

**ST 5100: Introduction to Pastoral and Theological Studies**  
**Dr. Michael Allen**  
**Fall 2026**  
**Thursday 9:00-12:00**

*Catalog Description*

An introduction to biblical, theological, and practical ministry studies within the Reformed tradition.

*Course Objectives*

The students will grow in their ability to:

- Understand the connections between theological study and Christian spiritual growth;
- Discern their vocational identity and the way(s) in which theological study will inform its pursuit and practice;
- Read, research, and write in a manner appropriate to graduate theological education;
- Grasp the doctrine of Scripture undergirding the RTS curriculum;
- Gain familiarity with the broad patterns of Reformed theology regarding its catholic commitments and its reformational distinctives, as well as its unique confessional status amongst other Protestant approaches;
- Learn the classic catholic and Reformed models of pastoral ministry, as well as analyze their potential to inform and renew churches today.

*Instructor*

Michael Allen, Ph.D.

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Feel free to contact me whenever needed (preferably via email). When in doubt about protocol or anything regarding class material, write and ask. Also, feel free to stop by my office whenever the door is open.

*Textbooks*

I'm hoping that you've already read the following book: Kelly Kopic, *A Little Book for New Theologians: Why and How to Study Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2012). ISBN 9780830839759. It's meant as a very brief guide to prepare one for a course of study in seminary such as you will find here at RTS.

The following books are required reading:

1. Scott Swain, *Trinity, Revelation, and Reading: A Theological Introduction to the Bible and Its Interpretation* (London: T & T Clark, 2011). ISBN 9780567265401.

2. Michael Allen, *Reformed Theology* (London: T & T Clark, 2010). ISBN 9780567034304.
3. Uche Anizor, *How to Read Theology: Engaging Doctrine Critically and Charitably* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2018). ISBN 9780801049750.
4. Richard Baxter, *The Reformed Pastor* (Puritan Paperbacks; Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1974). ISBN 9780851511917.
5. Gregory the Great, *Book of Pastoral Rule* (Popular Patristics Series 34; Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2007). ISBN 9780881413182.

Additional resources will be provided by the instructor on Canvas, our seminary's learning management system. Students should check Canvas on a weekly basis.

### *Requirements*

#### 1. Reading

Reading must be completed before the class in which it is to be discussed. Class discussions will focus on readings, so you must be prepared to talk.

Theology is an activity done largely through the process of good reading. Read carefully. Read charitably. Read with others. Read with the expectation that you will learn from others, even when you disagree with their main point. Read even when a text is dense and difficult, for you will learn perseverance and fortitude here. Read that which seems trite and obvious, asking how others might object or criticize. Most importantly, read because God was willing to reveal himself in written words, and because we can best witness to God's grace with corresponding words. Read because words matter in God's economy of grace.

#### 2. Reading Briefs

Students are expected to prepare a brief on each chapter read from Swain and Allen. The purpose of the 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 (and should) include quotations from various points in the text (so long as page numbers are referenced parenthetically).

Briefs should be no more than 350 words. They should be written in complete sentences and paragraphs and should be edited carefully.

Students are to upload briefs onto Canvas before class each week.

### 3. Final Paper

Students will write a 1500-2000 word essay on the role of confessions and catechisms in shaping a Christian, a theologian, and a ministry. You may choose any way of addressing that aspect of discussions about scripture and tradition. You will interact with chapter 7 in Michael Allen's *Reformed Theology*, chapter 4 of Uche Anizor's *How to Read Theology*, and/or chapter 4 of Scott Swain's *Trinity, Revelation, and Reading*.

All papers are to be uploaded on Canvas by 11:00 a.m. on Wednesday, December 9.

#### *The Grading Structure*

Grades will be assessed as follows:

Reading Briefs	50%
Final Paper	50%

The grading scale can be found in the Academic Catalog. As laid out in the catalog, a "B" is the work normally expected of a student. An "A" is given for someone who consistently outperforms expectations, and a "C" is given for persons who only minimally and occasionally meet expectations. Read the Academic Catalog to see what grades reflect.

#### *Academic Honesty* (adapted from Dr. Timothy Phillips of Wheaton College)

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. 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.

4. Cheating or plagiarism results, at minimum, in the disqualification of that unit of the course affected. A student caught plagiarizing or cheating will forfeit that project. A second offense will result in the forfeiture of the course. Punishments may be more severe than the minimum depending upon the specific situation.

*Computer Policy (Modified from Dr. Alan Jacobs of Baylor University)*

Computers, tablets, and smart-phones are not allowed in class. Think I'm over-reacting? Think you're a master of multitasking? [You are not](#). No, [I really mean it](#). Notes taken by hand are almost always more useful than typed notes, because more thoughtful selectivity goes into them; plus there are multiple cognitive benefits to [writing by hand](#). And people who use laptops in class [see their grades decline](#) — and even contribute to lowering the grades of *other people*.

*The Schedule*

*Week 1: August 27*

Why Study Theology?

Read Swain, ch. 1

*Week 2: September 3*

How to Study Theology

Read Swain, ch. 2; Anizor, ch. 1

*Week 3: September 10*

Scripture and Theology (1)

Read Swain, ch. 3; Anizor, ch. 2

*Week 4: September 17*

Scripture and Theology (2)

Read Swain, ch. 4

*Week 5: September 24*

Scripture and Theology (3)

Read Swain, ch. 5

*Week 6: October 1*

Reformed Theology: Word of God

Read Allen, ch. 1; Gregory, 9-49

*Week 7: October 8*  
Reformed Theology: Covenant  
Read Allen, ch. 2; Gregory, 49-87

*Reading Week: October 15*  
No Class: Finish Anizor

*Week 8: October 22*  
Reformed Theology: God and Christ  
Read Allen, ch. 3; Gregory, 87-140

*Week 9: October 29*  
Reformed Theology: Faith and Salvation  
Read Allen, ch. 4; Gregory, 140-212

*Week 10: November 5*  
Reformed Theology: Sin and Grace  
Read Allen, ch. 5; Baxter, 37-87

*Week 11: November 12*  
Reformed Theology: Worship and Sacraments  
Read Allen, ch. 6; Baxter, 87-133

*Week 12: November 19*  
*NO CLASS: Academic Conferences*  
Read Allen, ch. 7; Baxter, 133-172

*November 26*  
*NO CLASS: Thanksgiving Holiday*

*Week 13: December 3*  
Reformed Theology: Eschatology and Culture  
Read Allen, ch. 8; Baxter, 172-256

*Final Paper Due: December 9 (11:00 a.m.)*

**Course Objectives Related to MDiv\* Student Learning Outcomes**

Course: ST 5100 Introduction to Pastoral and Theological Studies  
 Professor: Allen  
 Campus: Orlando  
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<b><u>MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes</u></b>		<b><u>Rubric</u></b>	<b><u>Mini-Justification</u></b>
<p><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></p> <p><i>*As the MDiv is the core degree at RTS, the MDiv rubric will be used in this syllabus.</i></p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Strong</b></li> <li>• <b>Moderate</b></li> <li>• <b>Minimal</b></li> <li>• <b>None</b></li> </ul>	
<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. Also includes ability to preach and teach the meaning of Scripture to both heart and mind with clarity and enthusiasm.	Strong	Students will respond to the material in weekly briefs and a final paper.
<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 stresses the organization and teaching of the whole Scripture and the Scripture's implication for ministry.
<b>Reformed Theology</b>	Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards.	Strong	Introduction to the shape of Reformed theology.
<b>Sanctification</b>	Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student's sanctification.	Strong	Sustained focus upon pastoral character and the practices of good theological study for Christians and specifically for future leaders.
<b>Worldview</b>	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	Stresses the systematic and ethical shape of Reformed theology, which is rooted in scriptural exegesis.
<b>Winsomely Reformed</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 wider catholic heritage and also the Reformed distinctives that mark our theological approach.
<b>Pastoral Ministry</b>	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.	Strong	The forming of "servant-leaders" and "pastor-shepherds" is the goal. Sustained focus week by week upon the conception of pastoral character and vocation.