

Reformed Theological Seminary
HT5200 The History of Christianity II

Course information

Times: Tuesdays 7:00pm – 10:00pm

Dates: February 3 – May 12, 2026

Instructor: Dr Rufus T Burton

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Office hours: By appointment / Usually, the hour prior to class in the library.

Course description:

A continuation of History of Christianity I, this course is a general introduction to Christianity in the Reformation, Post-Reformation and Modern eras. The course will focus on the key figures, movements and ideas that have contributed significantly to the history of the Church. As an outcome of the course, students should have a general grasp of Christian history since the Sixteenth Century, and with it a working knowledge of the major ecclesiastical issues and personalities of this period of church history, with particular reference to Europe and North America.

Goals:

1. The student will be *introduced* to the history of the Christian Church over the past five centuries, particularly emphasizing the way certain beliefs and practices have shaped Christian identity.
2. Through the lectures, the student will be *exposed* to the cultural and political contexts of Christian thought and *develop* a greater critical appreciation for the Christian tradition.
3. Through the reading and discussions, the student will be *oriented* to key figures, beliefs, practices, and stories in the life of the Christian Church and will *explore* how they relate to contemporary Christian life and ministry.
4. Through the primary source readings, the student will *appreciate* Protestant, and particularly Reformed identity, as a confluence of beliefs, practices, and commitments, which continue to have importance in our world.
5. Through the Digest Papers, and Exams, the student will *reflect* on how Christian identity, and Reformed identity in particular, as represented over the studied period, has relevance for contemporary Christian life and ministry.

Required texts:

Justo Gonzalez, *The Story of Christianity, vol. 2: The Reformation to Present Day*, revised edition (New York: Harper, 2010); ISBN: 978-0061855894

Martin Luther, *The Bondage of the Will*, trans. Packer & Johnston (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012 [1525]); ISBN: 978-0801048937

John Calvin, *A Reformation Debate*, ed Olin (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1966 [1539]); ISBN: 978-0801023903

Jeremiah Burroughs, *The Rare Jewel of Christian Contentment*, (Banner of Truth, Edinburgh, 2022 [1648]); ISBN: 978-1800400153

Gresham Machen, *Christianity and Liberalism*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009 [1923]); ISBN: 978-0802864994

Course Requirements

1) Reading Digests 30%

Students will be required to submit four (4) 1750–1950 word (five to six pages typed and double spaced) digests of primary source material. One digest will be required for each of the four primary source readings, totalling four (4) digests.

Due Dates:	Luther	24 February 2026
	Calvin	24 March 2026
	Burroughs	14 April 2026
	Machen	5 May 2026

Additional useful tips will be provided on the first day of class.

2) Exams 60%

- There will be a take-home **midterm** to complete during reading week. This exam should take one to two hours and will be worth half of the exam grade.
- There will be a take-home **final** to complete during finals week. This exam should take two to three hours and will be worth half the exam grade.

Helpful information and study guides will be given to the students at least a month before each exam.

3) Attendance and Participation 10%

Students are expected to attend class and to demonstrably participate in the learning process.

Artificial Intelligence Use in Coursework

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.

For the full detailed AI policy, please refer to the Catalog (pp.49-50).

RTS Grading Scale

The seminary uses the following attenuated grading system:

A	(97-100)	4.00 quality points
A-	(94-96)	3.66
B+	(91-93)	3.33
B	(88-90)	3.00
B-	(86-87)	2.66
C+	(83-85)	2.33
C	(80-82)	2.00
C-	(78-79)	1.66
D+	(75-77)	1.33
D	(72-74)	1.00
D-	(70-71)	0.66
F	(below 70)	0.00
I	(incomplete)	0.00
W,WP	(withdraw, withdraw passing)	0.00
S	(satisfactory)	0.00

The grade "I" indicates that the work required for the course was not completed. It is given only when special, extenuating circumstances (such as illness) prevent the student from completing the work or taking the examination. A written request for an extension must be submitted prior to the due date of the work concerned. If the request is granted, it remains the responsibility of the student to complete all work for the course as soon as possible. In any case, an "I" grade must be removed within the extension time granted; otherwise it will be changed to "F."

Late work:

Late work is not accepted. All assignments are due at the beginning of class. Only serious personal issues, with excuses almost always cleared in advance of the class, are given consideration. If you are traveling for some important reason and cannot attend class, please arrange to have your work delivered on time.

Incomplete work:

Given that **late work is not accepted**, students should consider submitting incomplete work rather than nothing at all.

Resubmitted work:

Work may be resubmitted until it achieves a desired grade. This means that something must be turned in on the due date to be resubmitted. **The final due date for all assignments, whether final digests or resubmitted digests, is 5 May 2026.**

Course Objectives Related to MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes

Course: HT5200
 Professor: Burton
 Campus: Washington, DC
 Date: Spring 2026

<u>MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes</u>		<u>Rubric</u>	<u>Mini-Justification</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>		<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 will have to speak and write knowledgably about the topics at hand. There are two exams and five 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.)	Moderate	The history of Christian doctrine includes the history of exegesis.
Reformed Theology	Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards.	Strong	The survey of the development of doctrine will strengthen understanding of key elements of Reformed theology.
Sanctification	Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student's sanctification.	Strong	Calvin on the Christian life. English Puritanism, Continental piety.
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.	Moderate	Use biblical pre-suppositions to think historically about cultural issues.
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	In lectures and discussions, model critically sympathetic engagement with other perspectives.
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	In lectures and course work model helpful pastoral habits and attitudes.

Burton**Church History II****Spring 2026**

Week	Date	Readings Due		Papers Due
1	3 Feb 2026	--		--
2	10 Feb 2026	Gonzalez	pp. 6-46	
		Luther	pp. 62-136	
3	17 Feb 2026	Gonzalez	pp. 47-86	
		Luther	pp. 137-238	
4	24 Feb 2026	Gonzalez	pp. 87-124	<i>Luther Digest</i>
		Luther	pp. 239-320	
5	3 Mar 2026	Gonzalez	pp. 125-160	
		Calvin	pp. 7-48	
6	10 Mar 2026	Gonzalez	pp. 173-228	
		Calvin	pp. 49-94	
7	17 Mar 2026	READING WEEK		MIDTERM EXAM
8	24 Mar 2026	Gonzalez	pp. 229-274	<i>Calvin Digest</i>
		Burroughs	pp. 1-86	
9	31 March 2026	Gonzalez	pp. 275-318	
		Burroughs	pp. 87-196	
10	7 April 2026	Gonzalez	pp. 319-372	
		Burroughs	pp. 197-270	
11	14 April 2026	Gonzalez	pp. 373-416	<i>Burroughs Digest</i>
		Schleiermacher	odd pp. 1-63	
12	21 April 2026	Gonzalez	pp. 417-456	
		Machen	pp. ix - 46	
13	28 April 2026	Gonzalez	pp. 457-494	
		Machen	pp. 47-98	
14	5 May 2026	Gonzalez	pp. 495-530	<i>Machen Digest</i>
		Machen	pp. 99-152	
15	12 May 2026	FINALS WEEK		FINAL EXAM