

ST5200, Systematic Theology 2 Syllabus
Reformed Theological Seminary Houston
Spring 2026
March 12-14
March 26-28
April 30-May 2

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Course Description

This course will cover a study of **Christology** (the person and work of Christ), **soteriology** (the application of Christ's work of redemption), and **eschatology** (the doctrine of the last things). It will be based on the exegesis of Scripture, but with continual reference to historical figures, movements, creeds, and confessions as well. To be sure, we rely upon the Bible as our *ultimate authority* in matters of faith and life. But we also "stand on the shoulders" of approximately 2000 years of history in interpreting and applying the Bible. Listen to what William Perkins has to say on this matter:

Though the best men's works be but base stuff [compared] to the pure word of God, yet the writings of holy men must not be condemned, but must be read and regarded in their place, for our furnishing and enabling to the study of the scriptures, for the helping of our knowledge and judgment in the word of God. They that hold or practise the contrary know not what helps they be and what light they yield to many dark places of scripture.¹

Rationale for the Course

I am convinced that the most important classes that you will take in seminary are the systematic theology classes. Let me tell you why. In my experience as a pastor, I can count on one hand the number of times someone came to see me to ask about the meaning of a specific Bible passage. But I cannot even begin to count the number of times people came to see me with a topical question that they needed counsel about. They came wanting me to walk them through what the Bible as a whole had to say about this particular topic. And that, my friends, is the work of systematic theology. So, in that sense at least, the most practical and most important field of study for your future ministries within the local church is the area of systematic theology.

Tim Keller has put it this way: "This is one of the things that parishioners want from their pastors. We are to be a bridge between the world of scholarship and the world of the street and the pew. I'm aware of what a burden this is. I don't know that there has ever been a culture in which the job of the pastor has been more challenging. Nevertheless, I believe this is our calling."²

¹ William Perkins, *The Workes of...William Perkins* (1618), 3:104.

² Tim Keller, "Creation, Evolution, and Christian Laypeople" available at www.biologos.org/projects/scholar-essays.

Let me encourage you, therefore, to pour yourself into your studies in this class. You really will get out of it what you put into it.

Prerequisites

Students who are struggling with seeing the importance of systematic theology to pastoral ministry and to preaching may want to read the following quotations and articles before class:

Quotations:

“To be effective preachers you must be sound theologians.” (Charles Spurgeon)

“[L]earning...is essential to a successful ministry.” (Charles Spurgeon)

“[T]heology helps the preacher as the coach helps the tennis player....As the coach is the embodiment of decades of experience in playing tennis, so theology is the embodiment of centuries of study, debate and interpretative interaction as the church has sought to understand the Scriptures. One can play tennis after a fashion without ever having been coached, and one can preach from the Bible after a fashion without ever having encountered serious theology in a serious way. But, just as one is likely to play better with coaching, so one is likely to preach better—more perceptively, more searchingly, more fruitfully—when helped by theology; and so the preacher who is theologically competent will, other things being equal, be more use to the church.”³

“It is sometimes contended that ministers need not be trained in systematic theology if only they knew their Bibles. But ‘Bible-trained’ instead of systematically trained preachers frequently preach error....There are many ‘orthodox’ preachers today whose study of Scripture has been so limited to what it says about soteriology that they could not protect the fold of God against heresies on the person of Christ....If we carry this idea one step further, we note that a study of systematic theology will help men to preach theologically. It will help to make men proclaim the whole counsel of God. Many ministers never touch the greater part of the wealth of the revelation of God to man contained in Scripture. But systematics helps ministers to preach the whole counsel of God, and thus to make God central in their work.”⁴

Articles:

Donald Macleod, “Preaching and Systematic Theology,” in *The Preacher and Preaching*, ed. Sam T. Logan (P&R, 1986), 246-272.

J.I. Packer, “The Preacher as Theologian: Preaching and Systematic Theology,” in *Honouring the Written Word of God: The Collected Shorter Writings of J.I. Packer*, vol. 3 (Paternoster, 1999), 301-316.

John Murray, “Systematic Theology,” in *Collected Writings of John Murray*, vol. 4 (Banner of Truth, 1977), 1-21.

³ J.I. Packer, “The Preacher as Theologian,” in *Collected Shorter Writings of J.I. Packer*, 3:316.

⁴ Cornelius Van Til, *An Introduction to Systematic Theology*, 22-3.

Course Objectives

The principal aim of this course is to provide students with a comprehensive understanding of the main doctrines of Christianity, specifically in those areas mentioned above in the Course Description. It is expected that students will have a competent grasp of the issues involved in this course and a facility to communicate them with some fluency. Since many branches of the church require their ordained clergy not only to commit to these doctrines in a more or less strict sense but also to be able to articulate them when examined, these things are also in mind as objectives in this course as well. Most importantly, since all theology has worship as its end, this course will seek to foster deeper devotion and faithfulness to our great God and King by deepening our knowledge of Him and our reverence for Him. He is indeed worthy of all we are and have!

Charles Spurgeon once pointed out that the study of theology should lead both seminary professors and students to the same end:

Tutors [i.e., professors] should be what they wish their students to be; and what manner of men should [they] be? They should thunder in preaching, and lighten in conversation; they should be flaming in prayer, shining in life, and burning in spirit. If they be not so, what can they effect?⁵

Course Requirements

I. Required Reading

1. John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (Westminster/John Knox, Battles translation), 464-1008. (II.12.1—III.25.12).
2. *Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms* (WCF 8-20, 24, 32-33; WLC 36-60; 67-90; and WSC 20-90).
3. Donald Macleod, *The Person of Christ* (InterVarsity Press).
4. John Murray, *Redemption Accomplished and Applied* (Eerdmans).
5. Guy M. Richard, *What Is Faith?* (P&R).
6. Anthony J. Carter, *Blood Work: How the Blood of Christ Accomplishes our Salvation* (Reformation Trust)
7. Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (Eerdmans), 661-738.

II. Evaluation

1. **Class Participation** (10%).

Students will be required to attend each lecture, to answer questions that are asked in class, and to participate in class discussions. The following rubric will explain my evaluation:

A (100-94) Provided many good ideas for the class's consideration; inspired others; clearly communicated desires, ideas, questions, and comments. Was respectful of others.

B (93-86) Participated in discussions; shared questions and comments. Was respectful of others.

C (85-78) Listened mainly; occasionally asked a question or offered a comment. Was respectful of others.

⁵ CH Spurgeon, *Sword and Trowel* (1883), 262.

D (77-70) 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.

F (69 – 0) Failed to attend class—missed more than three lecture periods total.

2. Assigned Reading (10%). Due date: May 9 at 11:59pm.

Each student will be required to report on the total percentage of reading he/she has completed for the course. Please submit the required report in Canvas by the time and date above telling me the percentage you have completed.

3. Research Paper (40%). Due date: May 9 at 11:59pm.

A 10-12 page theological research paper is required for this course. Students will select a topic that is meaningful to them (please discuss it in advance with the professor). The only requirement is that it must examine some issue of theology covered in this class (Christology, soteriology, eschatology). The paper must adhere to the following guidelines:

- (1) Each paper should include a clear statement of the theological issue being covered. Ideally, it will also include a clear statement of the thesis the paper will be defending or arguing for. Then you would actually defend that thesis in your paper and show that it is in fact a correct statement or observation. You should do that based on careful exegesis of Scripture (please show your exegesis in the paper) and based on historical and theological arguments as well. *Please be sure to use the original languages if you know them.*
- (2) Each paper should be a research paper. In other words, I am looking for you to read widely in the area of your proposed theological issue. You should cite *at least* 10-12 good, scholarly sources in your bibliography and interact with those sources throughout the paper, citing them in your footnotes. Use these sources to support your arguments in defending your thesis. Please note: Wikipedia is NOT a scholarly source! I am interested in published articles or books primarily. On rare occasions, a website might serve in this capacity. But this is rare.
- (3) All papers should use footnotes (NOT endnotes) and be written according to the style advocated by Kate Turabian in *A Manual for Writers*, especially for footnoting and bibliography. If you don't own a copy of Turabian, you should consider buying one. You will use it throughout your seminary experience.
- (4) Each paper should show an awareness of at least 2 objections to your thesis and then to respond to those 2 objections biblically, theologically, and historically.
- (5) Each paper should also show how the selected theological issue applies practically to life and ministry.
- (6) Each paper should be no less than 10 pages in length and no more than 12 and should be written with one inch margins, double-spaced, 12pt Times New Roman font.
- (7) Late papers will warrant a deduction of 3 percentage points, per day late, off the final grade for the paper.

- (8) All papers should contain a title page with the following information: name and year of course; student name; student email address; professor's name; title of the paper; and date of submission.

NB: The grade I will assign you for your paper will be based upon your fulfillment of the instructions for the assignment, the overall quality of your presentation, my assessment of your grasp of the subject matter, your skill in communicating the material, and how well you did your work in comparison with your peers in the class.

4. Final Exam (40%). Due Date: May 9 at 11:59pm.

The examination will be a detailed test of the student's mastery of all the material covered in the course lectures and reading and will require the student to apply principles learned in the course to practical test cases.

5. Extra Credit (10%). Due date: May 9 at 11:59pm.*

Students may earn *significant* extra credit by researching and writing a 7-10 page research paper on any of the following theological topics (provided that it is a different topic from the main research paper for the course): the person of Christ, the work of Christ, effectual calling and regeneration, saving faith, faith and repentance, justification, adoption, sanctification, perseverance, assurance, glorification, death and resurrection, heaven and hell. ***Extra Credit papers should follow the abovementioned guidelines for the research paper.**

Course Lecture Schedule

The following is the tentative schedule for the course:

March 12—Introduction to Course, Syllabus Overview, Overview of Select OT and NT Passages
March 13—Deity of Christ, Humanity of Christ, Unity of Christ
March 14—Chalcedonian Christology, Virgin Birth, Incarnation

March 26—Offices of Christ, States of Christ
March 27—Atonement of Christ
March 28—Ordo Salutis, Union with Christ

April 30—Effectual Calling, Regeneration, Faith
May 1—Justification, Adoption, Sanctification
May 2—Perseverance, Eschatology

Office Hours

I am available to meet with students during class breaks or by appointment. Contact Katherine if you would like to schedule a time to meet.

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)

Course Objectives Related to MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes

Course: 04ST5200 Systematic Theology 2

Professor: Guy M. Richard

Campus: Houston

Date: Spring 2026

<u>MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes</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>		<u>Rubric</u> ➤ Strong ➤ Moderate ➤ Minimal ➤ None	<u>Mini-Justification</u>
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 expected to become articulate in expressing defending major points of doctrine.
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 is required for the doctrinal concepts articulated in this class. Students are expected to engage in exegetical studies.
Reformed Theology	Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards.	Strong	This course examines the issues raised by Reformed Theology.
Sanctification	Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student's sanctification.	Moderate	All truth is unto godliness.
Desire for Worldview	Burning desire to conform all of life to the Word of God.	Moderate	Students are expected to think of how the doctrines explored form a cohesive 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	Students are urged to defend their doctrinal positions winsomely. This approach is modeled in the classroom.
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-Xns.	Strong	Studying theology should, all things being equal, make students better preachers, teachers, counselors, and pastors.