

RTS

O R L A N D O



COURSE SYLLABUS

HT5200: History of Christianity 2

Dr. Joshua Bruce

Spring 2026

PROFESSOR'S CONTACT INFORMATION

NAME: Joshua Bruce, Ph.D.

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COURSE DATES

IN-CLASS/ON-CAMPUS DATES: Feb. 6th/7th; March 6th/7th; April 10th/11th

COURSE COMPLETION DATE: May 8th

COURSE OVERVIEW

DESCRIPTION:

A continuation of History of Christianity 1 concentrating on great leaders of the church in the modern period of church history from the Reformation to the twentieth century.

GOALS:

The students will grow in their ability to

- analyze texts, ideas, and debates in their historical contexts;
- gain familiarity with major theologians from the Reformation and modern eras (e.g., Luther, Calvin, Owen, Edwards, Schleiermacher, John Paul II);
- understand and assess the development of Christian doctrine through the centuries, including its relationship to exegetical, spiritual, philosophical, and various cultural forces;
- read primary sources from a variety of centuries, genres, and styles (including confessions of faith, doctrinal treatises, controversial tracts, etc.);
- retrieve riches from the past for the sake of contemporary theological renewal.

COURSE DETAILS

1. GRADING SCHEDULE.

Late work will be penalized 1 letter grade per day, unless prior permission for late submission was granted.

The published RTS grading scale is used in this course. See the Catalog, page 47.

2. ATTENDANCE AND LATE ASSIGNMENTS.

Attendance and prepared participation is required. If class is not attended, the student's final grade will be affected. Late assignments are reduced 1 letter grade per day.

3. SPECIAL NEEDS.

In order to ensure full class participation, any student with a disabling condition requiring special accommodations (e.g. tape recorders, special adaptive equipment) is strongly encouraged to contact the instructor before the beginning of the course.

4. ACADEMIC HONESTY (QUOTED AND ADAPTED FROM DR. TIMOTHY PHILLIPS OF WHEATON COLLEGE AND DR. MICHAEL ALLEN OF REFORMED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY).

The assignments are designed to extend and deepen your comprehension and appreciation of Christian theology and to increase your facility with theological method. The processes of defining a topic, researching the results of others' studies, critiquing those studies, and organizing your conclusions in a clear and cogent presentation provides valuable skills for your various leadership ministries. The use of sources is an essential step in appropriating the learning of the Church's tradition in its relationship to cultures to help us understand and faithfully practice Scripture.

Using information obtained from a source without indicating it (whether by footnote, parentheses, or bibliography or some other appropriate reference, depending on the type of assignment) is plagiarism (intellectual thievery and lying). This applies to any information that you gain from someone that is not “common knowledge.” It does not apply only to exact quotations or precise verbal allusions. Altering the wording does not remove the obligation to acknowledge the source.

Cheating is the presentation of someone else's work, which the student ought to have done personally. This includes submitting answers to test questions derived by some means other than that intended by the instructor. It also includes turning in written assignments composed in whole or in part by someone else.

5. DISCLAIMER.

This syllabus is intended to reflect accurately the learning objectives, instructional format and other information necessary for students to appraise the course. However, the instructor reserves the right to modify any portion of this syllabus as may become necessary.

6. SUPPORT:

Canvas allows you to interact with Dr. Bruce via the Inbox function.

Canvas also allows for interaction with classmates. You can interact with classmates via the Student to Student forum or Conferences.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

ON-CAMPUS LECTURES/MEETINGS

Students will meet with the professor for lectures on the campus of RTS Orlando on the following three weekends:

February 6th/7th (3pm—9pm on Friday; 8am—5pm on Saturday)

March 6th/7th (3pm—9pm on Friday; 8am—5pm on Saturday)

April 10th/11th (3pm—9pm on Friday; 8am—5pm on Saturday)

READING

The following books are required reading:

1. Martin Luther, *Three Treatises* (2nd ed.; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990). Approx. 290 pages. ISBN# 0800616391.
2. John Owen, *Spiritual-Mindedness* (Puritan Paperbacks; Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2009). Approx. 250 (small) pages. ISBN# 9781848710368.
3. Ernst Troeltsch, *Protestantism and Progress: The Significance of Protestantism for the Rise of the Modern World* (Fortress Texts in Modern Theology; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1986; repr. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1999). Approx. 100 pages.
4. J. Gresham Machen. *Christianity and Liberalism* (rev. ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009). Approx. 150 pages. ISBN# 0802864996.
5. Wilhelm Pauck (ed.), *Melanchthon and Bucer* (Library of Christian Classics 19; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1969). Approx. 200 pages.

Supplementary PDF readings will be available on Canvas and will be required (as noted).

READING BRIEFS

Students will provide written briefs on all assigned texts in advance of the class where those readings are discussed. **Texts for which reading briefs are assigned are denoted by asterisks (**) under the *schedule* below.** Students should also bring copies of their briefs with them to the classes where those readings will be discussed. The purpose of each brief is to summarize the thesis, outline, and argument of that text, as well as to state one's own analysis of it (in the form of questions, confirmations, objections, etc.). Briefs may include quotations from various points in the text (so long as page numbers are referenced). Briefs should be no more than 350 words. They should be written in complete sentences and edited carefully. Students must email the professor their briefs before each class where those readings are discussed.

FINAL PAPERS

Students will write a 2500-3000 word analysis of a theme found in Martin Bucer's *De Regno Christi*. The paper will examine that theme in Bucer and note ways in which it appears in other theological resources from our time period. In so doing, papers will demonstrate ability to examine a text in its own terms and also to do comparative analysis across various texts. Themes might include: authority, Christology, moral theology, civic life, and soteriology.

All papers are to be uploaded to Canvas by 11:59 p.m. (Eastern) on **Friday, May 8th**.

Final papers will be docked for poor grammar and style. Edit carefully. Read and re-read what you have written. Do not go over the word limit for any written assignments.

SCHEDULE

First Weekend of Meetings: February 6th/7th

Orientation to the Reformation

Assigned Readings:

¹** Luther, *ch. 1: "To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation"*

'95 Theses (PDF)

The Theology of Martin Luther

Assigned Readings:

**Luther, *chs. 2-3: "Babylonian Captivity of the Church" and "Freedom of a Christian"*

Heidelberg Disputation (PDF)

Reformed Theology: On Holy Scripture and the Ministry of the Church

Assigned Readings:

** Zwingli, *"On the Clarity and Certainty of the Word of God" (PDF)*

** Bullinger, *"Of the Holy Catholic Church" (PDF)*

Ten Theses of Berne (PDF)

Reformed Theology: On Justification in Christ Alone by Faith Alone

Assigned Readings:

** Calvin, *"The Necessity of Reforming the Church" (PDF)*

Heidelberg Catechism (PDF)

Second Weekend of Meetings: March 6th/7th

Reformed Theology: Spirituality and Controversy

Assigned Readings:

** Owen, *Spiritual-Mindedness (pages 1-132)*

¹ Asterisks (**) denote texts for which reading briefs are required.

Canons of Dordt (PDF)

History of the Reformation in England and Scotland: 16th -17th Centuries

Assigned Readings:

** Owen, *Spiritual-Mindedness (pages 133-249)*

Excerpts from Book of Common Prayer (PDF)

The Great Awakening of the Eighteenth Century

Assigned Readings:

** Edwards, "*Distinguishing Marks*" (PDF)

** Wesley, "*Sermon 18: The Marks of the New Birth*" (PDF)

The Enlightenment & Schleiermacher

Assigned Readings:

** Schleiermacher, *excerpts from The Christian Faith (PDF)*

** Kant, *What is Enlightenment? (PDF)*

Third Weekend of Meetings: April 10th/11th

The Long Nineteenth Century in America

Assigned Readings:

**Schaff, *Principle of Protestantism (PDF)*

The Christian Century: Protestantism and Modernity in the Early Twentieth Century

Assigned Readings:

** Troeltsch, *Protestantism and Progress*

** *Theological Declaration of Barmen (PDF)*

Fundamentalism and Neo-Evangelicalism

Assigned Readings:

** Machen, *Christianity and Liberalism*

Modern Roman Catholic Theology

Assigned Readings:

** John Paul II, *Evangelium Vitae (PDF)*

Modern Reforms to Christian Theology and Ethics; Recent Trends: Global Christianity, Theological Diversity, and Reformed Theology

Assigned Readings:

Bucer, *Kingdom of Christ*

Final Paper Due: May 8th

Course Objectives Related to MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes

Course: HT5200
 Professor: Bruce
 Campus: Orlando
 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	Reading briefs and final paper test ability to communicate in written form.
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	Lectures and readings focus upon biblical exegesis as shaping the history of Christian thought in its various literary genres.
Reformed Theology	Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards.	Moderate	Historical analysis of the Reformed church.
Sanctification	Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student's sanctification.	Minimum	Regular reading of classic devotional/spiritual literature.

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	Readings, lectures, and final paper address the construction of principles and a moral imagination that is conformed to Holy Scripture as its final authority and informed by the Christian witness of the past.
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	Readings and lectures address instruction of Christians from beyond the Reformed world.
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	Readings, lectures, and final paper address issues which inform pastoral counsel