

**ST5200N1 Christology, Soteriology, Eschatology**  
**Dr. Michael Allen**  
**Spring 2024**

*Course Description*

This course explores the doctrines of Scripture from a systematic perspective. Topics include Christology, Soteriology, and Eschatology.

*The Learning Objectives*

*Comprehension*

- To increase your knowledge of Christology, the doctrine of Christ's person
- To increase your knowledge of Soteriology, the doctrine of Christ's work for us
- To increase your knowledge of Eschatology, the doctrine of our hope in the gospel

*Competence*

- To sharpen your ability to read, think, and write about systematic theology with clarity and perception
- To sharpen your ability to think synthetically about how various theological topics relate to one another

*Character*

- To grow in your faith, better appreciating the glories of the gospel
- To grow in your hope, more perceptively longing for the returning presence of Christ
- To grow in your love, reflecting the generosity of God back to others

*The Instructor*

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Note: feel free to contact me whenever needed (preferably via email). When in doubt about protocol or processing, write and ask.

*The Texts*

The following books are required:

Cyril of Alexandria, *On the Unity of Christ* (Popular Patristics Series 13; Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1995), pages 49-133. ISBN 9780881411331.

John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (1559 Edition). We will read select portions: bk. 2, chs. 10-17; bk. 3, chs. 1-3, 11-13.

The best edition is published by Westminster John Knox Press, edited by John T. McNeill, and translated by Ford Lewis Battles (ISBN 978

0664220280). You only need volume 1. The translation by Henry Beveridge is also acceptable and published by Hendrickson (ISBN 978 1598561685).

Do not purchase abridged versions or editions from years other than the 1559 edition (e.g. don't get the 1541 edition), as they will be missing massive amounts of the book.

Michael Allen, *Grounded in Heaven: Recentering Christian Hope and Life on God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2018). ISBN 9780802874535.

John Webster, *The Culture of Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2019), pages 43-147. ISBN 9781540960801.

Supplementary PDF readings will be available on Canvas and will be required on various weeks (as noted).

### *The Assignments*

The student is required to complete the following four assignments in whole:

#### *(1) Attendance*

Attendance is required, and absences will involve a penalty.

Class occurs in three formats. First, we meet in person for two intensive weekends. Second, we meet on several Tuesday evenings for one hour on Zoom (5:00-5:50 p.m.). Third, several asynchronous lectures are also assigned at various points, and you can listen to them anytime during that week. See further details on the course schedule.

#### *(2) Reading*

Reading must be completed before each class meets. Class discussions will focus on readings, so you must be prepared to talk.

Theology is an activity done largely through the process of good reading. Read carefully. Read charitably. Read with others. Read with the expectation that you will learn from others, even when you disagree with their main point. Read even when a text is dense and difficult, for you will learn perseverance and fortitude here. Read that which seems trite and obvious, asking how others might object or criticize. Most importantly, read because God was willing to reveal himself in written words, and because we can best witness to God's grace with corresponding words. Read because words matter in God's economy of grace.

Remember: reading is an active exercise, a conversation in which you participate.

### *(3) Reading Briefs*

Students are expected to prepare a brief on what has been read (the professor specifies which chapter or book selection each week). The purpose of the brief is to summarize the thesis, outline, and argument of that chapter, as well as to state one's own analysis of it (in the form of questions, confirmations, objections, etc.). Briefs may include quotations from various points in the chapter (so long as page numbers are referenced). An example is provided on Canvas. Briefs should be no more than 350 words. They will be submitted on Canvas. You will also bring your first brief to class in hard copy for discussion and review.

### *(4) Final Research Paper*

Students will write a research paper on one topic discussed in class readings or lectures. The student will demonstrate familiarity with major literature and will show competence in dealing fairly with that material. We will discuss the paper over the course of the final weeks of the term, taking incremental steps to preparing for it (e.g., picking a topic, developing a question, finding relevant and helpful sources, developing a thesis, creating an outline). The last class before it is due will be spent in significant group discussion of your research and outlining. The paper should be 2000-2500 words.

Final papers are due on May 10 by 11:59 p.m. They are to be submitted on Canvas.

#### *Rules for Final Paper*

Final papers will be docked for poor grammar and style. Edit carefully. Read and re-read what you have written. Ministry involves communication, so you should hone your speech even as you learn theological substance.

Note: I highly recommend that you read your paper backwards, sentence by sentence. This will force you to see that each sentence has a subject and predicate, that they agree, etc.

Do not go over the word limit for any written assignments. I assign a particular length to be followed by all. A good thinker will have more information than can be said in the limit, but a good writer will be able to distill and shorten.

Note: I will stop reading your work when it reaches the word limit. If you keep going, I will toss this out and read your paper as if it has no conclusion (something which will certainly lower your grade).

*Academic Honesty* (adapted from Dr. Timothy Phillips of Wheaton College)

1. The assignments are designed to extend and deepen your comprehension and appreciation of Christian theology and to increase your facility with theological method. The processes of defining a topic, researching the results of others' studies, critiquing those studies, and organizing your conclusions in a clear and cogent presentation provides valuable skills for your various leadership ministries. The use of sources is an essential step in appropriating the learning of the Church's tradition in its relationship to cultures to help us understand and faithfully practice Scripture.
2. Using information obtained from a source without indicating it (whether by footnote, parentheses, or bibliography or some other appropriate reference, depending on the type of assignment) is plagiarism (intellectual thievery and lying). This applies to **any** information that you gain from someone that is not “common knowledge.” It does **not** apply **only** to exact quotations or precise verbal allusions. Altering the wording does **not** remove the obligation to acknowledge the source.
3. Cheating is the presentation of someone else's work, which the student ought to have done personally. This includes submitting answers to test questions derived by some means other than that intended by the instructor. It also includes turning in written assignments composed in whole or in part by someone else.
4. Cheating or plagiarism results in the immediate failure of the entire course. Further disciplinary action may be taken as well.

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

We'll be zooming and listening to lectures. Computers, tablets, or other devices will be necessary to accomplish those essential elements of the class.

Yet we want to master technology, not have it unintentionally master us. Therefore, computers, tablets, and smart-phones are not allowed when we meet in class for our two intensives. If an assigned reading is stored electronically on your device, you may access the device when we discuss it. Otherwise, all screens should be off throughout class time.

Think I'm over-reacting? Think you're a master of multitasking? [You](#) are [not](#). No, [I really mean it. How many times do I have to tell you?](#) Notes taken by hand are almost always more useful than typed notes, because more thoughtful selectivity goes into them; plus there are 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*.

### *The Grading Structure*

Grades are apportioned as follows:

Reading and Reading Briefs	1/2
Final Paper	1/2

Grades may be adjusted based on issues regarding attendance and participation in class.

### *The Schedule*

#### Initial Weekend: February 2-3

We will meet Friday from 6-9 p.m. and Saturday from 9 a.m. – 6 p.m.

Introduction to Systematic Theology and to Christology, Soteriology, and Eschatology

Contexts for Christology (1): Eternity and History

Read John Webster, “‘It Was the Will of the Lord to Bruise Him’: Soteriology and the Doctrine of God”

Contexts for Christology (2): The Old Testament and the Covenant of Grace

Read John Calvin, *Institutes*, bk. 2, chs. 10-11

Write brief on Webster. Bring hard copy to class for discussion and review.

#### Weekly Session 1: February 7

Zoom Class: The Incarnation (1)

Read: David Yeago, “New Testament and the Nicene Dogma”

Listen: lecture on the Names and Deity of Christ (1):

<https://subsplash.com/reformtheosem/learn-about-rts/mi/+cxgbp54>

Write: brief on Yeago

#### Weekly Session 2: February 14

Zoom Class: The Incarnation (2)

Read: Kathryn Tanner, “Jesus”

Listen: lecture on The Names and Deity of Christ (2):

<https://subsplash.com/reformtheosem/learn-about-rts/mi/+c3c7j9t>

Write: brief on Tanner

#### Weekly Session 3: February 21

Zoom Class: The Incarnation (3)

Read: Cyril of Alexandria, *On the Unity of Christ*

Write: brief on Cyril

#### Weekly Session 4: February 28

Zoom Class: The Incarnation (4)

Read: Calvin, *Institutes*, bk. 2, chs. 12-14

Listen: lecture on Christ's Threefold Office (1):

<https://subsplash.com/reformtheosem/learn-about-rts/mi/+pyfrnch>

Write: brief on Calvin

#### Weekly Session 5: March 5

No Class

#### Weekly Session 6: March 12

Zoom Class: Humiliation and Exaltation (1)

Read: Calvin, *Institutes*, bk. 2, chs. 15-17

Listen: lecture on Christ's Threefold Office (2):

<https://subsplash.com/reformtheosem/learn-about-rts/mi/+y8srvs4>

Write: brief on Calvin

#### Weekly Session 7: March 19

Zoom Class: Humiliation and Exaltation (2)

Read: Henri Blocher, "Biblical Metaphors and the Doctrine of the Atonement" and "The Sacrifice of Jesus Christ"

Write: brief on Blocher

#### Weekly Session 8: March 26

Zoom Class: Humiliation and Exaltation (3)

Read: Adam Johnson, "Theories and *Theoria* of the Atonement: A Proposal" and "Atonement and Sin"

Write: brief on Johnson

#### Weekly Session 9: April 2

Zoom Class: Humiliation and Exaltation (4)

Read: Calvin, *Institutes*, bk. 3, chs. 11-13

Write: brief on Calvin

#### Weekly Session 10: April 9

No Class

Read: Calvin, *Institutes*, bk. 3, chs. 1-3

Write: brief Calvin

#### Weekly Session 11: April 16

Zoom Class: Justification

Read: Michael Allen, *Grounded in Heaven* (part 1)

Listen: lecture on Perseverance of the Saints and Glorification (1):

<https://subsplash.com/reformtheosem/learn-about-rts/mi/+kmtj399>; and lecture on Perseverance of the Saints and Glorification (2):

<https://subsplash.com/reformtheosem/learn-about-rts/mi/+v5b6fp6>

Write: brief on Allen, ch. 2

Paper: Identify Topic/Theme

### Weekly Session 12: April 23

Zoom Class: Sanctification

Read: Allen, *Grounded in Heaven* (part 2)

Listen: lecture on Consummated Eschatology (1):

<https://subsplash.com/reformtheosem/learn-about-rts/mi/+ghsbdyf>

Write: brief on Allen, ch. 3

Paper: Identify Sources

### Weekly Session 13: April 30

Zoom Class: Workshop for Final Papers

Read: John Webster, *The Culture of Theology*, pages 43-147

Listen: lecture on Consummated Eschatology (2):

<https://subsplash.com/reformtheosem/learn-about-rts/mi/+63zszyt>

Paper: Identify Question

Write: brief on Webster, ch. 1

### Second Weekend: May 3-4

We will meet Friday from 6-9 p.m. and Saturday from 9 a.m. – 6 p.m.

The Return of Christ and the Last Things

Read Allen, *Grounded in Heaven*

Conclusion: Returning to Theological First Principles and Reflecting on Method

Read Webster, *Culture of Theology*

Paper: Identify Paper Thesis and Outline

### May 10

Final paper due on Canvas

### *For Further Reading*

Explore the relevant sections on the person and work of Christ, the application of salvation, and the last things in classical systematic theologies (e.g. Lombard, Bonaventure, Thomas, Melancthon, Calvin, Turretin, Mastricht, à Brakel, Watson, Hodge, Scheeben, Bavinck, Barth, Berkouwer). Earlier catechetical or theological treatises may not be systematic theologies per se, but they provide a foundation for such later volumes: see especially Origen's *On First Principles*, Gregory Nazianzus's *Catechetical Orations*, and Augustine's *Enchiridion*. See Introduction to Dogmatic Literature document (available in course resources section on Canvas) for further annotated bibliography.

Explore the relevant exegetical or homiletical discussions of key texts for each of these doctrinal topics as they have been explored through the Christian tradition (e.g.

commentary or homilies developed on John 1 or Philippians 2 [person of Christ], Romans 3:21-26 [atonement of Christ], Romans 8 [for the order of salvation's application], Romans 9-11 [for election and predestination], Galatians 5 [the spirit/flesh contrast and the fruit of the Spirit], Revelation 21-22 [the new Jerusalem]). Pay special attention to classical exegesis and/or to contemporary engagement that involves what is often referred to as theological interpretation of Scripture or theological exegesis (including but going beyond bare historical and linguistic analysis).



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

Course: ST 5200  
 Professor: Allen  
 Campus: NYC  
 Date: Spring 2024

<b><u>MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes</u></b> <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> <i>*As the MDiv is the core degree at RTS, the MDiv rubric will be used in this syllabus.</i>		<b><u>Rubric</u></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong</li> <li>• Moderate</li> <li>• Minimal</li> <li>• None</li> </ul>	<b><u>Mini-Justification</u></b>
<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. Also includes ability to preach and teach the meaning of Scripture to both heart and mind with clarity and enthusiasm.	Strong	Regular writing briefs and final 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	Lectures and discussion forums involve exegetical interaction at length.
<b>Reformed Theology</b>	Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards.	Strong	Course focus is Reformed teaching on central doctrines.
<b>Sanctification</b>	Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student's sanctification.	Minimal	Interaction with Scripture is a regular element of course requirements.
<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	Strong	Development of systematic theology helps provide a frame

	worldwide church, and with significant public issues.		for thinking about public issues.
<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.)	<b>Strong</b>	Reading and engagement of wider catholic resources is a major element of reading and writing assignments as well as lectures.
<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.	<b>Moderate</b>	Development of pastoral theology, especially an understanding of the gospel and the kingdom of God, is a major focus.