

ST5150 Systematic Theology 1 Syllabus
Reformed Theological Seminary
Spring 2024—Atlanta Campus (Nashville Extension)

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Course Description

Students will continue to develop their foundations in systematic theology through the study of **revelation** (prolegomena, Scripture), **theology proper** (divine attributes, Trinity, creation, providence), and **theological anthropology** (image of God, covenant, sin, redemption). Core doctrines of the faith will be introduced and examined along exegetical, biblical-theological, systematic, and historical lines. While Scripture is our norming norm and highest authority for both doctrine and devotion, we will gladly receive the help of the saints throughout history who, under the Spirit's illumination, have thought deeply about the Word and handed down patterns of sound words to help us in our mission to know God and make Him known.

Rationale for the Course

According to Martyn Lloyd Jones, “[p]reaching is is theology coming through a man who is on fire.” All that we do and say in ministry (in the pulpit and beyond) is a Spirit-fired outworking of what we have learned concerning the being and doing of our triune God. More than an abstract articulation of disembodied truth, doctrine is direction—a faithful recitation of sound words tuned to help God’s redeemed images know the way they should go to glorify and enjoy Him forever. This course will equip students to sound the right words and filter out the wrong ones for the glory of God and the good of His people.

Course Objectives

As a result of having taken this course, students will be able to articulate the core doctrines of the faith included within the topical areas sketched above and outlined below. Students will learn to follow and relay the exegetical and dogmatic reasoning behind these doctrines in conversation with the broad sweep of church history and contemporary thought. The goal in all this is not to create ivory-tower dogmaticians but faithful laborers who can rightly divide the word of truth.

Course Requirements and Evaluation

I. Required Reading (20%)

1. Weekly Reading Assignments

Students will be required to complete the assigned reading (see below) **in advance of each session**. Students should come prepared to discuss and apply the material during class. At the end of the course, students will submit a reading report indicating whether they completed the reading as assigned.

2. Class Reading Presentations

Each student will have at least one opportunity to facilitate a class discussion surrounding the week's reading. Students will be required to submit a two-page **maximum** (one sheet, front and back) report including a high-level outline of the reading.

II. Class Attendance and Participation (20%)

Committed engagement in the community of learning is vital to success in studying theology with and for the Church. Students will be expected to bring the following to class: the week's reading, a Bible, the *Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms*, and a *Trinity Hymnal*.

III. Research Paper (35%)

Students will be required to write a theological research paper that further explores one of the topics discussed in this course. **Topics must be submitted and approved by 3/28.**

The paper must adhere to the following guidelines:

1. Every paper must include a clear, precise thesis statement that articulates a position to be defended. A good thesis should ordinarily be falsifiable (i.e., capable of being refuted).

Bad: "In this paper, I will explore the doctrine of predestination."

Better: "In this paper, I will argue the doctrine of unconditional election makes better sense of the biblical data than its conditional alternative, specifically as articulated by Roger Olson."

2. Substantiate your position using biblical, theological, and historical arguments. Each paper should anticipate and respond to at least 3 objections/attempts to falsify its thesis.
3. Orthodoxy (right thinking) should never be divorced from orthopathy (right feeling) and orthopraxy (right acting). Each paper must demonstrate, not only why the thesis is true, but how the goodness and beauty contained therein constitute a gift to God's people for them to embrace and embody. Imagine a member in your church gets to the final page of your paper and asks, "So what?" Answer that question; only, begin answering it from page one!
4. Each paper must consult at least 8 books and/or articles, primarily of a scholarly nature. At least 2 of them must come from the early Church (~100-600), 2 from the medieval period (~600-1500), 2 from the Reformation/Post-Reformation period (~1500-1750), and 2 from the 21st century. Don't just reference or quote these sources. Interact with them and their arguments. Ultimately, the paper should convey *your* voice in conversation with the sources—not their voices as a stand-in for your own.
5. Each paper must have a title page that includes the student's name, name/year/number of course, professor's name, paper title, and date of submission. All text must be 12-point Times New Roman font. All lines are to be double-spaced and margins set to one inch. All citations must be footnoted (**no endnotes**), according to the standards set forth in Kate Turabian's *A Manual for Writers* (9th ed.). The paper must include a complete bibliography formatted according to the same guidelines.

6. Papers must be 10-12 pages long, **not** including front/back matter (title, abbreviations, bibliography, etc.). Shorter papers will receive an automatic 5-point deduction per page under the limit. Longer papers will receive a 5-point deduction per page over the limit.

7. Late papers will receive an automatic 5-point deduction for each day past the due date.

In addition to the guidelines specified above, papers will be graded for clarity, cogency, and style. If we are called to know God *and* make Him known, then we must make every effort to prevent our good arguments from dying at the hands of bad writing.

IV. Final Exam (25%)

The final exam will be designed to test students' mastery of the material covered in both the course lectures and reading. Students should come prepared to articulate the doctrines discussed, trace their historical development, and apply them to concrete needs in the life of the church.

VI. Extra Credit (up to 10%)

For extra credit, students may read one of the works from the extra credit reading list (below) and submit a 5–6-page critical review by 5/10/24.

Course Lecture and Reading Schedule

WCF: Westminster Confession of Faith

WLC: Westminster Larger Catechism

PDF: Electronic copy will be provided

[2/1/24] Lecture 1: Introduction & Prolegomena

1. Michael Allen, "Knowledge of God," Pages 7-29 in *Christian Dogmatics*
2. Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics* 2, 27-91
3. Athanasius, *On the Incarnation*, 60-69 [**PDF**]
4. WCF 1.1
5. WLC 2

[2/8/24] Lecture 2: Doctrine of Scripture: Revelation

1. Timothy Ward, *Words of Life*, Chapters 1-3
2. WCF 1
3. WLC 3-6

[2/15/24] Lecture 3: Doctrine of Scripture: Inspiration (Production & Perfection)

1. Ward, *Words of Life*, Chapter 4
2. John D. Meade & Peter J. Gurry, *Scribes & Scripture*, Introduction and Chapters 1-3

[2/22/24] Lecture 4: Doctrine of Scripture: Illumination (Reception & Reading)

1. Ward, *Words of Life*, Chapters 5-6
2. Meade & Gurry, *Scribes & Scripture*, Chapters 4-6

[2/29/24] Lecture 5: Doctrine of God: Names, Models, and Controversies

1. Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics 2*, 95-147
2. WCF 2

[3/7/24] Lecture 6: Doctrine of God: Attributes

1. Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics 2*, 148-255
2. WLC 7

[3/14/24] Lecture 7: Doctrine of God: The Trinity

1. Scott Swain, "Divine Trinity," Pages 78-106 in *Christian Dogmatics*
2. Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics 2*, 256-334
3. WLC 8-11

[3/21/24] Lecture 8: Works of God: The Decree

1. Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics 2*, 337-405
2. Paul Nimmo, "The Divine Decree," Pages 404-419 in *Oxford Handbook* [PDF]
3. WCF 3
4. WLC 12-13

[3/28/24] Lecture 9: Works of God: Creation

1. Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics 2*, 406-441
2. John Webster, "Creation Out of Nothing," Pages 126-147 in *Christian Dogmatics*
3. "I/We Believe: The Doctrine of Creation as an Article of Faith," Pages 7-40 in Bruce Riley Ashford and Craig G. Bartholomew, *The Doctrine of Creation* [PDF]
4. WCF 4
5. WLC 14-15

[4/11/24] Lecture 10: Works of God: Providence

1. John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Book 1, Chapters 16-18
2. Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics 2*, 591-619
3. John Webster, "Providence," in *Christian Dogmatics* Pages 148-164
4. WCF 5
5. WLC 18

[4/18/24] Lecture 11: Anthropology: The Image of God

1. Anthony Hoekema, *Created in God's Image*, 1-101

2. Joshua R. Farris, *An Introduction to Theological Anthropology*, 1-77
3. WLC 1
4. WLC 17

[4/25/24] Lecture 12: Anthropology: Covenant, Fall, and Redemption

1. Hoekema, *Created in God's Image*, 102-186
2. Farris, *Introduction*, 109-134
3. WCF 6-7, 9
4. WLC 19-31

[5/2/24] Lecture 13: Anthropology: Contemporary Issues

1. Farris, *Introduction*, 161-290

[5/9/24] Final Exam

[5/10/24] Final Paper Due

Required Books

Michael Allen & Scott Swain, eds., *Christian Dogmatics*
 Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics* (Vol. 2)
 Timothy Ward, *Words of Life*
 John D. Meade & Peter J. Gurry, *Scribes & Scripture*
 John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*
 Anthony A. Hoekema, *Created in God's Image*
 Joshua R. Farris, *An Introduction to Theological Anthropology*

Extra Credit

Stephen Duby, *God in Himself: Scripture, Metaphysics, and the Task of Christian Theology*
 Abigail Favale, *The Genesis of Gender*
 Scott Swain, *Trinity, Revelation, and Reading*

Recommended (Not Required) Books

Systematic Theology

Wilhelmus à Brakel, *The Christian's Reasonable Service*
 Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics* (4 vols)
 Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*
 John Owen, *Collected Works*
 Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*
 Petrus van Mastricht, *Theoretical-Practical Theology*
 Geerhardus Vos, *Reformed Dogmatics*

Prolegomena

John Frame, *The Doctrine of the Knowledge of God*
Richard Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics* (Vol 1)
Anthony Thiselton, *Hermeneutics: An Introduction*
Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *Is There a Meaning in This Text?*
_____, *The Drama of Doctrine*
Cornelius Van Til, *An Introduction to Systematic Theology*

Scripture

DA Carson and John Woodbridge, eds., *Scripture and Truth*
_____, *Hermeneutics, Authority and Canon*
J. de Waal Dryden, *A Hermeneutic of Wisdom: Recovering the Formative Agency of Scripture*
John Frame, *The Doctrine of the Word of God*
Michael Kruger, *Canon Revisited*
Richard Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics* (Vol 2)
John Webster, *The Domain of the Word*

Theology

Matthew Barrett, *None Greater*
Herman Bavinck, *Doctrine of God*
Stephen Charnock, *The Existence and Attributes of God*
Richard Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics* (Vols 3-4)
J.I. Packer, *Knowing God*
Fred Sanders, *The Deep Things of God*
John Webster, *God Without Measure*

Anthropology

St. Augustine, *Confessions*
Marc Cortez, *Theological Anthropology: A Guide for the Perplexed*
Richard Lints, *Identity and Idolatry*
John Murray, *The Imputation of Adam's Sin*
Richard L. Pratt, *Designed for Dignity*

Pastoral Theology

Richard Baxter, *The Reformed Pastor*
J.I. Packer, *A Quest for Godliness*
Richard Sibbes, *The Bruised Reed*
C.H. Spurgeon, *Lectures to My Students*
Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *Hearers & Doers: A Pastor's Guide to Making Disciples*

Zoom Policy

Your professor may allow you to Zoom into class or watch Zoom recordings for excused absences based on the professor's discretion and subject to the availability of equipment. Students should contact their professor well in advance of the class meeting. For a third absence the Registrar should be consulted. Your professor may require additional interactive assignments to offset the absence of classroom interaction. Sync or Remote Live courses have priority for the limited Zoom equipment.

Extension Policy

All assignments and exams are to be completed by the deadlines announced in this syllabus or in class.

Extensions for assignments and exams due within the normal duration of the course must be approved beforehand by the Professor. Extensions of two weeks or less beyond the date of the last deadline for the course must be approved beforehand by the Professor. A grade penalty may be assessed.

Extensions of greater than two weeks but not more than six weeks beyond the last deadline for the course may be granted in extenuating circumstances (i.e. illness, family emergency). For an extension of more than two weeks the student must request an Extension Request Form from the Registrar's Office. The request must be approved by the Professor and the Academic Dean. A grade penalty may be assessed. (RTS Catalog p. 46 and RTS Atlanta Student Handbook p. 18)

Any incompletes not cleared six weeks after the last published due date for course work will be converted to a failing grade. Professors may have the failing grade changed to a passing grade by request. (RTS Catalog p. 49)

Course Objectives Related to MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes

Course: ST515 Systematic Theology 1
 Professor: Kenny Silva
 Campus: Atlanta (Nashville Extension)
 Date: Spring 2024

<u>MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes</u>		<u>Rubric</u>	<u>Mini-Justification</u>
<p><i>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.</i></p> <p><i>*As the MDiv is the core degree at RTS, the MDiv rubric will be used in this syllabus.</i></p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Strong ➤ Moderate ➤ Minimal ➤ None 	
Articulation (oral & written)	<p>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.</p>	Strong	<p>Students will learn to articulate, describe, and defend major heads of orthodox and Reformed doctrine.</p>
Scripture	<p>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.)</p>	Strong	<p>Students will learn the being, purpose, and use of Scripture, specifically as exegesis pertains to dogmatic reasoning.</p>
Reformed Theology	<p>Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards.</p>	Strong	<p>Students will learn to think through the lens of the Reformed tradition, particularly the Westminster Standards.</p>

Sanctification	Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student's sanctification.	Moderate	Orthodoxy (right thinking) is incomplete without orthopathy (right feeling) and orthopraxy (right doing), which are fruits and evidences of a true and living faith.
Desire for Worldview	Burning desire to conform all of life to the Word of God.	Strong	Theology is the study of God and all things in Him; students will be helped to develop a comprehensively biblical world and life view.
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.)	Strong	The Reformed faith is good, beautiful, and true; students will be encouraged to embrace and explicate it not merely for the sake of winning arguments but to demonstrate the wonders of God.
Pastoral Ministry	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-Xns.	Moderate	As much and as often as possible, issues will be discussed with consideration as to how they impact preaching, pastoral ministry, and counseling.