ST6140: THEOLOGY OF SCRIPTURE
RTS ATLANTA | WINTER 2026

I. **COURSE INFORMATION**
   A. Contact Information
      1. Instructor: Dr. Derek W. H. Thomas
      2. Email: dthomas@rts.edu
      3. Assistant: Beck Otersen
      4. Email: beckrhoton@gmail.com
   B. Schedule
      1. Dates: 5–8 January 2026
      2. Meeting Times: Mon–Fri | 9:00 AM – 4:30 PM

II. **COURSE DESCRIPTION & OBJECTIVES**
   A. Catalogue Description
      1. An exegetical, historical, and dogmatic survey of the Christian doctrine of Scripture, including such topics as revelation, inspiration, authority, infallibility, inerrancy, canonicity, hermeneutics, and self-attestation. Consideration of representative contemporary formulations of these *loci* are included along with recent attacks on the historical Christian doctrine of Scripture.
   B. Learning Objectives
      1. Consider the priority of Scripture in Christian theology and ministry
      2. Examine the biblical teaching on the knowledge of God and how knowledge is acquired
      3. Explore the exegetical, theological, and confessional development of the Reformed doctrine of Scripture
      4. Respond to some popular criticisms of the Reformed doctrine of Scripture
      5. Consider implications for how we approach, receive, and use the Bible today

III. **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**
   A. Class Attendance
      1. Class attendance will be imperative for successful completion of this course.
   B. Assignments[1]
      1. Required Reading
      2. Final Examination
      3. Term Paper
   C. Required Reading
      1. D.A. Carson, *Collected Writings on Scripture* (Crossway: ISBN 978-1433514418)
      2. Derek Thomas, *The Bible: God's Inerrant Word* (Banner of Truth: ISBN 9781848718128)

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[1] See Appendices for more information regarding assignment details.

3. Michael J. Kruger, *Canon Revisited: Establishing the Origins and Authority of the New Testament Books* (Crossway: ISBN 9781433505003)
4. J.I. Packer, *"Fundamentalism" and the Word of God* (Eerdmans: ISBN 978-0802811479)
5. B.B. Warfield, *Inspiration and Authority of the Bible* (P&R: ISBN 978-0875525273)

IV. COURSE GRADE

A. Reading   10%
B. Exam   40%
C. <u>Term Paper   50%</u>
D. Total   100%

V. THEOLOGICAL STANDPOINT

A. The course will be taught from the standpoint of a personal commitment to the Westminster Confession of Faith. Additionally, all good theology should be doxological. Obedience in worship will be the chief objective of this course.
B. Note should be taken of the following quotations:
    1. "Theology seems often to the outsider just so much word-spinning air-borne discourse which never touches down except disastrously." – Ian Ramsey, *Models for Divine Activity* (London: SCM Press, 1973), 1.
    2. "There are theologians in the bottom of hell who are more interested in their own thoughts about God than in God himself." – C. S. Lewis
    3. "Theology is the science of living blessedly forever." – William Perkins, *The Golden Chaine* (1590), 1.

APPENDIX I: REQUIRED READING REPORT

- Below is a copy of the form that you will use to report how much reading you completed.
- This form will be available on Canvas.
- Submit your reading report on Canvas by <mark>13 February 2026 11:59pm</mark>.

Book	Pages Read
Carson	x/319
Thomas	x/115
Packer	x/186
Kruger	x/295
Warfield	x/442
TOTAL	x/1,357
FINAL READING GRADE	(X/1,357) * 100

APPENDIX II: EXAMINATION GUIDELINES

1. **Assignment**
   a. This course will include one examination administered after the lectures have ended.
   b. The examination will be taken on Canvas.
   c. The examination will cover class lectures and discussions.
   d. The examination will be due <mark>6 February 2026 at 11:59pm</mark>.

2. **Format**
   a. The exam will list a choice of eight (8) essay prompts.
   b. You will choose four (4) essays to write.
   c. At the beginning of each essay, please clearly indicate which prompt you are answering.
   d. No helps other than an unmarked English (or native language) Bible (i.e., no study notes).

3. **Length**
   a. The exam must be completed in one sitting.
   b. You will have three (3) hours to complete the exam.
   c. Each essay should be 350–600 words.
   d. Suggestion: Aim for 30–35 minutes of writing per essay. This is not an absolute principle, but it should help you manage your time. You should have plenty of time.

4. **Important to Note**
   a. The best preparation will be to give close attention to the lectures, take notes, and review your notes before taking the exam. An exam review guide will be provided on Canvas. The guide is meant to help you identify key points from the lectures. If you grasp the concepts on the guide, you will have the requisite knowledge to succeed on the exam.
   b. You will be asked to affirm the following honor statement at the end of your exam:

   "I have not received any unauthorized help on this exam, and I have not used any other unauthorized resources while taking this exam. I will keep the content of this examination confidential and will not discuss it with other students."

<p align="center">**APPENDIX III: TERM PAPER GUIDELINES**</p>

1. **Assignment:**
   a. Students will write a research paper on an approved topic related to the course material.
   b. Students should submit term papers via Canvas in PDF format.
   c. Term Papers will be due by ==13 February 2026 11:59pm==

2. **Length:**
   a. 2500–3500 words including footnotes (~8–10 pp.)

3. **Grading:** The paper will be assessed based on the following criteria:
   a. <u>Clear & Viable Thesis (15%)</u>: The paper clearly states in the introduction a viable thesis that can be reasonably defended in a paper of the assigned length.
   b. <u>Structure & Argumentation (25%)</u>: The paper has a clear and logical structure and provides appropriate argumentation in support of the thesis.
   c. <u>Depth (25%)</u>: The paper shows rigorous research, critical analysis, and theological insight.
   d. <u>Research (15%)</u>: Student uses <u>at least</u> 8 sources; at least 2 of these sources are academic journal articles. The paper uses diverse and quality resources in a responsible manner.
   e. <u>Formatting (10%)</u>: The paper follows Turabian style, and a bibliography is included.
   f. <u>Presentation (10%)</u>: The paper reflects good grammar, spelling, and punctuation, with clarity of expression and appropriate academic style.

4. **Formatting:**
   a. Chicago (Turabian) style
   b. Keep formatting consistent throughout
   c. Use footnotes rather than endnotes!!
   d. 12-point font
   e. Double spaced
   f. Must include a bibliography page. Automatic letter grade deduction if biblio is missing!
   g. Please only submit one (1) PDF to Canvas. i.e., your title page, paper, and bibliography should all be part of one (1) document, not three separate documents.

5. **Important to Note:**
   a. Please make sure that your thesis statement is clearly stated near the beginning of the paper.
   b. Please proofread to ensure that you are writing in coherent sentences.
   c. Must have at least eight (8) sources. Must interact with at least two (2) peer reviewed journal articles. Quality of sources will <u>greatly</u> impact the quality of the paper.

6. **Helpful Resources:**
   https://rts.edu/campuses/charlotte/students/research-and-writing-seminary-papers/

APPENDIX IV: OPTIONAL READING

Nota Bene: I do not necessarily endorse all of the books on this list. This is merely an aid to help you begin your research. Perhaps something on this list may spark a paper idea.

o   John Barton, *Holy Writings, Sacred Text: The Canon in Early Christianity*, 1st American ed. (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998).

o   Ford Lewis Battles, "God Was Accommodating Himself to Human Capacity," *Interpretation* 30, no. 1 (1977): 19–38;

o   Richard Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses: The Gospels as Eyewitness Testimony* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2006);

o   G. K. Beale, *Erosion of Inerrancy in Evangelicalism: Responding to New Challenges to Biblical Authority.* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2008);

o   Joel R. Beeke, *Puritan Reformed Theology: Historical, Experiential, and Practical Studies for the Whole of Life* (Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 2020);

o   Louis Berkhof, *The History of Christian Doctrines* (Carlisle, Pennsylvania: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1937);

o   Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1971);

o   Marc Zvi Brettler, Peter Enns, and Daniel Harrington, *Bible and the Believer: How to Read the Bible Critically and Religiously.* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2012);

o   Hans von Campenhausen, *The Formation of the Christian Bible*, trans. J. A. Baker (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1972);

o   D. A Carson and John D Woodbridge, *Hermeneutics, Authority, and Canon* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2005);

o   D. A. Carson, *The Gagging of God: Christianity Confronts Pluralism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996);

o   D. A. Carson, ed., *The Enduring Authority of the Christian Scriptures* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2016);

o   Stephen B. Chapman, *The Law and the Prophets: A Study in Old Testament Canon Formation*, Baker Academic edition. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2020);

o   Brevard S. Childs, *The New Testament as Canon: An Introduction* (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International, 1994);

o   Philip Wesley Comfort, *The Text of the Earliest New Testament Greek Manuscripts*, 2 vols. (Kregel Academic, 2019);

o   David A Dorsey, *The Literary Structure of the Old Testament: A Commentary on Genesis-Malachi* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005);

o   Bart D. Ehrman, *Lost Christianities: The Battles for Scripture and the Faiths We Never Knew* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005);

o   J. K. Elliott, ed., *The Apocryphal New Testament: A Collection of Apocryphal Christian Literature in an English Translation*, Reprint. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2007);

o   Edward Earle Ellis, *The Making of the New Testament Documents* (Boston, MA: Brill, 2002);

o   Peter Enns, *The Evolution of Adam: What the Bible Does and Doesn't Say about Human Origins* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2012);

o   Peter Enns, *The Bible Tells Me so: Why Defending Scripture Has Made Us Unable to Read It*, First Edition. (San Francisco, CA: HarperOne, 2014);

o   Peter Enns, *Inspiration and Incarnation: Evangelicals and the Problem of the Old Testament*, Second Edition. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2015);

o   Peter Enns, *The Sin of Certainty: Why God Desires Our Trust More than Our "Correct" Beliefs*, First Edition. (New York, NY: HarperOne, 2016);

o   Peter Enns, *How the Bible Actually Works: In Which I Explain How an Ancient, Ambiguous, and Diverse Book Leads Us to Wisdom Rather than Answers--and Why That's Great News*;

o   Sinclair B. Ferguson, *Some Pastors and Teachers* (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 2017);

o   John M. Frame, *The Doctrine of the Word of God*, A theology of Lordship (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2010);

o   Harry Y Gamble, *The New Testament Canon: Its Making and Meaning* (Philadelphia, PA: Wipf & Stock, 2002);

o   Mark S. Gignilliat, *A Brief History of Old Testament Criticism: From Benedict Spinoza to Brevard Childs* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012);

o   Charles Evan Hill, *Who Chose the Gospels?: Probing the Great Gospel Conspiracy* (Oxford University Press, 2012);

o   Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, Reprinted from the ed. originally publ. by Eerdmans [Grand Rapids, MI: 1952]., vol. 3, 3 vols. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2003);

o   Meredith G. Kline, *The Structure of Biblical Authority* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1975);

o   Michael J. Kruger, "Manuscripts, Scribes, and Book Production within Early Christianity," in *Christian Origins and Greco-Roman Culture: Social and Literary Contexts for the New Testament*, ed. Stanley E. Porter and Andrew W. Pitts, Text and editions for New Testament study v. 9 (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2012), 15–40;

o   Michael J. Kruger, *The Question of Canon: Challenging the Status Quo in the New Testament Debate* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2013);

o   Robert Letham, *Systematic Theology* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2019);

o   Peter A. Lillback and Richard B. Gaffin, eds., *Thy Word Is Still Truth: Essential Writings on the Doctrine of Scripture from the Reformation to Today* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2013);

o   V. Philips Long and Moisés Silva, eds., *Foundations of Contemporary Interpretation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996);

o   J. Merrick and Stephen M. Garrett, eds., *Five Views on Biblical Inerrancy*, Counterpoints: Bible and theology (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2013);

o   Bruce M. Metzger, *The Canon of the New Testament: Its Origin, Development and Significance* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1997);

o   Richard A. Muller, "The Foundation of Calvin's Theology: Scripture as Revealing God's Word," *Duke Divinity School Review* 44, no. 1 (1979): 14–23;

o   Richard A. Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics*, vol. 2, 4 vols. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academics, 2003);

o   John Murray, *Collected writings of John Murray* 4 vols. (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1982);

o   J. I Packer, "The Adequacy of Human Language," in *Honouring the Written Word of God*, vol. 3, 4 vols., Collected Shorter Writings of J. I. Packer (Carlisle, UK: Paternoster Press, 1999), 23–49;

o   Vern S. Poythress, *Interpreting Eden: A Guide to Faithfully Reading and Understanding Genesis 1-3* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2019);

o   Benjamin B. Warfield, *Selected Shorter Writings of Benjamin B. Warfield*, ed. John E. Meeter, vol. 2, 2 vols. (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Pub. Co, 1970).

o   Kevin DeYoung, *Taking God at His Word* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2016).

o   Guy Prentiss Waters, *For the Mouth of the Lord Has Spoken: The Doctrine of Scripture*, 2020.

o   A. T. B. McGowan, *The Divine Authenticity of Scripture: Retrieving an Evangelical Heritage* (Downers Grove, Ill: IVP Academic, 2007).

o   Richard B. Gaffin, *God's Word in Servant-Form: Abraham Kuyper and Herman Bavinck on the Doctrine of Scripture* (Jackson, MS: Reformed Academic Press, 2008).

o   Norman L. Geisler, ed., *Inerrancy* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1980).

o   N. T. Wright, *The Last Word: Scripture and the Authority of God - Getting beyond the Bible Wars* (New York, NY: HarperCollins, 2006).

o   Noel Weeks, *The Sufficiency of Scripture* (Edinburgh; Carlisle, Pa.: Banner of Truth Trust, 1998);

o   John William Wenham, *Christ and the Bible*, 1st American ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1994).

o   Louis Gaussen, *The Divine Inspiration of Scripture* (Fearn, Ross-shire, Scotland: Christian Heritage, 2007).

o   Paul D. Wegner, *A Student's Guide to Textual Criticism of the Bible: Its History, Methods & Results* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2006).

<div align="center">**APPENDIX V: RTS POLICIES**</div>

Zoom Policy

Your professor may allow you to Zoom into class or watch Zoom recordings for excused absences based on the professor's discretion and subject to the availability of equipment. Students should contact their professor well in advance of the class meeting. For a third absence the Registrar should be consulted. Your professor may require additional interactive assignments to offset the absence of classroom interaction. Sync or Remote Live courses have priority for the limited Zoom equipment.

Extension Policy

All assignments and exams are to be completed by the deadlines announced in this syllabus or in class. Extensions for assignments and exams due within the normal duration of the course must be approved beforehand by the Professor. Extensions of two weeks or less beyond the date of the last deadline for the course must be approved beforehand by the Professor. A grade penalty may be assessed.

Extensions of greater than two weeks but not more than six weeks beyond the last deadline for the course may be granted in extenuating circumstances (i.e. illness, family emergency). For an extension of more than two weeks the student must request an Extension Request Form from the Registrar's Office. The request must be approved by the Professor and the Academic Dean. A grade penalty may be assessed. (RTS Catalog p. 46 and RTS Atlanta Student Handbook p. 18)

Any incompletes not cleared six weeks after the last published due date for course work will be converted to a failing grade. Professors may have the failing grade changed to a passing grade by request. (RTS Catalog p. 49)

AI Policy

Artificial Intelligence Policies for Use in Coursework

RTS has instituted the following policy pertaining to the use of AI-enabled tools (including, but not limited to, generative chatbots like ChatGPT and Claude, writing assistants like Grammarly, and other AI-enabled assistants like Google Gemini, Microsoft Copilot, and Apple Intelligence).

It is noted that the policy below does allow for a limited use of AI. This will be the default RTS policy. *A professor, however, has the right to modify this policy, including denying the use of AI altogether. Any modifications to these policies by a professor for a specific RTS course will be explicitly noted by the professor.*

Gathering research leads: AI-enabled tools *may* be employed in a manner similar to using Wikipedia, blogs, social media, or other online sources in generating basic raw material (e.g., "What verses in the Old Testament use the word 'covenant'?") or leads for further reading (e.g., "What recent books deal with the topic of divine simplicity?"). Such uses *do not generally have to be disclosed*, but the student is encouraged to consult with the professor of record if there are any questions or doubts. Note: even the best AI tool is not infallible and often generates junk data; the student is, therefore, fully responsible for vetting the accuracy or validity of any such information generated.

Generating or analyzing content: AI-enabled tools *may* be used to generate small portions of content that would be used in a manner equivalent to quoting a commentary or other written or digital sources. Any use of such information in an assignment, either through direct quotation or indirect summarization, *must be fully disclosed* in keeping with the guidance provided by the Chicago Manual of Style and APA. The following examples illustrate appropriate methods of citation.

Footnoting direct usage (e.g., quotation) of the result generated by an AI tool:
1. Text generated by ChatGPT, Open AI, March 7, 2024 (https://chat.openai.com).
2. Text generated by Claude, Anthropic, March 20, 2024 (https://claude.ai).

Footnoting indirect use of AI results that are further modified/summarized by student:
3. ChatGPT, response to "What are the differences between Calvinists and Arminians concerning regeneration?" OpenAI, March 12, 2024.
4. When given a prompt of "What is the traditional Reformed view of church discipline," the Claude-generated text outlined three reasons: "Obedience to God's word," "protection of the church," and "restoration of the sinner" (https://claude.ai, April 2, 2024; see Appendix A for the full transcript).

Bibliographic entry
CMS/SBL: OpenAI, *ChatGPT* [large language model]. March 7, 2024. https://chat.openai.com.
APA: OpenAI (2024). *ChatGPT* (March 7 version). [Large language model]. https://chat.openai.com.

Proofreading: AI writing assistants (e.g., Grammarly) *may* be used for standard help with basic spellchecking and grammatical proofreading; such uses *do not have to be disclosed*. However, AI *may not* be used to *fully rewrite* sentences or paragraphs.

Creative process and textual composition: All writing in every course assignment must be, for all intents and purposes, the original work of the student. Thus, AI *may not* be used to generate key components of a writing project that are aimed at cultivating certain competencies in the student,

such as thesis/topic sentences, outlines, critical engagement with other views, and so forth. In addition, AI *may not* be used to write full sentences or paragraphs.

<u>Other</u>: AI-enabled tools *may not* be used in any way for online-discussion forum posts (e.g., TDQs), response papers, quizzes, and examinations.

Penalties

Illegitimate uses of AI are subject to penalties in line with the severity of the violation, ranging from letter-grade reductions, a grade of F for a course, or academic probation.

REFORMED ✝ THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
SYSTEM

COURSE OBJECTIVES RELATED TO MDIV* STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

Course: Theology of Scripture (ST6140-A1)
Professor: Dr. Derek W. H. Thomas
Campus: Atlanta
Term: Winter 20026

MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes *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.* **As the MDiv is the core degree at RTS, the MDiv rubric will be used in this syllabus.*	Rubric ➢ 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 be expected to write one graduate level research paper and four exam essays. Additional attention will be given to the importance of articulating a doctrine of in preaching ministry.
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	Scriptural justification and assessment is required for the doctrinal concepts articulated in this course.
Reformed Theology	Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards.	Strong	This course examines one of the more foundational issues in Reformed theology and also looks explicitly at the WCF.
Sanctification	Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student's sanctification.	Moderate	In addition, a robust understanding and trust of God's work is a keystone in sanctification (Jn 17:17).
Desire for Worldview	Burning desire to conform all of life to the Word of God.	Moderate	Students are expected to think of ways the doctrines explored form a worldview.
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	We will evaluate several different positions on the doctrine of Scripture. Students are urged to defend their doctrinal positions winsomely.
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-Xns.	Strong	This course will frequent discuss how doctrine should/can be preached in the context of suffering. Pastoral application will be done throughout.