

RTS

O R L A N D O



Th.M. COURSE SYLLABUS

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The Thought of Herman Bavinck –  
HT 6330/ST7365  
Dr. N. Gray Sutanto  
Fall 2025

## PROFESSOR'S CONTACT INFORMATION

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**NAME:** N. Gray Sutanto

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## COURSE DATES

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**COURSE DATES:** August 28

**COURSE COMPLETION DATE:** Dec 11, 2025

## COURSE OVERVIEW

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### DESCRIPTION:

This course is a reading seminar that works through Bavinck's texts systematically and chronologically. Students will be trained to engage Bavinck's own writings, and discern some of his main interlocutors within the context of modern theology in the 19th- 20th centuries, with an eye toward contemporary theological issues and debates.

### GOALS:

- Understand the scope and arguments in Bavinck's major texts
- Articulate the development in Bavinck's thought and contributions to modern Reformed theology and Dutch neo-Calvinism
- Appreciate the development of Reformed theology within the context of modernity

## COURSE DETAILS

### 1. GRADING SCHEDULE.

Late work will be penalized 1 letter grade per day, unless prior permission for late submission was granted.

The published RTS grading scale is used in this course. See the latest Catalog.

### 2. ATTENDANCE AND LATE ASSIGNMENTS.

Attendance and prepared participation is required. If class is not attended, the student's final grade will be affected.

### **3. SPECIAL NEEDS.**

In order to ensure full class participation, any student with a disabling condition requiring special accommodations (e.g. tape recorders, special adaptive equipment) is strongly encouraged to contact the instructor before the beginning of the course.

### **4. ACADEMIC HONESTY (QUOTED AND ADAPTED FROM DR. TIMOTHY PHILLIPS OF WHEATON COLLEGE).**

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.

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.

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 or by use of AI-powered programs (such as ChatGPT).

### **5. DISCLAIMER.**

This syllabus is intended to reflect accurately the learning objectives, instructional format and other information necessary for students to appraise the course. However, the instructor reserves the right to modify any portion of this syllabus as may become necessary.

### **6. SUPPORT:**

Canvas allows you to interact with the Professor or his teaching assistant via the Inbox function.

Canvas also allows for interaction with classmates. You can interact with classmates via the Student to Student forum or Conferences.

See FAQ on the Home Page or at Modules > Course Resources for instructions on various Canvas features.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

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### READING

The following books are required:

Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics* vols. 1-3 (Baker Academic, 2003-2008).  
Bavinck, *Christian Worldview* (Crossway, 2019).  
Bavinck, *Christianity and Science* (Crossway, 2023)  
Bavinck, *Philosophy of Revelation* (Hendrickson, 2018).  
Bavinck, *Essays on Religion, Science, and Society* (Baker Academic, 2008).  
Bavinck, *Foremost Problems in Contemporary Dogmatics* (Lexham, 2025)  
Cory Brock and N. Gray Sutanto, *Neo-Calvinism: A Theological Introduction* (Lexham, 2023)  
James Eglinton, *Bavinck: A Critical Biography* (Baker Academic, 2020)  
Recommended: *T&T Clark Handbook of Neo-Calvinism* (eds. Sutanto and Brock; Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2024).

For accessing Bavinck's individually published essays: see <https://sources.neocalvinism.org/bavinck/?tp=all>

### READING BRIEFS AND PRESENTATIONS

Weekly Reading Reports/Canvas Threads (45%): Each week, students are to write and submit a single page reading report on Canvas detailing (1) a summary of the readings for that week and (2) questions and discussion prompts for the week's class. There are 11 reading reports/canvas threads in total.

Other than the first class, each class will begin with a Th.M. student presentation that summarizes the reading and offer the initial discussion prompts.

### TERM SEMINAR PRESENTATION (TH.M STUDENTS)

Th.M students will present their research topics at the end of this class.

### RESEARCH PAPERS

The research paper will use Herman Bavinck's corpus as the primary text. Each student will come up with their own question that they seek to answer

in their essay. The question should be narrow enough to answer thoroughly. Each question must be approved by the instructor well in advance of the due date. The essay is due on the last day of exam week, according to the RTS-Orlando academic calendar. The essay should range between 5000-6000 words (for Th.M) or 3000 words max (MA). Proper (SBL/Turabian) footnotes are required. Include a title and at least three labeled sections within the paper (ex. Introduction, Conclusion and titles in between that lay out the paper in a sensible way).

## COURSE SCHEDULE

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August 28

Topic: Herman Bavinck and the neo-Calvinist Tradition

Th.M. Students - Read: Brock and Sutanto, *Neo-Calvinism*, "Editorial Introduction," and Harinck, "Neo-Calvinism and the Netherlands" in the *T&T Clark Handbook of Neo-Calvinism*, and Eglinton, *Bavinck*, before class starts.

Sep 4

Early Essays

- "Kingdom of God, the Highest Good," 1881 (38 pgs).
  - "The Pros and Cons of a Dogmatic System," 1881 (14 pgs). – Th. M. only
  - "The Catholicity of Christianity and the Church," 1888 (33 pgs).
  - "Theology and Religious Studies" in *Essays on Science...* 1892 (11 pgs).
- Th.M. Only

Sep 11

Early Essays (con'd)

- "General Biblical Principles and the Relevance of the Concrete Mosaic Law for the Social Question Today" 1891 (11 pgs).
- "The Future of Calvinism," 1894 (24 pgs).
- "Common Grace," 1894 (27 pgs).

Sep 18

Prolegomena

- RD 1, Chapter 7, 8
- Bavinck, *Foremost Problems of Contemporary Dogmatics*, chps. 1-4 (Th.M)

Sep 25

General and Special Revelation

*RD* 1, chps. 9, 10, 13

Oct 2

The Knowledge of God

*RD* 2, chps. 1-2, 6. (Th.M)

*RD*, 2, chps. 1-2, 329-34 (M.A.)

Oct 9

Christian Worldview

Bavinck, *Christian Worldview*, entirety (Th.M)

Bavinck, *Christian Worldview*, introductions, chps. 1-2 (M.A.)

Oct 16 (No Class – Reading Week)

Oct 23

Christianity and Science

Bavinck, *Christianity and Science* (entirety)

Oct 30

Human Nature and Sin

*RD* 2, chps. 12-13 (Th.M)

*RD* 3, chps. 1-4

Nov 6

Philosophy of Revelation pt. 1

Bavinck, *PoR*, Preface, Introductions, and Chps 1-5

Nov 13

Philosophy of Revelation pt. 2

Bavinck, *PoR*, chps. 6-10

Nov 20-27 (No Class – Conference and Thanksgiving Break)

Dec 4

Seminar Presentations from Th.M. Students on Paper Topics

‘Preface’ to the *Wonderful Works of God* (2 pages)

“Modernism and Orthodoxy,” 1911 (41 pgs)

Dec 11 – Term Paper Due

## FURTHER READING

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Herman Bavinck, *Certainty of Faith* (Paideia, 1980)

Herman Bavinck, *Christian Family* (Christian Library, 2012).

Herman Bavinck, *Foundations of Psychology* (available at The Bavinck Review)

Herman Bavinck, *On Theology: Herman Bavinck’s Academic Orations*, ed. Bruce Pass (Brill, 2020)

Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Ethics*, 3 vols., (Baker Academic, 2019 - )

Herman Bavinck, *Sacrifice of Praise*, eds. Cam Clausing and Greg Parker (Hendrickson, 2019)

Herman Bavinck, *Wonderful Works of God* (Westminster Seminary Press, 2019)

John Bolt, *Herman Bavinck on the Christian Life* (Crossway, 2015)

Cory Brock, *Orthodox Yet Modern* (Lexham, 2020)

Cory Brock and Nathaniel Gray Sutanto, “Herman Bavinck’s Reformed Eclecticism: On Catholicity, Consciousness, and Theological Epistemology,” *Scottish Journal of Theology* 70 (2017): 310-32.

Cameron Clausing, *Theology and History in the Methodology of Herman Bavinck* (Oxford, 2023)

James Eglinton, *Trinity and Organism* (T&T Clark, 2012)

James Eglinton, *Herman Bavinck on Preaching and Preachers* (Hendrickson, 2017)

Richard B. Gaffin, *God's Word in Servant Form* (2008)

Brian Mattson, *Restored to Our Destiny* (Brill, 2012)

Bruce Pass, *Heart of Dogmatics* (V&R, 2020)

N. Gray Sutanto, *God and Knowledge* (T&T Clark, 2020)

N. Gray Sutanto, *God and Humanity: Herman Bavinck and Theological Anthropology* (T&T Clark, 2024).

N. Gray Sutanto, *A Sense of the Divine: An Affective Model of General Revelation from the Reformed Tradition* (Cambridge University Press, 2025)

Henk van den Belt, *The Authority of Scripture in Reformed Theology Truth and Trust* (Brill, 2008)



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

Course: ST 7365

Professor: Sutanto

Campus: D.C./Orlando

Date: Fall 2025

| <b><u>ThM Student Learning Outcomes</u></b><br><i>In order to measure the success of the ThM 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 ThM outcomes.</i> |   | <b><u>Rubric</u></b><br><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>   | Articulates knowledge, both oral and written, regarding advanced biblical, theological, and historical scholarship, demonstrating attention to details, concepts, methods, and frameworks.  | Strong  | Reading reports and research paper emphasize articulation, analysis, and clarity of thought.  |
| <b>Primary Texts</b>   | Significant knowledge of, and skills to engage, primary texts within the student's chosen track (Bible or theology). This includes a demonstrated expertise in interpreting primary languages as appropriate (Bible = Greek and/or Hebrew; Theology = optional proficiency in a theological language) | Strong  | Readings in the course represent an exemplary instance of Reformed theology in the 19 <sup>th</sup> -20 <sup>th</sup> centuries.                  |
| <b>Secondary Literature</b>  | Demonstrates a breadth of knowledge of and skill to research and engage critically with secondary literature related to the appropriate discipline.   | Strong  | The course begins by assigning authoritative recent secondary literature on Bavinck, and other works will be brought into the seminar discussions |



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| <b>Winsomely Reformed</b> | Embraces a winsomely Reformed ethos. (Includes a charitable engagement with a wide variety of views, of those both inside and outside the Evangelical and Reformed perspectives) | <b>Strong</b> | Readings represent irenic engagement with non-Reformed theologies from a Reformed perspective. |
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