

Readings in Neo-Calvinism: From Kuyper to Plantinga
Reformed Theological Seminary, Washington, D.C.
Dr. N. Gray Sutanto
Tuesdays, 11-1pm

Course Description:

This course is a reading seminar through the primary sources of neo-Calvinism, focusing on the development of the tradition. Readings will include key selections from the first generation to contemporary representatives of this modern branch of Reformed theology, including Abraham Kuyper, Herman Bavinck, Klaas Schilder, Cornelius Van Til, Herman Dooyeweerd, and Alvin Plantinga, with the goal of both understanding and the application of this tradition for contemporary theological and philosophical issues.

Course Format and Assignments:

Other than the first week, each class will be divided into two hours – the first hour on the first half of the reading, and the second will be on the other half of the readings. Each hour will begin with an 8 minute, timed presentation from a student on the reading, which will end with a discussion prompt for the class (we will appoint and schedule who will lead and present each week at the beginning of the class). Each student should come prepared with discussion prompts and ready to engage, having digested the readings beforehand.

1. Reading Briefs (50%)

Each week, students will submit a reading brief, summarizing the main arguments of the reading for that week on a Canvas thread. The reading brief should be no more than 400 words per 80 pages of reading – pick out a sentence or paragraph from the reading that you believe encapsulates the argument of the author well. As a rule of thumb, for each line of summarization, you should be able to include a page reference to show which parts of the reading you are summarizing with each line. End each reading brief with 2-3 discussion prompts – be specific with these prompts (do not say “what do you think?” but “on pages xx-xx, Plantinga argues... what does he mean by this claim?” etc.)

There are about 1750 pages of reading for the entire semester, so plan accordingly.

2. Term Paper (50%)

Students will write a 4000 word minimum, 6000 word max. term paper on a subject related to the figures or texts discussed in class. Papers should attempt to vindicate a clear thesis, while using the primary-sources of neo-Calvinism as the key texts from which to draw. Each paper should include at least 12 scholarly sources.

Required Readings:

Students should have access to these books – we will be reading either parts of the whole of each, along with a few PDFS of key essays. Readings for each week are detailed in the schedule below.

Abraham Kuyper, *Lectures on Calvinism* (any edition is fine, but I will be following the pagination of the Ichtus edition)

- James Bratt, ed. *Abraham Kuyper: A Centennial Reader* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000)
- Herman Bavinck, *Christian Worldview*, trans. Sutanto, Eglinton, and Brock (Crossway, 2019)
- Klaas Schilder, *Christ and Culture* (Lucerna, 2016).
- Herman Dooyeweerd, *Roots of Western Culture*, trans. John Kraay, eds. Mark Vander Vennen, Bernard Zylstra, and Daniel Strauss (Ontario: Paideia Press, 2012)
- Herman Dooyeweerd, *In the Twilight of Western Thought* (Ontario: Paideia Press, 2012)
- Cornelius Van Til, *Common Grace and the Gospel*, 2nd ed. (Philipsburg, P&R, 2015)
- Alvin Plantinga, *Warranted Christian Belief* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).
- N. Gray Sutanto and Cory Brock, *T&T Clark Handbook of Neo-Calvinism* (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2024) – paperback version
- Cory Brock and N. Gray Sutanto, *Neo-Calvinism: A Theological Introduction* (Bellingham: Lexham Press 2022)
- N. Gray Sutanto, *A Sense of the Divine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2025)

Course Outline:

Week 1: Lecture – Mapping Neo-Calvinism

- George Harinck, 'Neo-Calvinism and the Netherlands', in *T&T Clark Handbook of Neo-Calvinism* (12 pages)
- Brock and Sutanto, 'Calvinism and Neo-Calvinism', and "Catholic and Modern" in *Neo-Calvinism: A Theological Introduction* (56 pages)

Week 2: Abraham Kuyper

- "Sphere Sovereignty", "Common Grace", and "Calvinism: Source and Stronghold of Our Constitutional Liberties," in *Abraham Kuyper: A Centennial Reader* (90 pages)
 - o Suggested Supplementary Reading: "Abraham Kuyper" by James Bratt, in *T&T Clark Handbook of Neo-Calvinism*

Week 3: Abraham Kuyper

- *Lectures on Calvinism* (200 pages)

Week 4: Herman Bavinck

- *Christian Worldview* (130 pages)
 - o Suggested supplementary reading: *Reformed Dogmatics* vol. 2, chps. 1-2, and "Catholicity of Christianity and the Church"

Week 5: Klaas Schilder

- *Christ and Culture* – (140 pages)
 - o Suggested supplementary reading: "Common Grace" and "No to Natural Theology" in *The Klaas Schilder Reader*, and Marinus de Jong, "Klaas Schilder" in the *T&T Clark Handbook of Neo-Calvinism*

Week 6: Herman Dooyeweerd

- *In the Twilight of Western Thought*, chps. 1-2, 5-7 (90 pages)
 - o Suggested supplementary reading: N. Gray Sutanto, “Revelation”, and Jonathan Chaplin, “Herman Dooyeweerd”, in *T&T Clark Handbook of Neo-Calvinism*

Week 7: Herman Dooyeweerd

- *Roots of Western Culture*, chps. 1-2, 4-5 (110 pages)

Week 8: Cornelius Van Til

- *Common Grace and the Gospel*, chps. 1-4 – (150 pages)
 - o Supplementary Reading: Cory Brock, “Common Grace,” in *T&T Clark Handbook of Neo-Calvinism*

Week 9: Alvin Plantinga and Nicholas Wolterstorff

- Alvin Plantinga, “Reason and Belief in God,” in Alvin Plantinga and Nicholas Wolterstorff, eds., *Faith and Rationality: Reason and Belief in God* (South Bend, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1983) – (PDF on Canvas)
- Nicholas Wolterstorff, “Herman Bavinck: Proto-Reformed Epistemologist,” *Calvin Theological Journal* (13 pages) – PDF on Canvas
- Nathaniel Gray Sutanto, “Herman Bavinck and Thomas Reid,” *Harvard Theological Review* (2018) (18 pages) – PDF on Canvas
 - o Supplementary Reading: Nicholas Wolterstorff, “Analytic Philosophy”, in *T&T Clark Handbook of Neo-Calvinism*

Week 10: Alvin Plantinga

- *Warranted Christian Belief*, chps. 1-5 (160 pages)

Week 11: Alvin Plantinga

- *Warranted Christian Belief*, chps. 6-10 (190 pages)

Week 12: Alvin Plantinga

- *Warranted Christian Belief*, chps. 11-14 (140 pages)

Week 13: Contemporary Neo-Calvinism

- Chps. 31-40, in *T&T Clark Handbook of Neo-Calvinism* (130 pages)
- N. Gray Sutanto, *A Sense of the Divine* (45 pages)

Select Recommended Secondary Sources:

Calvin

Bruce Gordon, *Calvin*

David W. Hall and Peter A. Lillback, *A Theological Guide to Calvin's Institutes*

Robert Kingdon, *Adultery and Divorce in Calvin's Geneva*

Anthony N. S. Lane, *A Reader's Guide to Calvin's Institutes*

Donald McKim (ed), *The Cambridge Companion to John Calvin*

Scott Manetsch, *Calvin's Company of Pastors*

Richard A. Muller, *The Unaccommodated Calvin*

William G. Naphy, *Calvin and the Consolidation of the Reformation in Geneva*
 T. H. L. Parker, *John Calvin*
 ---- *Calvin's Preaching*
 Herman Selderhuis, *John Calvin: A Pilgrim Life*
 ---- (ed.), *The Calvin Handbook*
 ---- *Calvin's Theology of the Psalms*
 Williston Walker, *John Calvin*
 François Wendel, *Calvin: Origins and Development of His Religious Thought*

Post-Reformation Theology and Philosophy

Willem J. van Asselt, Maarten Wisse, T. Theo J. Pleizier and Pieter L. Rouwendal, *Introduction to Reformed Scholasticism*
 Andreas Beck, *Gijsbertus Voetius on God, Freedom, and Contingency*
 Aza Goudriaan, *Reformed Orthodoxy and Philosophy 1625-1750*
 Richard A. Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics*, 4 vols.
 Richard A. Muller, Ulrich Lehner, A. G. Roeber, *Oxford Handbook of Early Modern Theology (1600-1800)*
 Adrian Neele, *Petrus van Mastricht 1630-1706: Reformed Orthodoxy – Method and Piety*
 Carl R. Trueman, *John Owen: Reformed Catholic, Renaissance Man*

Immanuel Kant

Henry Allison, *Kant's Transcendental Idealism*
 Karl Ameriks, *Interpreting Kant's Critiques*.
 Graham Bird, ed. *A Companion to Kant*.
 Charlie D. Broad, *Kant: An Introduction*.
 Eckhart Förster, ed. *Kant's Transcendental Deductions: The Three "Critiques" and the "Opus Postumum."*
 Paul Guyer, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Kant*.
 Paul Guyer, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Kant and Modern Philosophy*.
 Paul Guyer, *Kant*.
 G. Michaelson, ed. *Cambridge Critical Guide to Kant's Religion Within the Bounds of Mere Reason*
 Ralph Walker, ed. *Kant on Pure Reason*.
 Andrew Ward, *Kant: The Three Critiques*
 Alan Wood, *Kant*.
 Alan Wood, *Kant's Moral Religion*.
 Allen W. Wood. *Kant's Rational Theology*

Friederich Schleiermacher

K. Barth, *The Theology of Schleiermacher*, ed. D. Ritschl, trans., G. W. Bromiley
 Isaiah Berlin, *The Roots of Romanticism* (1965), various editions.
 Richard Crouter, *Friedrich Schleiermacher: Between Enlightenment and Romanticism*
 Keith Clements, *Friedrich Schleiermacher: pioneer of modern theology*
 B. A. Gerrish, *A Prince of the Church: Schleiermacher and the Beginnings of Modern Theology*
 B. A. Gerrish, *Christian Faith: Dogmatics in Outline*
 Kevin Hector, *Theological Project of Modernism*
 Jacqueline Mariña, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Friedrich Schleiermacher*
 Joel Rasumussen, Judith Wolfe, and Johannes Zachhuber, eds. *Oxford Handbook of Nineteenth Century Christian Thought*
 Martin Redeker, *Schleiermacher: Life and Thought*

Karl Barth

Kevin Diller, *Theology's Epistemological Dilemma: How Karl Barth and Alvin Plantinga Offer a Unified Response*

George Hunsinger, *How to Read Karl Barth*

Keith Johnson, *Karl Barth and the Analogia Entis*

Bruce McCormack, *Karl Barth's Critically Realistic Dialectical Theology: Its Genesis and Development 1909-1936*

Thomas Joseph White (ed.), *The Analogy of Being: Invention of the Anti-Christ or Wisdom of God?*

John Webster, *Karl Barth*

American Presbyterianism

Annette Aubert, *German Roots of Nineteenth-Century American Theology*

B. A. Gerrish, *Thinking with the Church: Essays in Historical Theology*

Harriett Harris, *Fundamentalism and Evangelicals*

George Marsden, *The Evangelical Mind and the New School Presbyterian: A Case Study of Thought and Theology in Nineteenth-Century America*

George Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture*

John Muether, *Cornelius Van Til*

Mark Noll, *America's God*

Dutch neo-Calvinism

Craig Bartholomew, *Contours of a Kuyperian Tradition*

Craig Bartholomew and Michael Goheen, *Christian Philosophy: A Systematic and Narrative Introduction*

James Bratt, *Abraham Kuyper*

Jonathan Chaplin, *Herman Dooyeweerd*

Cameron Clausing, *Theology and History in the Methodology of Herman Bavinck*

James Eglinton, *Trinity and Organism*

Brian Mattson, *Restored to Our Destiny*, "Paradisaal Gin and Tonics"

Jessica and Robert Joustra (eds.), *Calvinism for a Secular Age*

Kuyper Center Review (Eerdmans, 5 volumes)

James K.A. Smith, *Awaiting the King*

N Gray Sutanto, *God and Knowledge, God and Humanity*

Alvin Plantinga and "Reformed" Epistemology

James Anderson, *Paradox in Christian Theology: An Analysis of its Presence, Character, and Epistemic Status*

James Beilby, *Epistemology as Theology: An Evaluation of Alvin Plantinga's Religious Epistemology*

Michael Bergmann, *Justification Without Awareness:*

Kevin Diller, *Theology's Epistemological Dilemma*

Nathan D. Shannon, *Shalom and the Ethics of Belief: Nicholas Wolterstorff's Theory of Situated Rationality*

Jerry Walls and Trent Dougherty, *The Plantinga Project: Two Dozen (or so) Arguments for God*

Grading System

A	(97-100)	4.00
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)	–
W	(withdraw)	–

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.”

The grade “W” indicates that a student has withdrawn from a course after the drop deadline. This grade is granted by the academic dean only in extenuating circumstances.

If a course is retaken, the original grade remains on the transcript and is included in the GPA.



Course Objectives Related to MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes

Course: ST6402

Professor: Sutanto

Campus: Washington, D.C.

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 reports and research paper emphasize articulation, analysis, and clarity of thought.
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 neo-Calvinist tradition focus on the application of Scripture for every area of life, esp. philosophy.
Reformed Theology	Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards.	Strong	Readings in the course represent an exemplary instance of Reformed theology in the 19 th -21 th centuries.
Sanctification	Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student's sanctification.	Minimal	Readings help in seeing the holistic character of Christian faith.
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 represent primary sources on the essential readings that focus on the formation of a Christian 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.)	Moderate	Readings represent irenic engagement with non-Reformed theologies from a Reformed perspective.
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.	Minimal	Through deep engagement with one branch of the Reformed tradition, students should be helped in contextualizing Reformed theology within a ministry in the modern world.