

ST 5200 Christology, Soteriology, Eschatology
Dr. Michael Allen
Spring 2024
Wednesday 8:00-11:00

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 glory of the gospel
- To grow in your hope, more perceptively longing for the return 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. We can set up meetings as needed.

The Texts

The following books are required:

Michael Allen and Scott R. Swain (eds.), *Christian Dogmatics: Reformed Theology for the Church Catholic* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2016), pages 107-125, 216-290, 363-391. ISBN 9780801048944.

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 ideal 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 of this 2 volume set. 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. They will not have anything like the same text.

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 three assignments in whole:

(1) *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.

(2) Reading Briefs

Students are expected to prepare a brief on particular chapters read (as specified on Canvas). 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).

Briefs should be no more than 350 words.

(3) WSC Memorization

Students will memorize Westminster Shorter Catechisms 20-38. To be completed by May 15.

(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 3000-3500 words.

Final papers are due on May 10 by 11:00 a.m.

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.

See the RTS Academic Catalog for further details regarding plagiarism.

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

Computers, tablets, and smart-phones are not allowed in class. 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	40%
WSC Memorization	20%
Final Paper	40%

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

The Schedule

January 31

The God of the Gospel

Read *CD*, ch. 5 (“The Covenant of Redemption”)

February 7

The Covenant of Grace

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

February 14

The Incarnation (part 1)

Read Cyril, *On the Unity of Christ*

February 21

The Incarnation (part 2)

Read *CD*, ch. 10 (“Incarnation”); Calvin, *Institutes*, bk. 2, chs. 12-14

February 28

Humiliation and Exaltation (part 1)

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

March 6

Humiliation and Exaltation (part 2)

Read Blocher, “Biblical Metaphors and the Doctrine of the Atonement” and “The Sacrifice of Jesus Christ: The Current Theological Situation” (PDFs) and *CD*, ch. 11 (“The Work of Christ Accomplished”)

March 13

Humiliation and Exaltation (part 3)

Read Adam Johnson, “Theories and *Theoria* of the Atonement: A Proposal” and “Atonement and Sin”; *CD*, ch. 16 (“Kingdom of God”)

March 20

NO CLASS: SPRING BREAK

March 27

Eschatology

Read Allen, *Grounded in Heaven* (chs. 1-2)

April 3

Justification

Read Allen, *Grounded in Heaven* (chs. 3-4)

April 3-4

Attend Kistemaker Lectures by Lewis Ayres

April 10

Sanctification

Read CD, ch. 12 (“The Work of Christ Applied”); Calvin, *Institutes*, bk. 3, chs. 11-13

April 17

Word and the Spirit

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

April 24

Doing Theology (part 1)

Read Webster, *Culture of Theology* (chs. 1-3)

May 1

Doing Theology (part 2)

Read Webster, *Culture of Theology* (chs. 4-6)

May 10

Final paper due by 11:00 a.m.

May 15

WSC Memorization Due

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: 02ST5200

Professor: M Allen

Campus: Orlando

Date: Spring 2024

<u>MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes</u>		<u>Rubric</u>	<u>Mini-Justification</u>
<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>		➤ Strong ➤ Moderate ➤ Minimal ➤ None	
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	Weekly writing requirements develop ability to gather appropriate content and communicate it in a clear and compelling manner.
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	Focuses on broad, canonical teaching of Holy Scripture upon certain fundamental doctrinal topics, as they develop exegetically.
Reformed Theology	Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards.	Strong	Topics of Christology, Soteriology, and Eschatology introduced as taught in Reformed tradition. Analysis of relevant WCF chapters.
Sanctification	Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student's sanctification.	Minimal	Direct study of sanctification in residential week, focusing on Christ's agency in maturing Christians in the present tense.
Desire for Worldview	Burning desire to conform all of life to the Word of God.	Strong	Develops systematic and coherent framework for interpreting all of life in a biblical, Reformed manner.
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	Introduces many classical precursors to Reformed theology, noting the way in which the Reformation was a modification or renewal movement within classical Christianity rather than its repudiation or replacement, as well as contributions made by later traditions other than the Reformed.
Preach	Ability to preach and teach the meaning of Scripture to both heart and mind with clarity and enthusiasm.	Minimal	Macro-understanding of whole counsel of God developed so exposition of any text can be done with a greater sense of breadth, emphasis, and proportion.

Worship	Knowledgeable of historic and modern Christian-worship forms; and ability to construct and skill to lead a worship service.	Minimal	Macro-understanding of whole counsel of God developed so development of liturgy (whether fixed or free) can be done with a greater sense of breadth, emphasis, and proportion.
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.	Minimal	Focus upon application of salvation enables student to consider regular means of grace and normal course of Christian discipleship in light of the gospel promises.
Church/World	Ability to interact within a denominational context, within the broader worldwide church, and with significant public issues.	Minimal	Macro-understanding of whole counsel of God provides a framework for viewing key cultural issues in a theological lens.