Meeting Time: Monday, 8:00 AM – 11:00 AM Fall 2020

Meeting Place: DC1

*Note: the professor reserves the right to modify this syllabus as needed at any time.*

**Contact Information**

*Professor*

Bruce Baugus

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Sebastian Bjernegård

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**RTS Catalog Course Description**

This course explores the doctrines of Scripture from a systematic perspective, Topics include Scripture, theology proper, and anthropology.

**Explanation & Objectives**

This course is designed for students in the M.Div. degree program who have already taken Hebrew and Greek, Covenant Theology, History of Philosophy and Christian Thought, and Church History I & II. (Students in other degree programs, no degree program, or who have not taken these courses are welcome, but may sometimes find required readings, course lectures, and class discussions less profitable.)

Systematic theology involves integrating the various branches of biblical and theological studies at the point of doctrinal formulation and in this sense represents the culmination of theological studies. It does not, however, exist for its own sake nor is it a final end of our knowledge of God. Rather, systematic theology exists to meet the confessional a didactic needs of the church’s ministry and mission of knowing, worshipping, proclaiming, and living ever more perfectly for God in this world that we might glorify and enjoy him ever more fully. To this end, William Perkins famously defines theology as “the science of living blessedly forever.”[[1]](#footnote-1)

In this course, we will focus on (1) presenting a systematic statement of the biblical teaching on theological prolegomena (Scripture) and the topics of God (theology proper) and humanity (anthropology) as understood and taught within the Reformed tradition, demonstrating that these formulations represent (2) the correct understanding of Scripture and (3) the doctrine God’s people need to thrive as disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ and worshipers of the living God. Our objectives in this class correspond to our focus: at the conclusion of this course you will be (1a) properly prepared for pastoral ministry in an orthodox and evangelical Reformed or Presbyterian church on the topics covered, confident in (2a) the biblical foundation and (3a) practical usefulness of the Reformed understanding of Scripture, God, and humanity. The chief objective we have in this course, however, is doxological: that students will come to know God as he is revealed in Scripture and gives himself to us to be enjoyed through faith, and worship him accordingly.

Successful students will demonstrate an ability to conduct independent theological research and fluency in the main questions of theological method and the doctrines of God and humanity—able to articulate (from Scripture and confessional standards wherever possible) and defend Reformed views on these interrelated questions (even if those views differ from your own). This requires students to be conversant in the exegesis of key passages of Scripture and issues involved in relevant historic and contemporary debates, showing how the gospel is implicated in these debates and the practical significance to the faith, life, and worship of the church. It is also important that students demonstrate an ability to discuss and assess theological differences in a way that aims at realizing, maintaining, and displaying the unity of the one holy and universal church in its many historic and contemporary branches to the glory of her Lord and Savior.

**Readings**

*Systematic Textbook*

Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 4 vols. (Baker, 2008: ISBN 9780801035760)

*Note: required readings for this course come from vols. 1-3. If you are buying these volumes new, however, it is ordinarily much cheaper to buy all four volumes at once as a complete set than just the three individual volumes. Buying the complete set is also strongly recommended since vol. 4 will most likely be required for ST2.*

*Standards*

Ecumenical Creeds: Apostles’ Creed; Nicene Creed; and Chalcedonian Creed

The Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms (OPC/PCA version: ISBN 9780979377006)

*Note: you are required to memorize WSC QQ1–53 for this course (see* Assignments *below). You are also required to bring this text and a copy of Scripture to class each day.*

Three Forms of Unity: Belgic Confession, Heidelberg Catechism, and Canons of Dordrecht

*Note: the Ecumenical Creeds and Three Forms of Unity are available as a single pdf here:* [*http://urclearning.org/wp-content/uploads/3\_forms.pdf*](http://urclearning.org/wp-content/uploads/3_forms.pdf)*, among many other places.*

*On Scripture*

Kevin DeYoung, *Taking God At His Word* (Crossway; reprint ed., 2016: ISBN 9781433551031)

Michael J. Kruger*, Canon Revisited* (Crossway, 2012: ISBN 9781433505003)

*On Anthropology*

Richard B. Gaffin, “No Adam, No Gospel” (P&R: ISBN 9781596389670)

Sam Allberry, Is God Anti-Gay? (Good Book Co.: ISBN 978-1908762313)

*Dictionary*

Richard A. Muller, *Dictionary and Latin and Greek Theological Terms* (Baker: ISBN 9780801020643)

**Attendance & Participation Policy**

Your primary assignment is to be present, prepared, and ready to participate fully in class each week. This requires showing up on time and remaining for the duration of class, ready to contribute meaningfully by having read all assigned materials beforehand.

Any student who misses class or is grievously or repeatedly tardy (without prior permission or a compelling emergency) may find their course grade reduced on the following schedule:

1. By one full letter grade (e.g. A to B) for each unexcused absence
2. By one increment (e.g. A to A-) for each unexcused tardy or absence from class of more than 20 minutes
3. By one increment (e.g. A to A-) for every unexcused tardy of less than 20 minutes, for repeat offenders

Students found studying for other classes or using electronic devices for any reason not directly related to the current topic of discussion will be counted as being tardy or absent from class for more than 20 minutes.

Permission to be absent from class will ordinarily be granted only for medical reasons or family crises. Elective choices such as attending a conference, work (including RTS and church internship duties), enrolling in another course in conflict with this one, and so on, are unacceptable excuses. (The professor will try to accommodate special events on campus and presbytery meetings, as needed.)

Note: this “law is not laid down for the just but for the lawless and disobedient” (1 Tim 1:9).

**Technology Use Policy**

Since students who type notes during lectures consistently perform worse on exams and other assessments of lecture and discussion comprehension, laptops and tablets are prohibited in class except by special permission from the professor.[[2]](#footnote-2) (Permission is ordinarily restricted to matters of learning disabilities or those who handwrite their notes directly into a tablet application). Phones must be on silent and kept out of sight (and mind). If you must receive or place a call, even during a class break, please leave the classroom to do so.

**Assignments**

*Essay Exams*

You will be given a midterm exam over fall break and a final exam at the conclusion of the course. Both exams are timed essay exams that will be administered through the course page on Canvas. A representative list of essay questions will be posted on Canvas as a study guide. You are permitted to consult your notes and assigned readings during the exam; you must complete the exam on your own and not discuss the content of either exam with classmates until the professor notifies you that all exams have been submitted. An element of choice will be built into both exams: you will be asked to write on three (3) out of five (5) essay prompts on the midterm and four (4) out of seven (7) on the final.

*Term Paper*

Students will write a 10-12 page term paper on an approved issue in theological prolegomena, theology proper, or theological anthropology that integrates exegetical, historical and systematic perspectives and employs sound argumentation that demonstrates a clearly stated thesis. Proper style and formatting are expected (see latest edition of Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*). Papers ought to be error-free and reflect quality research and careful, critical analysis and articulation.

Note: a graduate level term paper is expected to identify and engage at least five (5) and preferably eight (8) or more scholarly sources in the argument of your paper. Acceptable secondary sources will ordinarily be articles or monographs published in peer reviewed journals (print or online) or for an academic audience or of historical note. Scripture and confessional standards are expected to be used and richly inform your discussion but ordinarily should not be listed in bibliographies (though they must be cited in the body of the text when directly discussed or quoted). These and required course readings do not count towards the expected minimum number of academic sources.

You should seek the professor’s approval of your paper topic and are encouraged to discuss your proposed thesis with the professor. You should also take full advantage of the resources available to you in the TA Suite in the Dean Center building.

**Assignment Submission Policy**

Submit written assignments as individual pdf files on Canvas. If you have any difficulties submitting your assignments, please contact my teaching assistant using the contact information at the top of this syllabus.

**Course Grade**

Essay Exams

Midterm 30%

Final 30%

Term Paper 40%

Total 100%

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

Course: ST5150 Scripture, Theology Proper, and Anthropology

Professor: Bruce P. Baugus

Campus: Jackson

Date: Fall 2020

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| **MDiv Student Learning Outcomes** | | **Rubric** | **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. Also includes ability to preach and teach the meaning of Scripture to both heart and mind with clarity and enthusiasm. | Strong | Primary course objective is for students to become articulate in the Reformed orthodox doctrines of Scripture, God, and humanity in just this way. |
| **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 | Scripture and the source and norm of our theology. This course is constantly presenting a summary of biblical teaching on the topics under consideration—which includes the doctrine of Scripture itself. |
| **Reformed Theology** | Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards. | Strong | The class presents an explicitly Reformed orthodox view of the respective doctrines as articulated in Westminster and other Reformed sources. |
| **Sanctification** | Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student’s sanctification | Moderate | The course has the salvation accomplished for us by Christ and applied to us by the Spirit constantly in view. |
| **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 | The application of theology to life is brought out frequently through this course. |
| **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.) | Moderate | The professor strives to model and encourage this ethos in the course as we consider various alternatives and challenges to the Reformed theology. |
| **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 | Theology is central to the task of every faithful pastor and preacher. |

1. William Perkins, *The Golden Chaine* (1590), 1; similarly practical definitions of theology can be found among most of our Reformed fathers. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. See, for example, Pam A. Mueller and Daniel M. Oppenheimer, “The Pen is Mightier Than the Keyboard: Advantages of Longhand over Laptop Note Taking,” *Psychological Science* 25.6 (June 2014): 1159-1168. See also the excellent guide produced by Harvard University’s Harvard Initiative for Learning and Teaching (HILT): Machael C. Friedman, “Notes and Note-Taking: Review of Research and Insights for Students and Instructors,” available online at <http://hilt.harvard.edu/files/hilt/files/notetaking_0.pdf>. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)