02ST5355 SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY FOUNDATIONS
Reformed Theological Seminary
Fall 2023
3 Credit Hours

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

Time and Location
Monday 1:00-4:00

Instructor
Prof: Justin Holcomb
Email: jholcomb@rts.edu

Course Description (from RTS Catalog)
This course introduces Christian doctrine and addresses its implications for the practice of soul care. In introducing Christian doctrine, students will gain familiarity with and competence in thinking exegetically, historically, and synthetically about the rule of faith and rule of love. In considering the ways in which Christian doctrine shapes the practice of soul care, students will grasp the canonical, hermeneutical, and contextual facets of therapeutic practice.

Course Objectives
By the end of this course students will:
1. Understand the basic shape of Christian doctrine.
2. Grasp the exegetical foundations and historical development of Christian doctrine.
4. Gain competence in engaging primary and secondary theological sources.
5. Be able to relate Christian faith to life and practice, especially the practice of counseling.
6. Be competent to tease out the therapeutic implications of Reformed doctrine.

Required Materials:
M1. Bavinck, Herman. *Our Reasonable Faith*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1956: ISBN: 9780802862730. Also available reprinted as *The Wonderful Works of God*. Philadelphia: Westminster Seminary Press, 2020. ISBN: 978-1733627221.
M2. Johnson, Eric (2017). *God and Soul Care: The Therapeutic Resources of the Christian Faith*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2017. ISBN: 9780830851591

Assignments
A1. Reading (20% of course grade): Reading must be completed before the class in which it is to be discussed; students must be prepared to discuss the assigned readings for the day thoughtfully and graciously in class. See handout for due dates and further explanation of this assignment.

A2. Reading Briefs (20% of course grade): Students will be assessed weekly via Canvas on their assigned readings. See handout for due dates and further explanation of this assignment.

A3. Write up #1 (10% of course grade): Students are required to compose and submit a brief paper. See handout for due dates and further explanation of this assignment.

A4. Write up #2 (10% of course grade): Students are required to compose and submit a brief paper. See handout for due dates and further explanation of this assignment.

A5. Final, Synthetic Assignment (40% of course grade). Students will be required to submit a final assignment that synthesizes topics surveyed in the course. There are three phases to this project: submission of a project, response to projects by others, and then reply to responses from others to your own project.

First, students will write a final project that addresses the therapeutic significance of one key element of Christian doctrine. Projects will be 1750-2000 words long. In so doing, four key elements must be present:

      (1) exegetical and canonical roots of the key doctrinal element must be shown,
      (2) historical development of the key doctrinal element must be introduced,
      (3) synthetic relationships to other elements of doctrine should be highlighted, and
      (4) concrete case study applications must be specified.

Second, students will then respond to classmates' projects. You should reply to at least 3 other projects with significant comments (1-2 paragraphs of sustained thought) by making observations about what they have said and offering critical engagement (raising a question, offering an objection, making an application, drawing a supplemental observation, etc.). Be civil, charitable, and critical (in thought, not tone).

Third, you will then respond to all responses to your own post. Again, be civil, charitable, and critical. Engage with what others actually say, seeking to learn from it and to improve or enhance your own project rather than offering defensive posturing. Replies can be 1-2 paragraphs as appropriate.

See handout for due dates and further explanation of this assignment.

Policies and Important Information

All written work must conform to American Psychological Association (APA) style. If a student does not have a copy of the APA manual, one should be purchased, or students may use one of the many APA style websites available online (e.g. https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/). Materials should be in 12 pt Georgia font and double spaced (Georgia font has been selected because research indicates it gets the best grades). Assessment will include how well students represent their thoughts on paper, craftsmanship in writing, and organization of all written work.

Access to Research Database. RTS provides MAC students access to the Ebscohost Psychology & Behavioral Science Collection of full text journal articles. You can access this collection from computers in the library, or from your home computer by following the link below and logging in with a username and password to be provided in class.

http://search.ebscohost.com/

Submission of work. Written assignments are to be submitted to the Canvas page for this course on the date due. Keep a digital copy of your work.

Late work. All assignments are due as scheduled regardless of attendance, unless prior arrangements are made with the instructor. Assignments turned in late will be deducted 1/3 letter grade for each late day.

Grading Scale:

A (97-100)	B- (86-87)	D+ (75-77)
A- (94-96)	C+ (83-85)	D (72-74)
B+ (91-93)	C (80-82)	D- (70-71)
B (88-90)	C- (78-79)	F (Below 70)

Attendance Policy

Regular attendance is expected and required. Excessive absences (more than 3 class meetings) will result in the loss of points equal to one letter grade per absence. If serious illness or an emergency prevents a student from attending any class, please notify the instructor before the class begins. It is the responsibility of the student to obtain any materials handed out or presented during the missed class from a classmate.

Disability Policy

If you have a documented disability (physical, psychological, learning, or other disability which affects your academic performance) and would like to receive academic accommodations, please inform your instructor prior to the start of this course. The instructor and student will discuss the available accommodations for the course. If the student with a disability does not disclose that s/he has a disability, then the student is agreeing to take full responsibility for any related consequences that may occur.

Class Participation

Students are expected to participate in all components of the class and will be evaluated on the quality and quantity of discussion. Each student is expected to read all of the assigned materials in advance for each class and have prepared written comments and questions for class discussion. Contributions should reflect knowledge of the reading assignments or other sources.

Computer Policy (Modified from Dr. Alan Jacobs of Baylor University)

Computers, tablets, and smart-phones are not allowed in class. Notes taken by hand are almost always more useful than typed notes, because more thoughtful selectivity goes into them; there are also multiple cognitive benefits to writing by hand. And people who use laptops in class see their grades decline — and even contribute to lowering the grades of other people. Computers must be used, of course, for the online portion of the class.

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Course Objectives Related to MAC* Student Learning Outcomes

Course: ST5355 Systematic Theology Foundations
Professor: Allen and Holcomb
Campus: Orlando
Date: Fall 2022

MAC* Student Learning Outcomes *In order to measure the success of the MAC 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 MAC outcomes.*		Rubric • Strong • Moderate • Minimal • None	Mini-Justification
Professional Counseling Orientation & Ethical Practice	Understands and applies the basic knowledge needed to be an effective counselor including: the history and philosophy of counseling, ethical standards of practice, personal career development, advocacy for clients, consultation & collaboration, and a Reformed, biblical and theological framework for counseling.	Moderate	*This course will equip students with the Reformed, biblical and theological framework necessary to function effectively as a distinctly Christian counselor trained in the Reformed tradition*
Social & Cultural Diversity	Understands and demonstrates how living in a cultural/global society affects clients who are seeking counseling and clinical mental health services, as well as the effects of sin such as racism, discrimination, sexism, and oppression on one's own life and career and those of the client.	Moderate	*The Christian and Reformed doctrine of sin is a major topic in this course. Our discussion in this course will focus on equipping Christian counselors to think biblically about sin—especially its universality (in counselor and client) and various effects (individually and corporately)—and its implications for the practice of counseling.*

Human Growth & Development	Understands and applies knowledge of various theories of individual and family development, and factors affecting human development. To include biological, neurological, physiological, systemic, and environmental factors, addiction, and effects of crisis, disasters, and traumas.	Minimal	
Career Development	Understands and applies theories and models of career development, counseling, and decision making.	Minimal	
Counseling & Helping Relationships	Understands and applies theories and models of counseling, strategies for understanding and practicing consultation, and developing relevant counseling treatment and intervention plans.	Minimal	
Group Counseling & Group Work	Understands and applies theories and models of group counseling and group work, dynamics of the group process and development, and therapeutic factors that contribute to group effectiveness.	Minimal	
Assessment & Testing	Understands and applies clinical knowledge effectively, including various models and approaches to clinical evaluation and their appropriate uses. To include diagnostic interviews, mental status examinations, symptom inventories, and psychoeducational and personality assessments, and is sensitive to the complications of diagnosis and interpretation of formal and informal evaluation.	Minimal	
Research & Program Evaluation	Demonstrates the ability to critically evaluate research through a biblical worldview and integrate it into counseling practice. Understands the process of program evaluation and its integration into the practice of counseling and clinical mental health counseling.	Significant	*This course equips students with the theological framework on which a Reformed biblical worldview rests, devoting significant attention throughout to the proper use of various kinds of sources under the Reformed category of common grace.*
Clinical Mental Health Counseling	Demonstrates the knowledge and skills necessary to address a wide variety of circumstances within the context of clinical mental health counseling.	Minimal	
Integration (Biblical/Theol ogical)	Knowledge of and integration of Reformed, biblical and theological concepts with counseling practices.	Significant	*This course equips students with the basic biblical and theological concepts students need to practice an integrated and distinctly Christian counseling ministry.*
Sanctification	Demonstrates a love for the triune God.	Significant	*This course is taught from the perspective that theology, as a knowledge of God, must be approached as a spiritual devotion of love to God, and strives to stir the students to love God through a knowledge of God and his world.*