

# Introduction to Pastoral and Theological Studies<sup>1</sup>

---

*Reformed Theological Seminary, Chicago  
Summer 2026*

---

## Details

- A. Dates: July 6-10, 2026
- B. Times: 8:30 AM-5:30 PM
- C. Location: Holy Trinity Church, 218 S Wabash Ave, Chicago, IL 60604
- D. Instructor: Dr. Gabriel N.E. Fluhrer
- E. Contact: Sara Kaitlin Van Puffelen, Executive Assitant  
sk@1stpresbyterian.com
- F. Availability: If you need any assistance outside of the class, please contact my assistant so she can schedule a time for us to connect!

## Goals

- A. To familiarize the student with the basics of Reformed theology (specifically, the Reformation *Solas* and the Doctrines of Grace) in their historical context.
- B. To familiarize the student with the core biblical arguments for Reformed theology.
- C. To encourage the student to reflect on some of the hermeneutical and practical implications of Reformed theology.
- D. To help the student appreciate the significance of a Reformed worldview for pastoral and theological studies.

## Course Overview

- A. Introduction: What is Theology?
- B. Foundations: The Doctrine of Scripture
- C. Background: The Reformation
- D. The Reformation *Solas*
- E. The Reformed Doctrines of Providence and Predestination
- F. The Doctrines of Grace (“Five Points of Calvinism: TULIP”)

---

<sup>1</sup> The syllabus and course notes for this class have been adapted from Dr. James Anderson’s ST 502 documents and used by permission.

# Course Requirements

- A. *Class attendance and thoughtful participation.*
1. Since this is an intensive course, class attendance is critical. **Any known absences must be approved by the professor by July 1, 2026.**
  2. A percentage of your final grade (see below) will depend on your attendance record and your participation in the classes (thoughtful interaction with the professor and other students).
  3. Use of the Internet on phones, tablets, and computers should be minimized to the greatest possible extent during lectures and discussions.
  4. In order to access Canvas, students and faculty need a reliable high-speed internet connection and an up-to-date browser (Chrome, Firefox recommended). Additional software and hardware needs include:
    - i. Computer – Microsoft Windows or Mac OSX
    - ii. An active e-mail account (provided by RTS)
    - iii. Word processing (Written assignments are submitted as MS Word or PDF) (RTS provides a Microsoft user license to all active students)
    - iv. Zoom conferencing software
  5. Additionally, some basic skills are necessary for using Canvas and Zoom
    - i. Browse the internet by entering a web-address
    - ii. Navigate Canvas & Zoom using a computer, tablet, or mobile device
    - iii. Upload and download a file
    - iv. For any Canvas-related issues, you can call or email the DE Students Service Departments ([dessa@rts.edu](mailto:dess@rts.edu)) or the DE Canvas Administrator ([canvas.admin@rts.edu](mailto:canvas.admin@rts.edu)). After hours, you have access to 24/7 support through the Canvas Help Desk (Instructure).
  6. RTS AI Policy: A copy of this policy has been uploaded in your “Files” tab on the Canvas page
- B. *Reading assignments.*
1. You will be required to write a 500 word response to all three assigned books.
  2. These responses must evidence correct grammar, spelling, and structure.
  3. All three reading assignments are due by July 31, 2017
- C. *Final exam.*
1. The final exam will be available on July 31, 2017.
  2. The format of the exam will be a series of short-answer questions plus two longer essay questions. You will have three hours to complete it.
  3. You may refer to an English translation of the Bible (but not one with study notes, etc.). You may not refer to any class notes or other study resources.
  4. You will be asked to sign a declaration that you have not discussed the content of the exam with anyone who has previously taken the exam.
  5. You will also be asked to indicate which of the required reading assignments you have *completed* and to sign a declaration to that effect.

## Grading

- A. Class attendance and participation – 10%

- B. Reaction papers — 40%
- C. Final exam (including credit for reading assignments) — 40%

## Required Reading

You should obtain copies of the assigned books listed below. You should also bring an English translation of the Bible to class. I will use the ESV primarily but, other translations such as the NIV, NASB, and CSB are acceptable. Paraphrase translations such as *The Message* are not acceptable.

- A. Graeme Goldsworthy, *According to Plan: The Unfolding Revelation of God in the Bible* (IVP Academic, 2002).
- B. Michael Reeves, *The Unquenchable Flame* (B&H, 2010).
- C. R. C. Sproul, *What Is Reformed Theology?* (Baker Books, 2005).

## Recommended Supplementary Reading<sup>2</sup>

You are not *required* to read any of the items below, but you may find them useful to consolidate the course material and for further study as your interests dictate. For many of these, the table of contents can be viewed on Amazon.com or Google Books.

- A. Theological Foundations
  1. John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John T. McNeill, trans. Ford Lewis Battles (Westminster John Knox, 1960).  
[An overview of Christian doctrine from the original Calvinist; a classic of Reformed theology. Battles' translation is widely considered to be the best. Henry Beveridge's earlier translation is available online in various places]
  2. John M. Frame, *Salvation Belongs to the Lord* (P&R, 2006).  
[An accessible introduction to systematic theology from a Reformed perspective.]
  3. Abraham Kuyper, *Lectures on Calvinism* (Hendrickson, 2008).  
[In six lectures delivered at Princeton in 1898, Kuyper argues that Calvinism is not merely a set of doctrines but an entire "life system" (i.e., worldview) with implications for all areas of human life.]
  4. J. I. Packer, *'Fundamentalism' and the Word of God* (IVP, 1958; multiple reprints).  
[A classic defense of the orthodox doctrine of Scripture against its liberal critics. Packer argues that the evangelical view of God's Word is not a modern innovation but just the view of Christ and his apostles. The book is as relevant today as ever.]
  5. John Wenham, *Christ and the Bible* (Wipf & Stock, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., 2009).  
[A classic treatment of Jesus' high view of Scripture.]
- B. Reformational Theology
  1. J. V. Fesko, *Justification: Understanding the Classic Reformed Doctrine* (P&R, 2008).

---

<sup>2</sup> Again, these are mainly Dr. Anderson's recommendations, but I agree with his assessments.

[An excellent historical, exegetical, and theological treatment of the doctrine.]

2. Steve Jeffrey, Mike Ovey, and Andrew Sach, *Pierced For Our Transgressions* (IVP, 2007).  
[A comprehensive biblical defense of a penal substitutionary understanding of the atonement in the face of recent attacks on the doctrine. Highly recommended.]
3. John Murray, *Redemption: Accomplished and Applied* (Eerdmans, 1984).  
[A classic exposition of the Reformed view of the atonement and the *ordo salutis*.]
4. Thomas Schreiner, *Faith Alone: The Doctrine of Justification* (Zondervan, 2015).  
[A solid exposition and defense of *Sola Fide*. Addresses various recent challenges.]
5. David VanDrunen, *God's Glory Alone: The Majestic Heart of Christian Faith and Life* (Zondervan, 2015).  
[A good introduction that covers historical, biblical, and pastoral perspectives.]
6. James R. White, *The God Who Justifies* (Bethany House, 2001).  
[A thorough exegetical defense of the doctrine of justification by faith alone.]
7. James R. White, *Scripture Alone* (Bethany House, 2004).  
[An insightful defense of the sufficiency of Scripture; responds to RC objections.]

#### C. Providence and Predestination

1. Paul Helm, *The Providence of God* (IVP, 1993).  
[A classic exposition of the doctrine of providence by a Reformed philosophical theologian.]
2. Paul Helm, Bruce A. Ware, Roger E. Olson, and John Sanders, *Perspectives on the Doctrine of God* (B&H Academic, 2008).  
[A four-way debate over the doctrines of providence and foreknowledge between a classical Calvinist (Helm), a fuzzy Calvinist (Ware), a classical Arminian (Olson), and an Open Theist (Sanders). Unlikely to change anyone's mind, but still useful for understanding the basic differences between the positions and the typical rationales for holding them. Not as exegetical as one might wish.]
3. Dennis W. Jowers, ed., *Four Views on Divine Providence* (Zondervan, 2011).  
[A four-way debate over the doctrine of providence between a Calvinist (Paul Kjos Helseth), a Molinist (William Lane Craig), a quasi-Calvinist (Ron Highfield), and an Open Theist (Gregory A. Boyd). Useful for understanding the key differences between the positions represented. Helpful introductory and concluding essays by Jowers.]
4. Douglas F. Kelly, *If God Already Knows Why Pray?* (Christian Focus, 2005).  
[A practical and encouraging (and deceptively profound) introduction to the

theology of prayer by a Reformed scholar, powerfully illustrated from personal experience.]

5. J. I. Packer, *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God* (IVP, 1961; multiple reprints).

[A classic treatment by a Reformed Anglican theologian.]

6. Greg Welty, *Why is There Evil in the World (And So Much of it?)* (Christian Focus, 2023).

[The best popular treatment on this vexing question from a Reformed standpoint.]

#### D. The Doctrines of Grace (Calvinism)

1. David L. Allen and Steve W. Lemke, eds., *Whosoever Will: A Biblical-Theological Critique of Five-Point Calvinism* (B&H Academic, 2010).

[Various essays targeting “Five-Point Calvinism”—yes, even Total Depravity.]

2. Matthew Barrett, *Salvation by Grace: The Case for Effectual Calling and Regeneration* (P&R, 2013).

[A thorough biblical defense of the doctrine of efficacious grace.]

3. D. A. Carson, *The Difficult Doctrine of the Love of God* (Crossway, 2000).

[A helpful little study on the love of God and its relation to God’s sovereignty and wrath, from a broadly Calvinist perspective. PDF available online [here](#).]

4. David Gibson and Jonathan Gibson, eds., *From Heaven He Came and Sought Her: Definite Atonement in Historical, Biblical, Theological, and Pastoral Perspective* (Crossway, 2013).

[An impressive multi-author defense of the doctrine of definite/limited atonement.]

5. Michael S. Horton, *For Calvinism* (Zondervan, 2011).

[A winsome and articulate defense of Calvinism, pitched at the popular level. Note also the companion volume, *Against Calvinism*, by Roger Olson.]

6. Roger E. Olson, *Arminian Theology: Myths and Realities* (IVP, 2006).

[Not so much a defense of Arminianism against Calvinism as an attempt to correct common misconceptions and misrepresentations of classical Arminian theology and to clearly present its disagreements with Calvinism. Probably the best book of its kind.]

7. Roger E. Olson, *Against Calvinism* (Zondervan, 2011).

[Olson is one of the most prominent Arminian critics of Calvinism writing today, although I find many of his criticisms to be quite superficial. Note the companion volume, *For Calvinism*, authored by Michael Horton.]

8. Robert A. Peterson, *Election and Free Will* (P&R, 2007).

[A solid and workmanlike defense of unconditional election; rather dry in style.]

9. Clark H. Pinnock, ed., *The Grace of God, the Will of Man* (Academia Books, 1989).

[An influential collection of essays in defense of (versions of) Arminianism.]

10. Robert E. Picirilli, *Grace, Faith, Free Will* (Randall House, 2002).  
[A defense of Arminianism from historical, systematic, and exegetical perspectives.]
11. Sam Storms, *Chosen for Life: The Case for Divine Election* (Crossway, 2007).  
[A lucid and thorough case for the doctrine of unconditional election.]
12. Jerry L. Walls and Joseph R. Dongell, *Why I Am Not a Calvinist* (IVP, 2004).  
[A responsible case for classical (Wesleyan) Arminianism; stronger philosophically than exegetically.]

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

Course: ST5100: Introduction to Pastoral and Theological Studies

Professor: Gabriel N.E. Fluhrer

Campus: Chicago Extension

Date: July 6-10, 2026

<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>• Strong</li> <li>• Moderate</li> <li>• Minimal</li> <li>• None</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	Achieved through a close reading of basic introductory texts, coupled with class discussion.
<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	Achieved through detailed study of relevant foundational Biblical texts, alongside a careful overview of systematic and Biblical theological studies.
<b>Reformed Theology</b>	Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards.	Strong	Achieved through assigned reading and lectures.
<b>Sanctification</b>	Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student's sanctification.	Strong	Achieved through demonstrating how the student's grasp of the basics of Reformed theology should issue in a life of joyful conformity to the image of Christ by the Spirit.
<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.	Moderate	As an introductory course, the concept of worldview will be woven through all the lectures and assigned reading. The aim is to help the student understand that Reformed theology entails a Reformed world and life view.
<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	Achieved primarily through the style of lecture and classroom discussion, helping the student understand that Reformed theology should result in warm-hearted doxology and living.
<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 material covered will prepare the student to non-negotiable place of sound theology for a lifetime of pastoral ministry.

