

**Systematic Theology 5250
Ecclesiology and Sacraments**

Meeting Information

February 4	6pm - 9pm
February 18	6pm - 9pm
February 25	6pm - 9pm
March 18	6pm - 9pm
April 8	6pm - 9pm
April 15	6pm - 9pm
April 22	6pm - 9pm
April 29	6pm - 9pm
May 3*	5pm-7pm*

*Instead of class on this date, there will be a required Church Visit and Discussion on Sunday evening, May 3 from 5-7pm at Redeemer East Side (150 E 91st).

Contact Information

Dr. Crawford Stevener (crawford.stevener@redeemer.com)
Teaching Assistant: James Ortiz (james.ortiz@redeemer.com)

Course Description

This systematic theology course explores the doctrine of the church and sacraments from a biblical and Reformed perspective. It aims to help students develop a theologically sound ecclesiology and robust understanding of the sacraments. This foundation will not only edify students, but equip them to lead and participate in worship and to serve effectively in various ministry roles.

Course Requirements

Mid-Term	20%
Final Exam	20%
Reading	20%
Mini Paper	15%
Mini Paper	15%
Participation	10%

Mid-Term

The Mid-Term will be administered during the first half of class on March 18th. It will include material from class lectures through this date (the Ecclesiology material), readings, and memorization of Westminster Shorter Catechism Questions. There will also be an attestation that you have completed the assigned reading. While questions from readings are fair game for the mid-term, the majority of the exam content will be drawn from class lectures.

Final

The Final Exam will be administered during the first half of class on April 29th. It will include material from class lectures from after the mid-term exam (the Sacraments material), readings, and memorization of Westminster Shorter Catechism Questions. There will also be an attestation that you have completed the assigned reading. While questions from readings are fair game for the final, the majority of the exam content will be drawn from class lectures.

Mini Papers

There are two Mini Papers due for this course. These are not full research papers. They apply learning from the course and consider personal experience, but they should still be academically rigorous in nature. The wordcount should be between 2,500-3,000 words in the main body of the text (not including footnotes). Anything more or less will not be accepted. The papers should be formatted with: 1.5 line spacing, 1" margins, and Garamond font. Mini Paper 1 is due before class on April 8 and Mini Paper 2 is due before class on May 3. They should be emailed as a .pdf file to Dr. Stevener and his T. A. James Ortiz before class begins. There should be a title page with your name, the course, date, and the wordcount (without footnotes) gathered from your word processor.

You may choose from the two topics below or propose a different topic that has to be approved by the professor. You do not have to agree with the position of your own paper, nor does the professor, but you should argue it carefully and winsomely from the perspective of full conviction.

Mini Paper 1 Topics (Due April 8)

- A Person with an Evangelical upbringing is confused by the practice of church discipline when joining a Reformed church. Make a Biblical case for the practice of church discipline. Be sure to not only defend it from the scriptures, but make the case for its goodness and beauty.
- A Pentecostal Friend loves to worship and speaks in tongues. She wants to know what Biblical grounds you have for questioning her practice. Write a winsome paper to this friend relying much on the material in Gaffin's *Perspectives on Pentecost* and Clowney's *The Church*.
- A Successful Management Consultant visits your church's session of elders (or comparable board) and advises that your church should broaden the range of who it is willing to ordain to the office of ruling elder. If your church (or position) is that only men should be ordained, he thinks you should consider the ordination of women. If your church (or position) is that men and women can be ordained, he thinks you should consider the ordination of LGBTQ+ elders. Write a paper defending from scripture your church's (or your position) on who should be ordained to the office of ruling elder. Be sure to cite Scripture and explain your interpretative assumptions. You also will need to give some parameters for how your church engages with today's culture.
- An Alien from Outer Space is confused by his observation of this thing on earth called the church. Write a paper to this Alien describing why planet earth needs the church and what the church's primary mission and function is. Pay attention to distinguish traditions or practices the Alien has observed that may be "cultural" from the Biblical marks and mission of the church. The Alien should be able to report back to Outer Space from your letter what this organization is all about.

Mini Paper 2 Topics (Due May 3)

- Reflect on your current church's theology and practice of Baptism and present how the course lectures and readings have either: clarified, challenged, changed, or did not impact your perspective. Be specific and use page references from reading or lecture dates from class in footnotes.
- Reflect on your current church's theology and observance of the Lord's Supper and present how the course lectures and readings have either: clarified, challenged, changed, or did not impact your perspective. Be specific and use page references from reading or lecture dates from class in footnotes.

Reading

Reading is required for this course and must be done ahead of exam periods to receive credit. There will be a question on the mid-term and final exams asking if you have completed the assigned reading. Reading does not mean skimming. It should be read and understood at an analytical level to the best of your ability.

Reading Due By March 18

- Edmund Clowney, *The Church*, all
- Richard Gaffin, *Perspectives on Pentecost*, all
- Sinclair Ferguson, *The Holy Spirit* (Chs. 4, 5, 9, 10), 79-113, 191-239
- John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion, Book 4* – (Battles translation is best/easiest)
- *The Church*, Chs. I Of the True Church, II Comparison between the False Church and the True, III Of the Teachers and Ministers of the Church, ~50pp. of reading.
- Westminster Confession of Faith, 21, 25-31
- Westminster Shorter Catechism, 37-38, 88-99 (read and memorize verbatim for exam)

Reading Due by April 29

- Keith Mathison, *Given For You*, 3-48, 179-324
- John Sartelle, *What Christian Parents Should Know About Infant Baptism* (pamphlet)
- William Strawbridge, *The Case for Covenantal Infant Baptisms* (Chs. 1, 2, 5, 10, 15), 9-48, 85-111, 201-229, 303-310
- John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion, Book 4* – (Battles translation is best /easiest)
Sacraments, Chs. XIV Of the Sacraments, XV Of Baptism, XVII Of the Lord's Supper and the Benefits Conferred by it, ~85pp. of reading

Participation

Class attendance and participation is required. This will be a technology free class. The use of cell phones, tablets, and laptops are not permitted. Since much of the completion of your degree with RTS NYC is online and remote in nature, and this is a fully in-person class, we will avoid the distractions of screens. Please be prepared with pen and paper or a notebook for taking notes in class. You should not expect to pass the exams unless you take good notes in class and study them.

Course Objectives Related to MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes

Course: Ecclesiology and Sacraments

Professor: Crawford Stevener

Campus: New York City

Date: 11/19/24

<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	Two Exams, two papers, and class discussion.
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	A biblical theological understanding of the church and sacraments will be demonstrated carefully from Scriptures.
Reformed Theology	Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards.	Strong	Reformation history and Reformed theology and confessions will be emphasized in a winsome way.
Sanctification	Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student's sanctification.	Moderate	A sound theology of the church and sacraments is integral

			to a life of faith and worship.
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	As an systematic theology course it applies to students' view of the world from the Scriptures.
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	Reformed views will be presented with respect to a diversity of views within the larger church.
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-Christians.	Moderate	The class will discuss the organization and roles within the church and the administration of the sacraments applicable to vocational ministry.