

Reformed Theological Seminary – New York
09ST5100: Introduction to Pastoral & Theological Studies Winter Semester 2024
January 8-12, 2024 (9:00am-5:00pm ET)
Ligon Duncan (Monday – Friday)

Course Description

This course is the RTS introduction to theology and pastoral ministry from the standpoint of the seminary's confessional, theological, and pastoral commitments and convictions. The classroom lectures and interaction, and the reading assignments for this course will acquaint the student with important exegetical, theological, historical, and practical issues for Christian life and ministry. Students will see the integral connection between theology and pastoral ministry (and, indeed, all vocation): that all theology is practical and that life, vocation and biblical pastoral ministry must flow out of and be founded upon sound biblical theology. Students will be equipped to apply Reformed Theology in all areas of pastoral labors, and to derive their theology of ministry from theological commitments.

The RTS catalog course description says: “This course introduces the student to exegetical, theological, historical, and practical aspects of ministry. Students are equipped to use the practice of ministry as the integrating concept for all of their theological studies [emphasis mine].”

Course Objectives

To familiarize students with the basics of Reformed Theology in historical context and encourage students to reflect on the basic hermeneutical and practical implications of Reformed Theology. The course will study the significance of a Reformed worldview for pastoral and theological studies. It will also set forth and commend the distinctives of Reformed Theological Seminary in order to enhance students' ability to benefit from the rest of the curriculum.

Contact Information

Ligon Duncan, Ph.D. – *John E. Richards Professor of Systematic and Historical Theology, Chancellor/CEO of RTS*

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Assisting me to facilitate this course will be my RTS Jackson Teaching Assistants:

Wesley Rule~wrule@rts.edu * William Skinner~wskinner@fpcjackson.org * Grant Carter~grant.carter23@yahoo.com

The TAs are available to answer questions for you about logistical matters related to the course.

Academic Integrity

All work submitted must be the student's own. Group study is encouraged, but work submitted must be the student's own (and not group-produced). Plagiarism is specifically addressed in the Student Handbook. Students who do not fulfill assignments with requisite academic integrity will be referred to the Academic Dean (the student should also consult pp. 33-34 in the Handbook for further details).

Technology Use

I would strongly encourage students to attempt to take notes by hand in this course, BUT laptop computers and tablets may be used for note-taking if you prefer, and may be used to access course texts available on Canvas for class discussion. No surfing Facebook and the web though! Phones and other handheld devices should remain in the off position and stowed during class time. Distraction is the great downside to the amazing technologies available to us in our time.

Course Texts

*William Cunningham, *An Introduction to Theological Studies* (A Press, 1993)

The Confession of Faith and Catechisms with Scripture Proofs (PCA; Great Commission Publications or Banner of Truth)

*Study Helps to the Confession and Catechisms (compiled and edited by Ligon Duncan, in Canvas)

John Newton, *Select Letters of John Newton* (Banner paperback)

*B. B. Warfield, *The Plan of Salvation* (Various Publishers)

*Herman Witsius, *On the Character of a True Theologian* (Reformed Academic Press, 1994)

**These required texts will be made available electronically in Canvas.*

Course Assignments and Evaluation

Short Essays (50% of Final Grade) Students will complete a total of five essays:

- 1. *Christian Experience*:** Describe how you came to faith in Christ, and what God has done and is now doing in your life (sanctification/maturation/aspiration), including your church participation and service.
- 2. *Vocation*:** Describe your sense of call to the ministry (or to whatever service or profession you are preparing for). How has this been confirmed by others (pastors, campus ministers, local church, family, etc.)? What process of self-examination have you followed? Why are you pursuing seminary studies? Where/How do you feel drawn to serve in the future?
- 3. *Reformed Theology*:** Briefly and clearly articulate what it means to be “Reformed.” Express the essence of Reformed Theology as concisely and comprehensively as possible in this short scope.
- 4. *Scripture*:** Briefly explain why you believe the Bible to be true. Make scriptural arguments. Include definitions of important terms and concepts like authority, sufficiency, clarity, inerrancy, and inspiration.
- 5. *Theology of Ministry*:** Relate your theological convictions to your purpose/goals/aims in ministry, as well as to your approach/methods/means/ to ministry. In other words, show how your practice of ministry is rooted in and flows out of your theological commitments. Show how your theology influences *how* you will minister.

Format: Please follow this format. All papers will be two pages or less, single spaced, Times New Roman, 12- point Font, one-inch margins. Each paper should have a clear, logical order and structure. Please remember to proofread your work, as points will be deducted for careless misspellings and grammatical errors. In the header of each paper, please put your name as well as the paper number and title:

Joseph Porter #2 Vocation

I was born in a Christian home and attended an evangelical church growing up, but I don't think I became a Christian until I was studying at the University of Florida. I went to a new

Oral Exam on Total Content (50% of Final Grade)

Similar in nature to a presbytery exam, students will meet with the professor via Canvas and spend 30 minutes answering questions dealing with the fundamental issues of theology and ministry covered throughout this course. This exam will focus on your understanding of the lecture material and reading, and your ability to articulate it. I will tell the students exactly what to prepare for and a study guide will be uploaded to Canvas. Students will select a date and time for the final exam through the calendar function in Canvas. Students will receive additional instructions via email from the TAs.

Collection of Assignments

All assignments are due to be submitted electronically on Canvas by **11:59 PM (Eastern Time)** of the due date. Assignments received after this time will be considered late and penalized accordingly.

Late Work

Students should make every effort to turn in work on time or early. In the rare case of medical or other providential emergency, extensions and/or alternative arrangements may be granted. In most cases, late assignments will be accepted but penalized one letter grade per day. Please make these arrangements with the TA as soon as possible.

Attendance and Tardiness

Given the huge amount of material we have to cover and the relative scarcity of classroom hours, attendance will be at a premium and, of course, to the benefit of the student. Roll will be taken at every class. If you need to miss a class or to leave early or to arrive late, you should seek permission (via my TA, my EA, or myself). Failure to attend class, or to engage while in the class, will be noted. No unexplained absences.



Course Objectives Related to MDiv Student Learning Outcomes With Mini-Justification

Course: 09ST5100 Introduction to Pastoral and

Theological Studies

Professor: J. Ligon Duncan III, PhD

Campus: New York

Date: Winter 2024

MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes <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>		Rubric <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. Also includes ability to preach and teach the meaning of Scripture to both heart and mind with clarity and enthusiasm.	Strong	Students will respond to the material both in written papers and exams as well as in an oral exam
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	This course stresses the organization and teaching of the whole Scripture and the Scripture's implication for ministry
Reformed Theology	Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards.	Strong	Introduction to the contours of Reformed Theology
Sanctification	Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student's sanctification.	Strong	Study of a Reformed Worldview and the godliness required of God's ministers
Worldview	Burning desire to conform all of life to the Word of God. Includes ability to interact within a denominational context, within the broader worldwide church, and with significant public issues.	Strong	Stresses the content of the worldview founded on the Scripture
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	Focuses on the beauty of the Scripture's teaching and the desire to bring people to a saving knowledge 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-Christians.	Strong	Aims at forming "servant-leaders" and "pastor-shepherds." Lays the groundwork for teaching/preaching, stresses God as the author and object of worship, and compares biblical reformed theology with other systems.