



11ST5100– Introduction to Pastoral and Theological Studies **Dr. Mark McDowell**

Reformed Theological Seminary, Dallas
Summer, 2026

May 26th – 30th
Tues- Fri (9AM – 5PM)
Sat (8AM-1PM)

I. Details

Instructor: Dr. Mark I. McDowell

Contact: hisbell@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

This course is the RTS introduction to theology and pastoral ministry from the standpoint of the seminary's confessional, theological and pastoral commitments and convictions. The classroom lectures and interaction, and the reading assignments for this course will acquaint the student with important exegetical, theological, historical, and practical issues for Christian life and ministry. Students will see the integral connection between theology and pastoral ministry (and, indeed, all vocation): that all theology is practical and that life, vocation and biblical pastoral ministry must flow out of and be founded upon sound biblical theology. Students will be equipped to apply Reformed Theology in all areas of pastoral labours, and to derive their theology of ministry from theological commitments.

III. Course Objectives

- a. To familiarize students with the basics of Reformed Theology in historical context and encourage students to reflect on the basic hermeneutical and practical implications of Reformed Theology. The course will study the significance of a Reformed worldview for pastoral and theological studies. It will also set forth and commend the distinctives of Reformed Theological Seminary in order to enhance students' ability to benefit from the rest of the curriculum.

- b. To enable students to grasp the broad horizon of theology for the Christian life and Ministry, as well as the spiritual implications of theological study and scriptural reflection.
- c. To engage in theological study through reading, researching and writing at a graduate level with an eye for preparation to serve and minister in the church

IV. Course Requirements

- a. Students are expected to write a book report (consisting of 900 words) on a theme from the course and reading. The aim is to understand the theological and pastoral significance of this theme as well as finding a way to articulate it clearly, cogently and fairly.
- b. Students must complete all required reading by the last day of class. As a theological student, good reading and the virtues that attend reading well are essential to pastoral ministry and the Christian life. Learning key texts and the ability to engage them charitably and fairly is an exercise central to good theology.
- c. There will be a short Westminster Shorter Catechism (WSC) quiz that tests students understanding of a handful of key questions and answers
- d. Each student will write a final paper (consisting of 2000 words). Further instructions will be given by the professor during class.

V. Grading

- | | |
|-----------------------|-----|
| a. Book Report | 20% |
| b. Reading | 20% |
| c. WSC Quiz | 20% |
| d. Writing assignment | 40% |

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. Required Reading

- a. Kelly Kapic, *A Little Book for New Theologians: Why and How to Study Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2012)
- b. Michael Allen, *Reformed Theology* (London: T&T Clark, 2010).
- c. Herman Bavinck, *Guidebook for Instruction in the Christian Religion*, trans., and ed., Gregory Parker and Cameron Clausing (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendricksen, 2022)
- d. John V. Fesko, *The Need for Creeds Today: Confessional Faith in a Faithless Age* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2020)
- e. Jonty Rhodes, *Covenants Made Simple: Understanding God's Unfolding Promises to His People* (Phillipsburg: P&R Publishing, 2014)
- f. William Still, *The Work of the Pastor* (Fearn: Ross-shire: Christian Focus, 2010)
- g. Kevin Vanhoozer, *Hearers and Doers: A Pastor's Guide to Making Disciples through Scripture and Doctrine* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2019).

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

Course: 11ST5100
 Professor: Dr. Mark I. McDowell
 Campus: Dallas
 Date: Summer 2026

<u>MDiv Student Learning Outcomes</u>		<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.	Strong	Students will respond to material in papers and exams
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	This course emphasizes the organization, structure and scope of Scripture and the theological implications from Scripture for ministry
Reformed Theology	Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards.	Strong	Introduction to the character, teaching and contours of Reformed theology
Sanctification	Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student's sanctification.	Strong	Study of Scripture and the Reformed Tradition issues in the godliness required
Desire for Worldview	Burning desire to conform all of life to the Word of God.	Strong	Emphasizes the holistic horizon of Scripture for all of life
Winsomely Reformed/ Evangelistic	Embraces a winsomely Reformed ethos. (Includes an appropriate ecumenical spirit with other	Strong	Focuses on the attractiveness, beauty and coherence of Scripture and presenting this to

	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.)		others who need to know and love God
Preach	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
Worship	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
Shepherd	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.	Strong	The forming of servant leaders and shepherd pastors is the core of the class
Church/World	Ability to interact within a denominational context, within the broader worldwide church, and with significant public issues.	Moderate	Understanding the identity of Reformed theology and other theological positions