Chain* in *The Works of William Perkins,* Volume 6. Grand Rapids, Reformation Heritage Books, 2018.
9. Warfield, Benjamin B. *Biblical Doctrines*. Vol. 2 of *The Works of Benjamin B. Warfield*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1927. Reprint, Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981.

1. Adapted from James Anderson’s syllabus for *Introduction to Pastoral and Theological Studies*. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)