

**Reformed Theological Seminary
Fall 2026**

**ST 5250 Systematic Theology: Ecclesiology and Sacraments 2 Hrs.
Thursday 10:00 A.M. – 12:05 P.M.**

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Course TA: TBA

Course TA Contact Information: TBA

Description (as per RTS *Catalog*)

“This class explores biblical doctrine from a systematic perspective. Topics include Ecclesiology and Sacraments” (p.85)

Prerequisites

Ideally, students will have completed the following courses prior to this course: ST 5300 “Covenant Theology”; ST 5150 “Systematic Theology: Scripture, Theology Proper, Anthropology”; ST 5200 “Systematic Theology: Christology, Soteriology, Eschatology.”

Students who have not completed these courses or who desire a theological refresher should consult J. I. Packer, *Concise Theology: A Guide to Historic Christian Beliefs* (Tyndale, 1988) and Louis Berkhof, *Manual of Christian Doctrine* (Eerdmans 2002 [1933]).

Course Objectives

- (1)** To survey the Scripture’s teaching falling under the topical headings of ecclesiology (the doctrine of the church), and the sacraments (Baptism and the Lord’s Supper).
- (2)** To enable the student better to grasp the doctrines comprehended under these *loci*, to understand these doctrines’ exegetical and biblical-theological foundations, to acquaint students with both historical and contemporary discussions concerning these *loci*, to assist students in communicating these doctrines in preaching, teaching, and counseling.
- (3)** To help the student better to grasp and appreciate the confessional and catechetical expressions of these *loci* in the Westminster Standards.
- (4)** To introduce the student to non-Reformed and non-evangelical systems of theology, and assist the student in bringing Reformed theology to bear on these particular systems.
- (5)** To help prepare students for licensure and ordination trials in the church.

Theological Standpoint

This course will be taught from a full and *ex animo* commitment to the Westminster Standards as containing the system of doctrine contained in the Scripture; as adopted by the PCA. The instructor regards the following theologians as among the ablest exponents of biblical doctrine in the church since the Reformation, and as most influential upon his own theological formation and perspective – the sixteenth-century Reformer, **John Calvin**; the late seventeenth-century Genevan, **Francis Turretin**; the English Puritans generally, but

especially **John Owen** and **Jonathan Edwards**; the Free Church of Scotland theologians, especially **William Cunningham**, **James Bannerman**, and **George Smeaton**; the American Presbyterians, especially **A.A. Hodge** and **B.B. Warfield** in the North; and **Robert L. Dabney** and **Thomas E. Peck** in the South.

Required Texts (Primary) (see below for page assts.; note abbreviation)

(1) The Holy Bible, preferably in a recent translation such as the New American Standard or the English Standard Version. Students who are competent in Hellenistic Greek are strongly encouraged to bring their Greek New Testaments to each class session.

(2) Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (pp. 551-658)

(3) Geerhardus Vos, *The Teaching of Jesus Concerning the Kingdom of God and the Church*

(4) Herman Ridderbos, *Paul: An Outline of His Theology* (pp. 327-95, 429-86)

(5) Richard B. Gaffin, Jr., *Perspectives on Pentecost*

(6) David Wright, ed. *Baptism: Three Views*

(7) Malcolm Maclean, *The Lord's Supper*

(8) Guy Waters, *The Lord's Supper as the Sign and Meal of the New Covenant*

(9) *Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms* (WCF 25-31). Recommended but not required is a harmony of the Standards (e.g. M. Smith, B. Green). **[WCF]**

(10) Guy Waters, "The Westminster Confession of Faith and Church Government," in ed. Kevin Bidwell, *The Westminster Standards for Today: Recovering the Church and Worship for Everyday Living*.

Recommended Text

Guy Waters, *One, Holy, Catholic, Apostolic Church: The Biblical Doctrine of the Church* (Baker, 2025).

Assignments & Requirements

(1) Weekly quizzes on the assigned reading. Each quiz will cover all the assigned reading for that particular week. You may **not** access quizzes previously administered in this course. On each quiz you will be asked to report the extent of your reading for that week. The quizzes are worth **30%** of your final grade. Quizzes will be administered outside of class, and should be arranged with the course TA. Students may drop one quiz grade. **Please note that the first reading quiz will be the week of 03 September.**

(2) A final exam will be taken during the exam period and will be cumulative. The final exam is worth **40%** of your final grade.

(3) An 8-10 page research paper on some subject relating to the Doctrine of the Church, Baptism, **or** the Lord's Supper. Examples include, but are not limited to, "Have sign-gifts ceased?"; "May women hold church office?"; "Is Roman Catholic baptism valid?"; "Is paedocommunion biblically warranted?" The topic must be pre-approved by the professor. See paper guidelines below. This assignment will be accepted late, but it will be subject to a penalty of one letter grade per day (or fraction thereof) after the due date. **30%** of your final grade. **Due 8:00AM, October 29.**

Course Format

The primary format of this course will be lecture. Because of the breadth of material the Seminary has asked us to survey in this course, the lectures will be necessarily selective. They will cover all the topics but they will not cover them in uniform depth. The readings, however, do survey the topics thoroughly, so the students are especially encouraged to be faithful in and attentive to the assigned readings.

Attendance

Class attendance is required for ST 5250. If a student anticipates an unavoidable absence, he should notify the instructor in advance. Each hour of unexcused absence subjects the student to a reduction of his final grade by one-half of a letter grade. Two tardies (arriving after the beginning of the hour) constitute an hour of unexcused absence. Students missing more than four hours (for any reason) may **either** submit an additional, compensatory assignment [determined by the instructor] **or** choose to receive a full letter grade reduction in their final grade.

Grading Scale

The grading scale for this course is the seminary's grading scale. You may find it listed at the *RTS Catalog*.

Plagiarism

Please review the seminary's policy on plagiarism. Plagiarized work will subject the student to failure in the course and possible disciplinary action.

In-Class Computer Use

Computers and tablets are not permitted in this course. Cell phones must be set to silent and stowed. If for some extraordinary reason you need to take a call, you may either wait until the break or leave the classroom.

Approximate Course Schedule

Please note that this schedule is approximate and subject to change at any time. The instructor's announced changes in class will be the final word on the nature and date of assignments. They are the student's sole responsibility to note and to implement.

27 Aug	Course Introductions / Introduction / The Holy Spirit & the Church
03 Sep	Union With Christ Reading Asst: WCF 25-26, 30-31; Waters, "Church Government"
10 Sept	The Church Reading Asst: Berkhof, 551-603; Vos, <i>Kingdom of God</i>
17 Sept	The Church Reading Asst: Ridderbos, <i>Paul</i> , 327-95
24 Sept	The Church Reading Asst: Ridderbos, <i>Paul</i> , 396-486
01 Oct	The Church Reading Asst: Gaffin, <i>Perspectives</i> , 9-54
08 Oct	Reading Week – Class Will Not Meet
15 Oct	SJC – Class Will Not Meet* Reading Asst: Gaffin, <i>Perspectives</i> , 55-122
22 Oct	The Church Reading Asst: WCF 27; Berkhof, 604-58
29 Oct	The Sacraments Reading Asst: WCF 28; Wright, <i>Three Views</i> , 19-138 Research Paper
05 Nov	Baptism Reading Asst: WCF 29; Maclean, <i>Lord's Supper</i> , pp. 13-68
12 Nov	Baptism Reading Asst: Maclean, <i>Lord's Supper</i> , pp. 171-221
19 Nov	ETS – Class Will Not Meet
26 Nov	No Class – Thanksgiving
03 Dec	The Lord's Supper Reading Asst: Waters, <i>Lord's Supper</i>

*To make up the hours missed on 15 Oct, class for each scheduled session will be extended by ten minutes. Class will conclude at 12:05 P.M. on each scheduled meeting date.

Select Recommended Readings

Ecclesiology

Bannerman, *The Church of Christ* (2 vols); Thomas E. Peck, *Notes on Ecclesiology*; Stuart Robinson, *The Church of God As An Essential Element of the Gospel*; Berkouwer, *The Church*; E.P. Clowney, *The Church*; Grudem, ed., *Are Miraculous Gifts For Today? Four Views*; H. Ridderbos, *The Coming of the Kingdom*; H. Ridderbos, *Paul: An Outline of His Theology*; O.P.C., "Report of the Committee on Women in Office" (1988)

Baptism

B.B. Warfield, "How Shall We Baptize?" SSW 2.329-50; "Christian Baptism," SSW 1.325-331; "The Polemics of Infant Baptism," *Studies in Theology* (=Works, Vol. 9), pp. 389-408; G. C. Berkouwer, *The Sacraments*; Pierre Marcel, *Baptism, Sacrament of the Covenant of Grace*; Robert G. Rayburn, *What About Baptism?*; Rowland Ward, *Baptism in Scripture and History*; Hughes O. Old, *The Shaping of the Reformed Baptismal Rite in the Sixteenth Century*; David Kingdon, *Children of Abraham*; John V. Fesko, *Word, Water, and Spirit: A Reformed Perspective on Baptism*.

The Lord's Supper

J. A. Alexander, *God Is Love*; John Brown, *Discourses Suited to the Administration of the Lord's Supper*; Robert Letham, *The Lord's Supper: Eternal Word in Broken Bread*; Waters and Duncan, *Children and the Lord's Supper*; Hughes O. Old, *Holy Communion in the Piety of the Reformed Church*; Howard Griffith, *Spreading the Feast: Instruction and Meditations for Ministry at the Lord's Table*.

Select Bibliography – Leading or Representative Systematic Theologies

Reformed

Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics* (4 vols.)
Herman Bavinck, *Our Reasonable Faith*
Wilhelmus à Brakel, *The Christian's Reasonable Service* (4 vols.)
James P. Boyce, *Abstract of Systematic Theology*
John Brown, *Natural and Revealed Theology*
John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (2 vols.)
Robert L. Dabney, *Lectures on Systematic Theology*
John Dick, *Lectures on Theology* (2 vols.)
Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology* (3 vols.)
A. A. Hodge, *Outlines of Theology*
Michael S. Horton, *Christian Faith*
John Murray, *Collected Writings, Volume 2* [=Classroom Lectures on Theology]
Robert L. Reymond, *A New Systematic Theology*
W. G. T. Shedd, *Dogmatic Theology* (3 vols.; repr. in 1 vol.)
Augustus H. Strong, *Outlines of Systematic Theology* (3 vols.)
Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology* (3 vols.)

Lutheran

Francis Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics* (4 vols.)
John Theodore Mueller, *Christian Dogmatics*

Arminian

Richard Watson, *Theological Institutes* (2 vols.)

Norman Geisler, *Systematic Theology* (4 vols.)

Dispensational

Charles Ryrie, *Basic Theology*

Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Systematic Theology* (8 vols.; repr. in 4 vols.)

Roman Catholic

Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* (5 vols.)

Ludwig Ott, *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma*

The Catechism of the Catholic Church (2d ed.)

Denzinger and Hunermann, *Enchiridion Symbolorum: A Compendium of Creeds, Confessions, and Declarations of the Catholic Church*

Paper Guidelines

You will submit an 8-10 page research paper, exclusive of cover page and bibliography. This paper must demonstrate awareness of and competence in both the primary and secondary literature.

You must submit your paper electronically. Submit your paper through Canvas, and be sure to submit it as a PDF attachment **only**.

The paper should have the following elements and meet the following guidelines:

- A concise introduction that reflects your awareness of the pertinent issues
- A strong, incisive, clearly-stated thesis in the opening of the paper
- A cogent argument that is integrally tied to and flows from your thesis
- Organization that is both inherent to the paper and evident to your reader
- A conclusion that properly concludes the argument of your paper, concisely reflecting on the implications of your thesis for our understanding of biblical teaching (generally) and for the life of the church today
- Appropriate exegetical and biblical-theological treatment of the biblical data relevant to your topic
- Demonstration of careful and mature systematic-theological and historical-theological reflection on the chosen topic
- Fair and decisive engagement of the secondary literature. You should engage positions that are similar to your own and positions with which you disagree.
- Use of at least **eight (8) sources, one of which must be a journal article**. "Use" means not merely inclusion in a bibliography, but also footnoted referencing in your paper. Do not string together quotations in your paper, and be sure to keep your quotations concise and to the point.
- Footnotes (not endnotes or parenthetical references!). Footnotes should be single spaced, 10 pt font. The first line of each footnote should be indented.
- Pagination – each page should be clearly numbered
- Consistent, readable margins – ½ to 1 inch margins on each side of the text
- Text set in left justification, Times New Roman font, 12 pt. Set your indentation at ½ inch.
- Double or 1.5 spacing only.
- Greek or Hebrew, typed (no transliterations)
- Documentation according to format and standards prescribed in the *SBL Handbook of Style* – this applies both to the body of the paper and the bibliography. Please take special note of the abbreviations.
- Absence of typographical, grammatical, syntactical, or spelling errors. Such errors will result in a lower grade on your paper. Proofread!
- A staple in the upper left hand corner – no folders, etc., please.

The Good Paper Guide

In grading your final paper, I will make reference to the following criteria (in addition to the guidelines set forth above, p.5). I have adopted these criteria, with slight modification, from a syllabus of Dr. W. Duncan Rankin.

General

Is the paper interesting? substantial? well-written?

Is the paper sufficiently focused or developed?

Is the paper organized? organized clearly?

Development and Flow

Does the paper show clear plan and purpose?

Treatment

Is the thesis of your paper stated clearly? Is your thesis pedestrian?

Does your paper raise more issues than you have adequately addressed in it?

Does your paper raise issues that cannot be adequately addressed in a paper of this scope and length?

Does your paper provide sufficient data to enable the reader to understand the problems and issues?

Does your paper set forth and engage various positions fully? fairly? objectively?

Does your paper provide careful, biblical exegesis?

Do your conclusions follow from the premises and data you set forth in the paper?

Does your paper evidence knowledge of and interaction with the broader Reformed tradition? views within modern evangelicalism? non-evangelical views?

Does your paper have material that should have been excised? Does it have material that is not germane to the subject?

Is the length of your paper adequate to address the issues raised?

Documentation

Is your paper well documented? adequately documented? poorly documented?

Bibliography

Does your paper have a bibliography?

Is your bibliography excellent? adequate? poor?

Does your paper omit key secondary sources that should have been included?

Appearance

Is your paper neat in appearance? Is your paper annoying to read?

Errors

Does your paper have typographical errors? grammatical errors? syntactical errors? spelling errors?

Time of Submission

Was your paper submitted on time?

Did you submit it in both hard copy and electronically (*per* syllabus instructions)?

Your assigned grade is based upon the following: your successful completion of the instructions for this assignment, as those instructions are set forth in this syllabus; your overall quality of presentation; my assessment of your grasp of the subject matter; your skill in communicating the material; the quality of your work relative to your peers in the course.

Course Objectives Related to MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes

Course: NT 5250 Systematic Theology: Ecclesiology and Sacraments
 Professor: Guy Waters
 Campus: RTS Jackson
 Date: Fall 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 demonstrate knowledge of the material by writing a theological paper; a cumulative final exam will measure student mastery of the concepts.
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	Students will argue from and prove doctrines using Scripture; the student will integrate the application of Scripture to modern circumstances throughout the course.
Reformed Theology	Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards.	Strong	By the completion of the Systematic Theology courses, the student will have a solid foundation and introduction to Reformed Theology as articulated in the Westminster Standards.
Sanctification	Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student's sanctification.	Strong	The biblical doctrines of the church and of the sacraments are critical to a biblically faithful doctrine of sanctification.
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	The course will reflect on the mission of the church, and of the relationship between church and world.
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	Non-Reformed and non-evangelical views will be engaged with respect and charity.
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	The course treats the doctrines of the church and of the sacraments, thereby equipping one to function well in the office of elder.