



CO5250 Human Personality
2 Credit Hours

Fall 2026
Thursday 1-3 PM
Reformed Theological Seminary: Charlotte

Professor Information

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course explores the philosophy and theology of human personality through the lenses of Reformed anthropology, biblical counseling, and contemporary personality theory. Special attention is given to the nature of the self, identity formation, personality development within relational contexts, and critical interaction with modern psychological and personality frameworks, including personality disorders and personality testing.

COURSE MATERIALS

Reading:

1. *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, by John Calvin, book 1, chapters 1-6 (40 pages)
2. *Biblical and Religious Psychology*, by Herman Bavinck (226 pages)
3. *Personality & Worldview*, by J.H. Bavinck (178 pages)
4. *Seeing with New Eyes*, by David Powlison (218 pages) – You are not required to read chapters 7 and 12, as you are assigned those portions in other classes as stand-alone articles.
5. *When People are Big and God is Small*, by Ed Welch (239 pages)
6. *Pattern and Growth in Personality*, by Gordon Allport (excerpts available on Canvas)
7. *Personality Disorders in Modern Life* (2nd Edition), by Theodore Millon (excerpts available on Canvas)

The expectation is that students will read every word of these books/excerpts to receive full reading credit. Students will be graded based on their self-reporting.

ASSIGNMENTS AND ASSESSMENTS

This course is entirely electronic for the submission of assignments. Each assignment will be uploaded to Canvas in the appropriate location. If you are unfamiliar with this process, make sure you schedule a time in advance with the professor or TA to learn how to use Canvas.

1. Reading Summary and Report

Students are to turn in a two page-double spaced paper, for each book read. At the top of your paper or on your cover page, explicitly state the percentage read of each book according to the following guide: 1. Percentage of the book read, word-for-word; 2. Percentage of the book skimmed. Then for the paper itself, page one will consist of a summary of the salient points of the book. Capture the thesis as well as the main points of the author's argument. Write it in such a way that if the author of the book read your summary, he could agree you understood what he was saying. Page two will be your personal interaction with the book—was it useful to you, is it applicable in your ministry, were there things you found helpful or troubling, etc. These 2-page reports will be due based upon the schedule in Canvas.

You must complete interaction papers for the following books:

1. *Biblical and Religious Psychology*, by Herman Bavinck
2. *Personality & Worldview*, by J.H. Bavinck
3. *Seeing with New Eyes*, by David Powlison
4. *When People are Big and God is Small*, by Ed Welch

You do not need to complete an interaction paper for the excerpt readings in the assigned reading list. Simply complete the “quiz” on Canvas once you have completed those readings and come to class prepared to discuss those assigned portions.

2. Personality Test Assignment

Students will complete two personality tests during the class. You must complete the *Big Five Personality Test* (available for free on Open Psychometrics website) and *16Personalities* (free at 16personalities.com) by midterms. You will then interact with your experience and results in the following way:

Download your results and keep them available in front of you. Then, complete *16Personalities* a second time, but this time, answer differently. Answer in a way you *want* to be known or thought of. Read the description of your results. Compare/contrast the results of all three tests you've now taken (*Big Five* and *16Personalities* x2).

Write a double-spaced, six-page paper reflecting theologically and critically on your experience with the *Big Five* and *16Personalities* assessments. Your paper should not merely report your results, but should evaluate what these tests reveal, distort, assume, and omit about human personality.

In your paper, address the following (one heading per page):

1. Observational Insight
What did the tests seem to recognize accurately about you, whether in temperament, habits, relational tendencies, desires, fears, strengths, or weaknesses? Where did the results feel illuminating, and where did they feel misleading, reductive, or frustrating?
2. Self-Presentation and Desired Identity
Compare your original *16Personalities* result with the result you received when answering

as you would like to be known or perceived. What did this reveal about self-knowledge, self-deception, aspiration, reputation, fear of man, or the gap between actual character and desired identity?

3. Underlying View of the Person

What assumptions about human nature, identity, motivation, and change seem to underlie these tests? What core beliefs or values do they assume about personality?

4. Biblical and Theological Evaluation

Where do these tests resonate with biblical truth about personhood, difference, relationality, or creaturely limitation? Where do they contradict Scripture, omit what Scripture treats as central, or over-prioritize matters that Scripture acknowledges but subordinates?

5. Moral and Spiritual Categories

How do these tests account for (or fail to account for) morality, worship, sin, suffering, responsibility, sanctification, and teleology? How would your reading of Calvin, the Bavincks, Welch, or Powlison help you evaluate the epistemology and anthropology behind personality testing?

6. Counseling Usefulness and Limits

How useful is personality categorization for counseling real individuals? In what ways might such categories provide helpful observation or description? In what ways might they obscure the person, flatten individuality, excuse sin, misname suffering, or distract from biblical categories of interpretation and care?

The goal of the paper is to reflect on **personality testing as an attempted form of self-knowledge** and to evaluate whether such tools help or hinder the biblical counselor's task of understanding people before God.

3. Final Paper

This course explores human personality from theological, philosophical, psychological, and counseling perspectives. The final paper should demonstrate the student's ability to synthesize these disciplines into a coherent Christian understanding of the human person.

Students will write a double-spaced, 10–13-page research paper engaging a significant issue related to personality, identity, personhood, personality development, personality theory, or personality pathology from a distinctly biblical and theological perspective. Papers should thoughtfully interact with course readings and critically engage both theological and secular approaches to understanding human personality.

The paper should not merely summarize sources, but should:

- construct a clear theological argument,
- demonstrate philosophical and anthropological awareness,
- critically evaluate modern psychological frameworks where appropriate,

- and meaningfully connect the discussion to the practice of biblical counseling and the care of people.

Possible topics include (but are not limited to):

- the image of God and human personality,
- the faculties of the soul,
- worldview and personality formation,
- personality typologies and Christian anthropology,
- fear of man and identity construction,
- personality disorders and moral agency,
- the one and the many problem in personality theory,
- embodiment and personality,
- the relationship between temperament, character, and sanctification,
- self-knowledge in Calvin and Reformed theology,
- relational dynamics and personality development,
- or the epistemology of personality assessment.

The strongest papers will demonstrate theological depth and clarity, careful interaction with sources (a minimum of 10, in addition to assigned course texts), and thoughtful application to biblical counseling.

4. Class Attendance and Participation

Please attend each class and be prepared to participate in class discussion. Class participation factors into your final grade.

Late Assignments

Assignments are due at the beginning of the class indicated in the Course Schedule. Assignments not submitted at this time are considered late and are penalized 3% for the first day late, and 1% for each day late thereafter.

Extensions Policy for Assignments: In extenuating circumstances, a deadline extension of **up to one week** may be granted at the discretion of the professor. Requests for extensions of **more than one week** must be submitted to the Registrar for consideration by the Academic Dean in consultation with the professor. Extensions are granted only for significant emergencies or unforeseen circumstances, and a grade penalty may be applied. *All extension requests must be made prior to the assignment deadline.* No retrospective extensions will be granted.

COURSE GRADING

Reading / Interaction Papers	30%
Personality Test Assignment	25%
Final Paper	35%
Class Participation	10%

Grading Scale:

Standard RTS Grading Scale

Additional Details:

Special Needs

In order to ensure full class participation, any student with a disabling condition requiring special accommodations (e.g., recordings, special adaptive equipment, special note-taking or test-taking needs) is strongly encouraged to contact the professor at the beginning of the course to make appropriate arrangements.

Disclaimer

During the course of the semester the professor reserves the right to modify any portion of this syllabus as deemed necessary to the professor because of events and circumstances that occur during the term.

Classroom Policies

1. All classroom policies at RTS Charlotte are expected to be followed.
2. Guidelines for papers (including reflections and exams) submitted in this course can be found as a separate document on Canvas. **Reading this document and following its instructions is essential for you to pass this course.**
3. Students are required to cite all sources consulted for a written assignment. Students who plagiarize or cheat in any other manner are guilty of academic misconduct and will be reported to the Dean of Students. This will result in disciplinary action up to and including failure of the course and academic dismissal.
4. Laptops are welcome in class for note taking only. Only word processing programs may be open during class; no browsers, email programs, social media feeds, or any other program is to be used. Please silence cell phones and do not text, Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram, or whatever else desperately beckons for your attention during class.

Please also adhere to the following RTS internet usage protocol:

RTS Charlotte Classroom Technology Usage

RTS Charlotte recognizes how essential it is for students to have reliable, campus-wide access to the internet. For that reason, we have made Wi-Fi available for our student body, not only in the library and student lounges, but also in the classrooms. We know that students need to use the internet to download class materials, access files on the Cloud, and locate other important information. However, we also recognize that internet access in the classroom provides opportunity for abuse and misuse. Some students have unfortunately used their internet access to engage in many activities that distract them from the classroom lectures (e.g., surfing the web, checking sports scores, playing games). Not only does such activity hamper a student's own seminary education, but it distracts other students who can easily view the screens of nearby students. In addition, donors and classroom guests (who often sit in the back) can see this inappropriate internet usage, which reflects poorly on RTS. Classroom etiquette includes leaving cell phones turned off, refraining from surfing the Internet or playing computer games or other distracting activities. In addition, students must respect standards set by individual professors regarding the use of technology during their class.

In order to address this issue, we must appeal to the integrity of the students as ones who are preparing for a lifetime of ministry to Christ and his church. We expect each student to take personal responsibility for proper classroom technology usage and to encourage others around them to do the same. All RTS-Charlotte students are accountable to the policies stated in the Student Handbook and Academic Catalog and are therefore expected to use technology in the classroom only for appropriate class-related activities. Student conduct is under the supervision of the Dean of Students.



Course Objectives Related to MACC Student Learning Outcomes

Course: CO5250 Human Personality
 Professors: Keith A. Evans
 Campus: Charlotte
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<u>MACC Student Learning Outcomes</u>	<u>Rubric</u>	<u>Mini-Justification</u>
<i>In order to measure the success of the MACC 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 MAC outcomes.</i>	➤ Strong ➤ Moderate ➤ Minimal ➤ None	
<u>COUNSELING KNOWLEDGE</u> Demonstrate knowledge of counseling theories and modern anthropology.	Strong	The course interacts at length with contemporary theories of personality and theories of personhood.
<u>COUNSELING SKILL</u> Ability to apply biblical truths and common-grace insights in a variety of counseling settings.	Strong	This is a counseling course aimed at being applicational even in its theological and philosophical approach to the human person.
<u>SCRIPTURE</u> Significant knowledge of the original meaning of Scripture and ability to apply to modern counseling circumstances.	Strong	Biblical counseling courses, and this one is no exception, have as their chief aim, the right understanding and application of the all-sufficient Scriptures to all of life.
<u>REFORMED THEOLOGY</u> Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice and ability to apply to modern counseling circumstances.	Strong	Systematic Reformed theology and Westminsterian theology is brought to bear on the concept of personality and theory of personhood.
<u>SANCTIFICATION</u> Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student's sanctification.	Moderate	Sanctification is the aim of developing Christian character within the unique individual (i.e. personality), and thus is one of the goals/outcomes of the course.
<u>WINSOMELY REFORMED</u> Embraces a winsomely Reformed ethos.	Moderate	While all counseling classes are aimed at being thoroughly winsome and of course Reformed, this course critically engages with secular personality theory.