

ST5355 Theological Foundations for Counseling (v. 072125)

Josh Malone – jmalone@rts.edu

Day: Tuesdays

Time: 10am-12pm

Room: 202

TA: Michael Emmanuel – MEmmanuel9343@student.rts.edu

Catalog Description

This is the first of five courses exploring the relation of psychology and counseling to biblical and theological studies. This course focuses on the relation of Scripture to psychological studies and counseling, on Scripture as the central text of the Christian counselor, and on scriptural texts of central importance to Christian counselors.

Course Requirements

Participation (15%): Each student is required to attend course, answer questions when asked, and participate in class discussions. The following rubric explains how students will be evaluated:

A to A- (100-94)	B+ to B- (93-86)	C+ to C- (85-78)	D+ to D- (77-70)	F (69 – 0)
Provided many good ideas for class consideration; inspired others; clearly communicated desires, ideas, questions, and comments. Was respectful of others.	Participated in discussions; shared questions and comments. Was respectful of others.	Listened mainly; occasionally asked a question or offered a comment. Was respectful of others.	Seemed bored with discussions; rarely spoke up, and questions or comments were off topic. Was disrespectful of others. Or, dominated class time by not permitting others to ask their questions.	Failed to attend class—missed more than three lecture periods total.

Reading (15%): Complete all assigned reading. Please only report your reading if you do not complete all 100 percent.

Research Paper (35%): Comparing evangelical counseling positions. Compare and contrast the three most viable positions evangelicals have taken regarding psychology and counseling (biblical counseling, Christian psychology, and integration) regarding such matters as the role of the Bible and creation grace in the human sciences; the use of the Bible and theology in counseling; the influence of secularism in contemporary psychology and counseling; participation in contemporary psychology, counseling, and public mental health; and the counseling in the church. For sources you should incorporate the following documents and interact with them:



ACBC, Annual Covenant of ACBC (Association of Certified Biblical Counselors)
<https://biblicalcounseling.com/about/beliefs/positions/membership-covenant/> Retrieved online 04/23/24. The document is also available as a PDF on CANVAS.

Johnson, ed., *Psychology & Christianity: Five Views.*

Your paper should be 3-5 pages, single-spaced, and you should answer the following questions in the assignment:

1. What is your understanding of the sufficiency of Scripture and which view(s) rightly account for the doctrine?
2. Briefly explain common grace and general revelation and which view(s) rightly factor them?
3. Which view(s) in your judgment best account for general and special revelation?

Due Tuesday, December 2, 2025, at 11:59pm. (last day of classes)

Final Exam (35%): Students will sit for a two-hour exam that covers questions drawn from lectures and assigned readings. **Date/Time: TBD.**

RTS Grading Scale

A (97-100)	C (80-82)
A- (94-96)	C- (78-79)
B+ (91-93)	D+ (75-77)
B (88-90)	D (72-74)
B- (86-87)	D- (70-71)
C+ (83-85)	F (below 70)

Textbooks & Required Reading

Holy Bible (any version)

Westminster Standards (post-1788 American revisions): WCF = Westminster Confession of Faith, WLC = Westminster Larger Catechism, WSC = Westminster Shorter Catechism

NOTE: Students who would like to pursue an advanced course of study may negotiate different assigned readings with the instructor. This must be done the first week of class and is binding.

Purchase:

Berkhof, Louis *Manual of Christian Doctrine* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1960): ISBN 978-0802816474

Johnson, Eric, ed. *Psychology and Christianity: Five Views*. (Downers Grove, IL: Inter Varsity Press, 2010): ISBN 978-0830828487

Trueman, Carl. *Strange New World: How Thinkers and Activists Redefined Identity and Sparked the Sexual Revolution* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2022): ISBN 978-1433579301

On Canvas:

Kant, Immanuel. “What Is Enlightenment?” in *What Is Enlightenment?*, ed. James Schmidt (Berkley, CA: University of California Press, 1996), pp. 58-64. The document is also available as a PDF on CANVAS.

Styker, Susan. “My Words to Victor Frankenstein Above the Village of Chamounix: Performing Transgender Rage,” *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 1 (1993): 237-54. The document is available as a PDF on CANVAS.

Vanhoozer, Kevin J. “The Sufficiency of Scripture: A Critical and Constructive Account,” *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 49/3 (2021): 218-34. The document is available as a PDF on CANVAS.

Course structure:

1. What is Theology? & General & Special Revelation
2. The covenants of redemption, works, and grace
3. Faith & Reason & The Impact of the Enlightenment on Theology and the Church
4. The Sufficiency of Scripture, Common Grace, & Light of Nature
5. The Twofold Knowledge of God & A Theology of the Body
6. The Word of God
7. Union with Christ
8. Sanctification
9. Suffering
10. Christ & Culture & Integration View
11. A Biblical Counseling View

Lecture Schedule

Week	Date	Topic	Readings
1	Aug 26	What is Theology? General and Special Revelation	WCF 1; WSC qq. 2-3; qq. WLC 3-5 Berkhof, 23-36
2	Sep 2	Labor Day – No Class	
3	Sep 9	The covenants of redemption, works, and grace	WCF 7; WSC qq. 12, 20; WLC qq. 20, 30-35 Berkhof, 151-74
4	Sep 16	Faith & Reason The Impact of the Enlightenment on Theology and the Church	Trueman, <i>Strange New World</i> Kant, “What Is Enlightenment?”
5	Sep 23	The Sufficiency of Scripture / Common Grace / Light of Nature	Berkhof, 223-29 Vanhoozer, “Sufficiency of Scripture”
6	Sep 30	The Twofold Knowledge of God A Theology of the Body	WCF 2, 8, 25, 26; WSC 4-6; 21-28, 36-38; WLC qq. 6-11, 36-57, 61-64, 65-66, 82-83, 86, 90 Stryker, “My Words”
7	Oct 7	Reading Week – No Class	
8	Oct 14	The Word of God	Berkhof, 37-52
9	Oct 21	Union with Christ	WLC q. 69
10	Oct 28	Sanctification	WCF 13; WSC 35-36; WLC qq. 75, 77-78. Berkhof, 265-73
11	Nov 4	PMV – No Class	Discuss Johnson, Five Views with a classmate, noting strengths/weaknesses
12	Nov 11	Suffering	WCF 27; WSC qq. 91-93; WLC qq. 161-64
13	Nov 18	ETS Week – No Class	
14	Nov 25	Christ and Culture Integration View	Johnson, Five Views, 101-48
15	Dec 2	A Biblical Counseling View	Johnson, Five Views, 245-91. Papers Due

Course Objectives Related to MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes

Course: ST5150 Scripture, Theology, Anthropology

Campus: Jackson, MS

Professor: Josh Malone

Date: Fall 2025

MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes		Rubric	Mini-Justification
<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)	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 are required to participate in discussions as well as research papers.
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 focuses on the exegetical foundations for doctrines.
Reformed Theology	Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards.	STRONG	This course examines the Reformed doctrine and has assigned readings from the Westminster Standards.
Sanctification	Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student's sanctification.	STRONG	A key point of this course is to learn humility and charity by studying Christ's saving work applied to us.
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	This course teaches material that represents the core of what a minister should teach and preach to his church.
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	If we learn how challenging it was to develop orthodox doctrine, then the aim is to be humble as we propagate it.
Pastoral Ministry	Ability to minister the Word of God to hearts and lives of both churched and unchurched, to include preaching, teaching, leading in worship, leading and shepherding the local congregation, aiding in spiritual maturity, concern for non-Christians.	MODERATE	This course examines the doctrines that are foundational to practice, but does not focus on the practice.