

REFORMED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

ST6516 World Christianity and Perseverance

Dr. Karen Ellis kellis@rts.edu

Dates: **Every Wednesday** from 9am-Noon, **March 4 – May 6**

- No class on April 8 due to Spring Break.

Office Hours: By appointment; feel free to contact me through your Canvas account.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This is a course in applied biblical ethics focused on Christian endurance under persecution. It serves as an introduction to the discipline of Christian Endurance studies. Students will consider theologians and practitioners from various theological traditions who have dealt extensively with the role of the Church amidst persecution, religious restrictions, and/or cultural and political anti-Christian hostility. In this broad theological and historical survey, the course remains grounded in the Covenantal story. Particular attention will be given to the relationship between epistemology and ethics, the role of the Church in context of particular societies, stealth methodologies from contemporary practitioners in restricted countries, the communion of the saints, spiritual development and weaponry, and God's historical use of secular and religious institutional corruption to purify God's people and expand His Kingdom.

COURSE GOALS

1. To equip the student to articulate and live out a biblical theology of endurance based on union with Christ, his ancient story, and his mission for his people.
2. To enable the student to better understand: the biblical/theological mandate of world evangelization, discipleship, building missional communities/local churches that resist institutional/organizational/ecclesial compromise.
3. To introduce the student to historical personalities, major and minor, of Christian endurance, and the strengths and weaknesses of their approaches to Christian endurance.
4. To inspire a passion in the student for the transformative, life altering Biblical Gospel worth dying for, so that others may live.
5. To equip the student with practical skills and narratives that make valuing endurance an integral part of their own disciple-making process.

FORMAT

Interactive lectures, small group interactions, seminars, video presentations, and/or discussions.

REQUIRED READING AND MEDIA

READINGS

Revelation Chapters 12, 13 and 14. (Lectures will use ESV translation).

1 Peter Chapters 1-5

Ephesians Chapter 1

Acts 7:54-60

Baker, Phil. 2021. *Faithful Witness, The Early Church's Theology of Martyrdom*. pp 3-51 (48 pages).

Croft and Carrol, "Encouragement to Suffer with Tenacity." *Pastoral Perseverance: Helping Pastors Stay, Endure and Thrive* pp 96-115 (19 pages).

Ferguson, Sinclair. 1987. *Sermon on the Mount*. pp 35-66.

Gallagher and Hawthorne. "Blessing as Transformation," from *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement*, 2009. pp 33-41. (11 pages, article located in Canvas files).

Guthrie, Nancy. 2022. "Blessed by Living and Dying for Jesus." *Blessed*: pp 143-167 (24 pages).

Hawthorne, Steven. "The Story of His Glory." from *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement*, 2009. pp 49-63. (14 pages, article located in Canvas files).

Moore & Pattingale. 2023. *The New Book of Christian Martyrs: The Heroes of Our Faith from the 1st Century to the 21st Century*. pp 1-88, 258-274, 333-341. (115 pages).

Ton, Josef. 2002. *Suffering, Martyrdom, and Rewards in Heaven*. pp 269-322. (53 pages).

Verkuyl, Johannes. "The Biblical Foundation for the Worldwide Mission Mandate," from *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement*, 2009. pp 42-48. (6 pages, article located in Canvas files).

Yi, Wang. "Should Christians Be Patriots?" pp 1-12. (12 pages, article located in Canvas files).

VIDEOS

Pastor Wang Yi – *When to Resist, When to Submit* (5:28)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q5jauHt8YFE>

Pastor Wang Yi – *Church State Relations and the Westminster Confession* (5:51)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=31eWtPnQ4i0>

Corrie Ten Boom – *God's Perfect Logistics* (41:09)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=suSrldV-gVw>

Josef Ton – *With Christ in Persecution, Part 1* (54:18)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DPs3wEU9sAk>

Additional Resources:

[The Joshua Project](#).

READING SCHEDULE	DUE DATE FOR DISCUSSION
Read Revelation Chapter 12. Begin Memorizing Belgic Conf. <i>Art. 13</i> . Read Guthrie, pp 143-167.	Week 1
Read Revelation Chapter 13. Read Gallagher and Hawthorne, pp 33-41. Read Hawthorne, pp 49-63.	Week 2
Read Revelation Chapter 14. Read Moore and Pattingale, pp 1-88.	Week 3
Read 1 Peter Chapter 1 Read Verkuyl, pp 42-48.	Week 4
Read 1 Peter Chapter 2 Read Acts 7:54-60 Read Ton, pp 269-322.	Week 5
SPRING BREAK: NO CLASS MEETING	WEEK 6 Take online midterm exam via Canvas.
Read 1 Peter Chapter 3 Read Ephesians Chapter 1 Read Croft and Carrol, pp 96-115.	Week 7
Read 1 Peter Chapter 4 Read Moore and Pattingale, pp 258-274.	Week 8
Read 1 Peter Chapter 5 Read Baker, pp 1-51.	Week 9
Read Moore and Pattingale, pp 333-341. Read Yi, pp 1-12.	Week 10
ONLINE FINAL EXAM	Available in Canvas May 8-14

ASSIGNMENTS:

There will be one midterm, much in class discussion, and one final exam in this course. Students are expected to show (1) significant Scriptural and theological reflection (2) integration of lecture and discussion material and (3) critical thinking, personal reflection, and conclusions.

MIDTERM: Your midterm will involve memorization of Belgic Confession Article 13, and a three essay questions regarding its meaning and application. The exam will be open during Spring Break and available to take via Canvas. Midterm is worth 30% of the final grade.

Belgic Confession, *Article 13 – Of Divine Providence (Memorize)*.

We believe that the same God, after he had created all things, did not forsake them, or give them up to fortune or chance, but that he rules and governs them according to his holy will, so that nothing happens in this world without his appointment: nevertheless, God neither is the author of, nor can be charged with, the sins which are committed.

For his power and goodness are so great and incomprehensible, that he orders and executes his work in the most excellent and just manner, even then, when devils and wicked men act unjustly.

And, as to what he doth surpassing human understanding, we will not curiously inquire into, farther than our capacity will admit of; but with the greatest humility and reverence adore the righteous judgments of God, which are hid from us, contenting ourselves that we are disciples of Christ, to learn only those things which he has revealed to us in his Word, without transgressing these limits.

This doctrine affords us unspeakable consolation, since we are taught thereby that nothing can befall us by chance, but by the direction of our most gracious and heavenly Father; who watches over us with a paternal care, keeping all creatures so under his power, that not a hair of our head (for they are all numbered), nor a sparrow, can fall to the ground, without the will of our Father, in whom we do entirely trust; being persuaded, that he so restrains the devil and all our enemies, that without his will and permission, they cannot hurt us.

And therefore we reject that damnable error of the Epicureans, who say that God regards nothing, but leaves all things to chance.

ONLINE DISCUSSIONS: All students are expected to complete discussion questions that engage with course reading. These will be posted on Canvas for short form interaction. Online discussion participation comprises 20% of the student's final grade.

FINAL EXAM: *Students will take a fifty-question final exam via Canvas during the examination period.* The final is based on course lectures, videos, and required readings and is worth 50% of the student's final grade.

ATTENDANCE

Classroom attendance (both Sync and Live) is for the glory of God and preparation for the gospel ministry. Students therefore are expected to attend class sessions. Excessive unexcused absences will affect the final grade. Consult the RTS Catalogue for further details.

GRADING

ST6516 Grading Matrix	
Midterm	30%
Discussion	20%
Final Exam	50%
TOTAL	100%

I. STUDENT ASSESSMENT AND GRADING

ASSIGNMENT	PERCENT OF GRADE	DUE DATE
Proctored Midterm (Memorization)	30%	via Canvas
Online Discussion/Engagement	20%	via Canvas
Final Exam	50%	via Canvas

Note: All assignments must be submitted by the due date listed in the syllabus and no later than the final due date for the course listed in this syllabus by permission of the instructor. After the final due date, faculty cannot grant students permission to submit late work. See “Completion of Course Work” below.

II. GRADE SCALE

97-100 A	86-87 B-	75-77 D+
94-96 A-	83-85 C+	72-74 D
91-93 B+	80-82 C	70-71 D-
88-90 B	78-79 C	00-70 F

Course Objectives Related to MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes

Course: ST6516 Worldview and Christian Perseverance

Professor: K.A. Ellis

Campus: Atlanta/Sync

<u>MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes</u>		<u>Rubric</u>	<u>Mini-Justification</u>
<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	Applying framework of creation, fall, redemption, glorification to international injustices; assessing global human rights through that framework in a long-form research paper.
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.)	➤ Moderate	Students are encouraged to incorporate Scripture and a biblical worldview in their research paper.
Reformed Theology	Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards.	➤ Strong	The student will consider human dignity through the lens of creation, abuses through the lens of original sin/depravity, and the impact of the fall on man's inhumanity to man.
Sanctification	Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student's sanctification.	➤ Moderate	Patience in engaging other members of the class in discussion groups; yielding, disagreeing, agreeing.
Desire for Worldview	Burning desire to conform all of life to the Word of God.	➤ Moderate	Assessing strengths and deficiencies in the historical application of the truths that were assumed to be "self-evident" In light of the Word of God.
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.)	➤ Moderate	Patience in engaging other members of the class in discussion groups; yielding, disagreeing, agreeing.
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	All have received human rights from God; student will test to what extent those rights should be granted, and how they should be expressed to all global citizens.

Date 7 August 2024

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)