



## **05ST6100/01 – The Doctrine of the Trinity**

**Dr. Mark McDowell**

**Reformed Theological Seminary, Houston (Summer 2026)**

June 8-12

Mon-Fri; 2-8:15PM

### **I. Details**

Instructor: Dr. Mark I. McDowell

Contact: [mmcdowell@rts.edu](mailto:mmcdowell@rts.edu)

Office Hours: Feel free to contact me regarding anything in class and beyond. If you would like to make an appointment, please email.

### **II. Course Description (2 credits)**

The biblical foundations and the ecclesiastical creedal formulations of Trinitarian theology are examined, as well as related developments in the history of thought—ancient, medieval, and modern.

### **III. Course Objectives**

- a. To enhance the student's love, devotion, wonder and understanding of the Triune God.
- b. To increase the comprehension and understanding of the biblical, theological and historical foundations of Trinitarian doctrine
- c. To familiarize students with doctrinal debates throughout Church History
- d. To sharpen theological insights to perceive doctrinal truth and error
- e. To cultivate a theological imagination around faith, hope and love
- f. To perceive and understand the shape, scope and character of the Christian tradition's deep reflection on this doctrine, and to understand and appreciate the relation between theology and exegesis

### **IV. Course Requirements**

- a. Class Participation (20%): be present in body, mind and voice
- b. Book Report (20%): Students are expected to write a book report (consisting of 900 words) on the following work:

The aim is to understand the theological and pastoral significance of the book, to see its practical import in ministry, as well as finding a way to articulate it clearly,

cogently and fairly. This assignment includes the ability to identify the author's thesis and trace the argument throughout the book.

**\* Due by August 14<sup>th</sup> by 5pm**

- c. Readings (20%): Reading of all required texts is expected and will be graded.
- d. Theological Research Paper (40%): Each student will write a 12–15 page paper on a topic that will be discussed in class lectures or addressed in course readings. The aim of the paper is to test the student's ability to engage the doctrine of the Trinity broadly considered, while demonstrating the student's competency to grasp the finer contours of this doctrine. The paper must be typed, double-spaced, 12 pt font, and use footnotes (not endnotes). Students ought to discuss the topic of their research paper with the professor ahead of time.
- \* Due by August 14<sup>th</sup> by 5pm**

## V. Grading Scale:

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

## VI. Reading

### Required:

Basil the Great, *On the Holy Spirit*, trans. by Stephen Hildebrand (NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2011)

R. B. Jamieson and Tyler R. Wittman, *Biblical Reasoning: Christological and Trinitarian Rules for Exegesis* (Baker Academic, 2022)

Franz Dünzel, *Doctrine of the Trinity in the Early Church* (London: T&T Clark, 2007)

Stephen R. Holmes, *The Quest for the Trinity: The Doctrine of God in Scripture, History, and Modernity* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2012)

Fred Sanders, *Fountain of Salvation: Trinity and Soteriology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2021)

Scott R. Swain, *The Trinity: An Introduction* (Short Studies in Systematic Theology; Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2020)

Supplemental:

*The Westminster Confession of Faith* (WCF)

**VII. Schedule of Lectures**

- a. Introduction to the Class
- b. The Trinity and Worship
- c. Biblical Foundations
  - i. Sounding the Old Testament
  - ii. Declared in the New Testament
- d. Trinitarian Stirrings: Pre-Nicene Trinitarian Theology
- e. Arius, Athanasius and Nicaea
- f. The Cappadocians and the First Council of Constantinople
- g. Post-Conciliar Developments in Trinitarian Theology
- h. Augustine
- i. Medieval Trinitarian Theology
- j. Reformation Trinitarian Theology
- k. Modern Trinitarian Theology
- l. Trinity and Christology: Contemporary Debates

**Course Objectives Related to MDiv Student Learning Outcomes  
With Mini-Justification**

Course: **05ST6100/01**  
 Professor: Dr. Mark I. McDowell  
 Campus: Houston  
 Date: Summer 2026

<u><b>MDiv Student Learning Outcomes</b></u>		<u><b>Rubric</b></u> ➤ Strong ➤ Moderate ➤ Minimal ➤ None	<u><b>Mini-Justification</b></u>
<b>Articulation (oral &amp; written)</b>	Broadly understands and articulates knowledge, both oral and written, of essential biblical, theological, historical, and cultural/global information, including details, concepts, and frameworks.	Strong	Students will respond to material in papers and exams
<b>Scripture</b>	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	This course emphasizes the organization, structure and scope of Scripture and the theological implications from Scripture to learn and engage the doctrine of the Trinity
<b>Reformed Theology</b>	Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards.	Moderate	Within the scope of the Christian tradition, students will explore the contribution of the Reformation to Trinitarian Theology
<b>Sanctification</b>	Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student's sanctification.	Strong	Students will be prompted to adoration, worship and wonder a the Triune God who redeems and sanctifies
<b>Desire for Worldview</b>	Burning desire to conform all of life to the Word of God.	Moderate	The doctrine of the Trinity shapes the mind and heart of the student to see all of life in relation to God

<b>Winsomely Reformed/ Evangelistic</b>	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	Focuses on the attractiveness, beauty and coherence of Scripture's reflection on the Triune God, and cultivates an appreciation for the catholicity of the church's reflection on this doctrine
<b>Preach</b>	Ability to preach and teach the meaning of Scripture to both heart and mind with clarity and enthusiasm.	Minimal	Gives a foundation for interpretation, exegesis and cultivates theological instincts for preaching
<b>Worship</b>	Knowledgeable of historic and modern Christian-worship forms; and ability to construct and skill to lead a worship service.	Moderate	Stresses God as author and object of worship
<b>Shepherd</b>	Ability to shepherd the local congregation: aiding in spiritual maturity; promoting use of gifts and callings; and encouraging a concern for non-Christians, both in America and worldwide.	Minimal	
<b>Church/World</b>	Ability to interact within a denominational context, within the broader worldwide church, and with significant public issues.	Moderate	Understanding the identity of Reformed theology's account of the Trinity vis-à-vis other theological positions within the Christian tradition