

## Systematic Theology Ecclesiology & Sacraments

### Meeting Information

Meeting Time: Thursdays, 8:30 AM–12:00 PM (February 6 – May 7)

Meeting Place:

### Contact Information

Prof.: D. Blair Smith (office: lower level in E building)

Office Phone: 704-366-5066 (x4223)<sup>[117]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>

Email: [bsmith@rts.edu](mailto:bsmith@rts.edu)

Hours: Wednesdays 1:00 PM–3:00 PM and by appointment

Teaching Assistant: Peter Leach ([peterjleach@gmail.com](mailto:peterjleach@gmail.com))

### 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)

- THS: Sinclair B. Ferguson, *The Holy Spirit*, pp. 57-92; 191-239 (chapters 3-4; 9-10 - \*if you take 'Systematic Theology: Christology, Soteriology, Eschatology' you will read this whole book)
- 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*<sup>[SEP]</sup> (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.

## Requirements

1. Attend and be ready to participate in every class.
2. Complete the required reading for each week.

3. Weekly Reading Response (10%)

Students will upload to Canvas by noon the day *before* class meets (Wednesday) a document containing *two elements*: (1) three quotes from the week's required reading, which you found interesting or challenging. You are also to provide (2) a 200 word response (approximately 12 typed lines) to one of the three listed quotes. The quote should not be included in the response. This response is an opportunity to interact with the idea and/or author in a critical (positive or negative or questioning) manner.

4. Reading report (20%)

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. *This includes reading Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians three times throughout the course of the semester.*

5. Class Debate (15%)

On the last day of class we will have a great reformation debate on the Lord's Supper. The class will be divided into four groups. Each group will represent a key position on the Lord's Supper from the Reformation era: Roman Catholic, Lutheran, Calvinist, and Zwinglian. The groups will study up on their respective positions, produce a five-page summary to be turned in the day of the debate, and also be prepared to rebut the other three positions. Each group will need to nominate its debater for the day of the debate. There will be allowed one substitution for each group in the course of the debate. The professor will moderate the debate. Your grade will be determined by the quality of your summary and how prepared your team is the day of the debate. More details will be given in class.

6. 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 8 scholarly sources. If it would be helpful, please consult with the professor on initial bibliography. Your paper should be on one of the following topics:

- a. 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?

- b. 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?
- c. 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?
- d. 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?
- e. 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)?
- f. 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?
- g. 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"?
- h. 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?
- i. Other topics/questions may be chosen in consultation with the professor.

**\*Due: April 30**

7. 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.

**Final Exam: May 14-19**

## **Schedule, Reading Schedule, and Assignments**

### **Class 1 - Thursday, February 6**

**Topic: *Introduction to Ecclesiology***

SR: Herman Bavinck "The Catholicity of Christianity and the Church," *Calvin*

*Theological Journal* 27 (1992): 220-51

WCF: Chapters 25-26, 30-31

**\*These should be read before the first day of class.**

**Class 2 – Thursday, February 13**

**Topic:** *The Foundation of the Church*

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

**\*Assignment:** Weekly Reading Response 1 (see details above)

**Class 3 – Thursday, February 20**

**Topic:** *Defining the Church*

BRD: pp. 589-595

VRD: pp. 1-31 (chapter 1)

**\*Assignment:** Weekly Reading Response 2

**Class 4 – Thursday, February 27**

**Topic:** *The Church’s Story in Scripture*

BRD: pp. 595-601

SR: Edmund P. Clowney, *The Church*, pp. 27-60

**\*Assignment:** Weekly Reading Response 3

**Class 5 – Thursday, March 5**

**Topic:** *The Church’s Spiritual Government & Power*

VRD: pp. 32-74 (chapter 2)

SR: John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, pp. 1011-1041 (IV.1)

**\*Assignment:** Weekly Reading Response 4

**Class 6 – Thursday, March 12**

**Topic:** *The Modes and Marks of the Church*

BRD: pp. 601-642

THS: pp. 57-92 (chapters 3-4)

**\*Assignment:** Weekly Reading Response 5

**SPRING BREAK – March 19 – No Class**

**Class 7 – Thursday, March 26**

**Topic:** *The Ministry of the Church*

THS: pp. 191-239 (chapters 9-10)

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

**\*Assignment:** Weekly Reading Response 6

### **Class 8 - Thursday, April 2**

**Topic:** *Introduction to the Sacraments*

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

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

\_\_\_\_\_. "The Doctrine of the Lord's Supper in the Reformed Confessions," *MTJ* 12 (2001): 81-145.

WCF: Chapters 27-29

### **Class 9 - Thursday, April 9**

**Topic:** *The Nuts & Bolts of the Sacraments: Scripture, Christ, Grace*

BRD: pp. 643-662

VRD: pp. 77-109 (chapter 3)

SR: John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, pp. 1276-1303 (IV.14)

**\*Assignment:** Weekly Reading Response 7

### **Class 10 - Thursday, April 16**

**Topic:** *The Sacrament of Baptism*

BRD: pp. 662-667

VRD: pp. 110-157

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

**\*Assignment:** Weekly Reading Response 8

### **Class 11 - Thursday, April 23**

**Topic:** *Who should be Baptized?*

BRD: pp. 667-675

VRD: pp. 158-201

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

**\*Assignment:** Weekly Reading Response 9

### **Class 12 - Thursday, April 30**

**Topic:** *The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper*

BRD: pp. 676-690

VRD: pp. 202-249 (chapter 5)

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

**\*Assignment: Term Paper**

### **Class 13 – Thursday, May 7**

**Topic: *The Great Reformation Debate on the Lord's Supper***

*Last Day of Class*

**\*The Final Exam will be taken during the exam period: May 14-19.**

#### *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*

## **Class Policies**

### **1. On Laptops and Smartphones in Class**

It is my recommendation that you take notes by hand using the hardcopy outlines I will provide before class. If you have a strong inclination to use your laptop, please put your word processing program in "full screen" mode or use the "do not disturb" function so that other applications on your computer do not grab your attention (Facebook, Twitter, etc.).

Please keep your smartphone in your pocket on vibrate. If you do not have a pocket, please put it facedown on your desk. Only check them on breaks or if you are receiving repeated notifications indicating an emergency.

### **2. Internet Policy**

RTS Charlotte recognizes how essential it is for students to have reliable, campus-wide access to the internet. For that reason, we have made Wi-Fi available for our student body, not only in the library and student lounges, but also in the classrooms. We know that students need to use the internet to download class materials, access files on the Cloud, and locate other important information. However, we also recognize that internet access in the classroom provides opportunity for abuse and misuse. Some students have unfortunately used their internet access to engage in many activities that distract them from the classroom lectures (e.g., surfing the web, checking sports scores, playing games). Not only does such activity hamper a student's own seminary education, but it distracts other students who can easily view the screens of nearby students. In addition, donors and classroom guests (who often sit in the back) can see this inappropriate internet usage, which reflects poorly on RTS. Classroom etiquette includes leaving cell phones turned off, refraining from surfing the Internet or playing computer games or other distracting activities. In addition, students must respect standards set by individual professors regarding the use of technology during their class.

In order to address this issue, we must appeal to the integrity of the students as ones who are preparing for a lifetime of ministry to Christ and his church. We expect each student to take personal responsibility for proper classroom technology usage and to encourage others around them to do the same. All RTS-Charlotte students are accountable to the policies stated in the Student Handbook and Academic Catalog and are therefore expected to use technology in the classroom only for appropriate

class-related activities. Student conduct is under the supervision of the Dean of Students.

### 3. Procedures for taking your Exams:

- a. Install the LockDown Browser application on the computer you intend to use for exams, prior to sitting for the exam, using this link:  
<http://www.respondus.com/lockdown/download.php?id=998253613>
  - i. This link is ONLY for RTS students and covers both Mac and Windows applications.
  - ii. Be sure that you are able to login to your Canvas account from the LockDown Browser before scheduling a time to take your exam.
  - iii. The LockDown Browser application is already installed on the computers in the RTS Charlotte library. (Note that if you elect to use the library computers, your proctor must still be present throughout the duration of the exam.)
- b. Make arrangements with a proctor to supervise the exam within the date timeframe set by the professor. The proctor cannot be a family member, current RTS student (current = taken a class within the past year but not yet graduated), or member of the library staff. Typical proctors are pastors or church staff members. For your convenience, there will be several on-campus proctor blocks where a proctor will be available to supervise your exam. Dates and times will be posted on Canvas and announced in the weekly Semper. The final exam period is also published on the schedule for this term posted throughout campus.
- c. If you are taking the exam off-campus with a proctor, send your proctor the "RTS Charlotte Proctor Expectations" document which can be found on the Canvas Course homepage. The proctor must observe student taking exam and ensure that there are no devices or resources available other than the computer being used for the exam.
- d. Access the exam during the date window specified for that exam:
  - i. Start the LockDown Browser application using a wired or known reliable WIFI connection. We do not recommend using restaurant or coffee shop WIFI to take exams.
  - ii. Login to your Canvas account using your Self-Service username and password. If you need to reset your Self-Service password, you may do so at <https://selfservice.rts.edu>.
  - iii. Navigate to the exam. You will not be able to access the exam with a standard web browser. For additional details on using LockDown Browser, review this [Student Quick Start Guide \(PDF\)](#).
  - iv. Time clock will begin once you open the exam.
  - v. Exam must be completed in one sitting. You may not exit and return to exam later.

- vi. The exam will contain questions requiring the proctor contact information, an honor pledge, and certification that your proctor was present during the entire exam period.
- e. Proctors may be contacted to verify information regarding exam administration.
- f. In the rare case of a technical issue (for example, if internet service goes out during exam), the proctor should contact the course TA. While the TA's may not be immediately available, the date and time of the email will document when the issue was reported. Please have your TA's contact information available for your proctor before opening the exam. Once you open the exam using the LockDown Browser, you will not be able to access other programs on your computers.

**Course Objectives Related to MDiv Student Learning Outcomes  
With Mini-Justification**

Course: ST5250  
 Professor: D. Blair Smith  
 Campus: Charlotte  
 Date: Spring 2020

<b><u>MDiv Student Learning Outcomes</u></b>		<b><u>Rubric</u></b>	<b><u>Mini-Justification</u></b>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Strong</li> <li>➤ Moderate</li> <li>➤ Minimal</li> <li>➤ None</li> </ul>	
<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	Emphasis on learning and articulating foundational truths about the church and sacraments in exams and research paper
<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	Students not only explain theological truths, but will understand the exegetical process essential to arriving at those truths.
<b>Reformed Theology</b>	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 <i>The Westminster Confession of Faith</i> , chapters 21, 25-31
<b>Sanctification</b>	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.
<b>Worldview</b>	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.
<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 attitude in disagreements.)	Strong	While other views are considered, engaged, and expounded, this course focuses on Reformed Theology without alienating those who disagree.
<b>Pastoral Ministry</b>	Ability to minister the Word of God to hearts and lives of both church 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.