**ST 515: Scripture, Theology Proper, Anthropology**

Reformed Theological Seminary, Houston

*Summer 2016*

Scott R. Swain

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**Course description**

This course explores biblical doctrine from a systematic perspective. Topics include Scripture, theology proper, and anthropology (3 hours).

**Textbooks**

Michael Allen and Scott R. Swain, ed., *Christian Dogmatics: Reformed Theology for the Church Catholic* (Baker Academic, 2016). ISBN 13: 9780801048944

James Dolezal, *All That is in God: Evangelical Theology and the Challenge of Classical Theism*. (Available from professor)

Gilles Emery, *The Trinity: An Introduction to Catholic Doctrine on the Triune God* (Catholic University of America Press, 2011). ISBN 13: 9780813218649

Hans Madueme, “‘The Most Vulnerable Part of the Whole Christian Account’: Original Sin and Modern Science,” chapter 11 in Hans Madueme and Michael Reeves, ed., *Adam, the Fall, and Original Sin: Theological, Biblical and Scientific Perspectives* (Baker Academic, 2014). (Available from professor)

Ian A. McFarland, *From Nothing: A Theology of Creation* (Westminster John Knox, 2014). ISBN 13: 9780664238193

John Murray, *The Imputation of Adam’s Sin* (P & R, 1977). ISBN 13: 9780875523415

Timothy Ward, *Words of Life: Scripture as the Living and Active Word of God* (IVP Academic, 2009). ISBN 13: 9780830827442

**Assignments**

***1. Psalms report (5 % of final grade):*** Students are required to read Psalms 1, 8, 51, 104, 119, and 145 slowly and prayerfully at least four times over the course of the semester. Students will provide a reading report on the second exam indicating whether or not they have done so.

***2. Reading report (20 % of final grade)*:** Attached to the second 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.

***3. Exams (40 % of final grade):*** Students will take two exams which will test their critical grasp of doctrinal topics covered in class lectures, readings, and the Reformed confessions as well as your ability to communicate doctrinal topics in a clear and cogent manner.

***4. McFarland book brief and discussion (10 % of final grade)*:** Students will bring a two page book brief to the last weekend of classes (August 12-13) that (1) summarizes the major claims of each chapter of McFarland’s, *From Nothing*, (2) identifies places where McFarland argues that evolutionary theory requires a revision of classical understandings of creation, (3) and suggests possible lines of response to McFarland’s proposed revisions (responses may be affirmative or critical). Students will engage in a classroom discussion that is informed by their book briefs.

***5. God of the Psalms paper (25 % of final grade):*** Students will write a short theological essay (12-15 pages) on the ways in which one psalm of their choice presents God (his names, attributes, actions, etc.). Draw upon knowledge gained from lectures and readings about how the Bible “names” God (e.g., literal and metaphorical language, absolute and relative descriptions, the “three ways” of causation, eminence, and negation, etc.). The paper should contain a clear thesis statement, follow a coherent outline, and address both theological and practical dimensions of the doctrine of God as presented in your psalm.

**Academic Policies**

**1. *Late assignments:***Apart from exceptional circumstances, I will not accept late assignments for credit.

**2. *Plagiarism:*** Plagiarism, whether intentional or unintentional, will result in a failing grade for the course.

**Schedule of Assignments**

***June 3-4*** Ward, all; Allen and Swain, chaps. 1-2

***June 24-25*** Dolezal, all; Allen and Swain, chap. 4

***July 29-30*** Emery, all; Allen and Swain, chaps. 6-8;

***August 12-13*** McFarland, all; Madueme; Murray, all

**Select bibliography**

In addition to the standard systematic theological works of Peter Lombard, Thomas Aquinas, John Calvin, Francis Turretin, Charles Hodge, Herman Bavinck, Karl Barth, etc., the following books will assist further study of the doctrinal topics discussed in this course.

Khaled Anatolios, *Retrieving Nicaea: The Development and Meaning of Trinitarian Doctrine* (Baker Academic, 2011)

Augustine, *The Trinity* (New City Press, 1991)

Basil the Great, *Hexaemeron* NPNF, Second Series, Vol. 8 (Eerdmans, n.d.)

Stephen Holmes, *The Quest for the Trinity: The Doctrine of God in Scripture, History, and Modernity* (IVP Academic, 2012)

Michael Horton, *Covenant and Eschatology: The Divine Drama* (WJK, 2002)

Franciscus Junius, *A Treatise on True Theology* (Reformation Heritage Books, 2014)

Kelly Kapic and Bruce McCormack, ed., *Mapping Modern Theology: A Thematic and Historical Introduction* (Baker Academic, 2012)

Michael Kruger, *Canon Revisited: Establishing the Origins and Authority of the New Testament Books* (Crossway, 2012)

Martin Luther, *The Bondage of the Will* (Revell, 1957)

Richard Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics*, 4 Vols.(Baker Academic, 2003)

Josef Pieper, *Happiness and Contemplation* (St. Augustine’s Press, 1998)

Alvin Plantinga, *Where the Conflict Really Lies: Science, Religion, and Naturalism* (Oxford, 2011)

Fred Sanders, *The Deep Things of God: How the Trinity Changes Everything* (Crossway, 2010)

Mark Sheridan, *Language for God in Patristic Thought: Wrestling with Biblical Anthropomorphism* (IVP Academic, 2015)

Katherine Sonderegger, *Systematic Theology*, Volume 1: The Doctrine of God(Fortress, 2015)

Dolf te Velde, ed., *Synopsis of a Purer Theology* (Brill, 2015-)

Terrance Tiessen, *Providence and Prayer: How Does God Work in the World?* (IVP Academic 2000)

Willem van Asselt et al, *Reformed Thought on Freedom: The Concept of Free Choice in Early Modern Reformed Theology* (Baker Academic, 2010)

B. B. Warfield, *The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible* (P & R, 1980)

John Webster, *God Without Measure: Working Papers in Christian Theology*, 2 Vols. (Bloomsbury, 2015)

John Webster, *The Domain of the Word: Scripture and Theological Reason* (Bloomsbury, 2014)



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

Course: ST 515

Professor: Swain

Campus: Houston

Date: Summer 2016

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| **MDiv\* Student Learning Outcomes**  *In order to measure the success of the MDiv 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 MDiv outcomes.*  *\*As the MDiv is the core degree at RTS, the MDiv rubric will be used in this syllabus.* | | **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, 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 | Emphasized in lectures; part of paper |
| **Desire for Worldview** | Burning desire to conform all of life to the Word of God. | Strong | Focus of all ST courses |
| **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 |  |
| **Preach** | Ability to preach and teach the meaning of Scripture to both heart and mind with clarity and enthusiasm. | Minimal | ST provides deeper understanding of Scripture |
| **Worship** | Knowledgeable of historic and modern Christian-worship forms; and ability to construct and skill to lead a worship service. | Minimal | Focus on doctrine of God and providence assists in practice of prayer |
| **Shepherd** | Ability to shepherd the local congregation: aiding in spiritual maturity; promoting use of gifts and callings; and encouraging a concern for non-Christians, both in America and worldwide. | None |  |
| **Church/World** | Ability to interact within a denominational context, within the broader worldwide church, and with significant public issues. | Moderate |  |