

ST5150 Syllabus Systematic Theology: Scripture, Theology Proper, Anthropology

Reformed Theological Seminary (Atlanta/Nashville/Athens)

Fall 2026

Contact Information:

Professor: Rev. Dr. Nathan Parker

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Hours: by appointment

Meeting Information:

Time: Tuesday, August 25 – November 24 (No class October 06)

- Eastern Time (Athens/Atlanta): 01:00-04:00 PM
- Central Time (Nashville): 12:00-03:00 PM

Location: RTS Athens Satellite (2191 Mars Hill Rd. Watkinsville, GA 30677).

Zoom link for remote students¹

Course Description:

This course explores the doctrines of Scripture, theology proper, and anthropology from a systematic perspective. This introduction to Christian doctrine examines the structural foundations of Christian theology, prioritizing a rigorous scriptural framework for understanding divine revelation, the triune God, and humanity.

Special consideration is given to classical topics such as the inspiration, inerrancy, and authority of the biblical canon; the essence, communicable and incommunicable attributes, and internal relations of the Godhead; the eternal decrees, creation, and divine providence; and the constitutional nature of humanity, the image of God, the Fall, and the ongoing structural effects of original sin.

¹ <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82786038464?pwd=hkN9YkSgYabrEJBFIZy0xeCROwX2ZZ.1>

Course Objectives:

1. For students to master a comprehensive overview of the classical formulations of bibliology, theology proper, and anthropology within the historic Reformed tradition.
2. For students to be able to articulate and critically contrast orthodox theology with historic and contemporary doctrinal errors regarding the nature of God and humanity.
3. For students to be able to seamlessly appropriate systematic theological truths into practical, modern ministry contexts and the cultivation of personal holiness.
4. For students to conduct rigorous research that demonstrates a deep, nuanced grasp of a specific doctrinal locus covered within the course parameters.

Required Reading:

1. David Wells. *No Place for Truth: or Whatever Happened to Evangelical Theology?* (Eerdmans, 1993) (300 pages)
2. Kevin DeYoung. *Taking God At His Word* (Crossway, 2014) (115 pages)
3. Louis Berkhof. *Systematic Theology* (Eerdmans, 1996), 126-78. (52 pages). Important pagination note.²
4. D.A. Carson. 'Approaching the Bible,' in *Collected Writings on Scripture* (Apollos, 2010), 19-40. (21 pages)
5. Martyn Lloyd-Jones. 'The Doctrine of Providence' (13 pages). Link³
6. J.I. Packer. 'Freedom and Authority' (27 pages). Link⁴
7. B.B. Warfield. 'The Biblical Idea of Revelation' in *The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible* (1948), 71-101 (30 pages) Link⁵
8. B.B. Warfield. 'The Biblical Idea of Inspiration' in *The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible* (P&R Publishing, 1948), 131-65. (34 pages). Link⁶

² Assigned readings are from the *second* section of this volume. Section 1 consists of a 200-page prolegomena, while section 2 begins right after that and restarts the page numbering, running from pages 1 to 784.

³ <https://www.monergism.com/doctrine-providence>

⁴ https://www.the-highway.com/Authority_Packer.html

⁵ https://www.monergism.com/thethreshold/sdg/warfield/The_Inspiration_and_Authority_o_-_B_B_Warfield.pdf

⁶ https://www.monergism.com/thethreshold/sdg/warfield/The_Inspiration_and_Authority_o_-_B_B_Warfield.pdf

9. Megan Basham. "Cancer may take my life. Here's what a hymn made me see." *The Washington Post* (May 22, 2026) (2 pages)
10. "Does Inerrancy Matter?" booklet by James Boice (30 pages)

Required Seminar readings (John Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion*)

1. Book I.1-3 (Knowledge of God; 9 pages)
2. Book I.13.1-6 (Trinity; 8 pages)
3. Book I.6.1, 3; 7.1-5 (Internal Testimony of the Spirit; 9 pages)
4. Book I.15.1-4 (Image of God; 8 pages)
5. Book II.1.1-6 (Image of God Defaced; 8 pages)
6. Book III.1.1-4 (Image of God Restored; 10 pages)

Historical Documents and Confessions

1. The Westminster Confession of Faith chapters 1-6
2. The Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy (1978)
3. Westminster Shorter Catechism 1-20

Total reading: 676 pages

Class Schedule and Due Dates

- August 25
 - Topics covered: Introduction/Prolegomena (Part 1)
 - Required reading:
 - Westminster Confession of Faith, Chapters 1-6
 - Carson, "Approaching the Bible"
- Sept 01
 - Topic covered: Introduction/Prolegomena (Part 2)
 - Required reading:
 - No Place for Truth, Introduction
 - Warfield, "The Biblical Idea of Revelation"
- Sept 08
 - Topic covered: Scripture
 - Required reading:
 - No Place for Truth, Chapter 1
 - Seminar: *Institutes Book I.1-3 (chapters 1-3)

*Students *must carefully read* prior to class or they will not be able to participate in the seminar during class (see course requirement #7). Primary source readings can be found on Canvas.

- Sept 15
 - Topic covered: Inspiration
 - Required reading:
 - No Place for Truth, Chapter 2
 - The Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy (1978)
 - Seminar: Institutes Book I.6.1, 3; 7.1-5
- Sept 22
 - Topic covered: Inerrancy
 - Required reading:
 - No Place for Truth, Chapter 3
 - Boice, "Does Inerrancy Matter?" booklet
 - Seminar: Institutes Book I.13.1-6
- Sept 29
 - Topic covered: Canon
 - Required reading:
 - No Place for Truth, Chapter 4
 - Warfield, "The Biblical Idea of Inspiration"
 - Seminar: Institutes Book I.15.1-4
- Oct 06: READING WEEK
- Oct 13: This class will be pre-recorded and sent out to students.
 - Topic covered: Theology Proper
 - Required reading:
 - No Place for Truth, Chapter 5
 - Taking God at His Word, Chapter 1
 - No Seminar!
- Oct 20
 - Topic covered: God/Trinity (Part 1)
 - Required reading:
 - No Place for Truth, Chapter 6
 - Taking God at His Word, Chapter 2
 - Packer, "Freedom and Authority"
 - Seminar: Institutes Book II.1.1-6

Midterm: due October 24

- Oct 27
 - Topic covered: God/Trinity (Part 2)
 - Required reading:

- No Place for Truth, Chapter 7
 - Taking God at His Word, Chapter 3
 - Seminar: Institutes Book III.1.1-4
- Nov 03
 - Topics covered: Creation & Providence
 - Required reading:
 - No Place for Truth, Chapter 8
 - Taking God at His Word, Chapter 4
 - Lloyd-Jones, "The Doctrine of Providence"
- Nov 10
 - Topic covered: Anthropology
 - Required reading:
 - Taking God at His Word, Chapter 5
 - Berkhof, Systematic Theology (section 2), pp. 126-143
- Nov 17
 - Topic covered: Man in God's Image
 - Required reading:
 - Taking God at His Word, Chapter 6
 - Berkhof, Systematic Theology (section 2), pp. 144-164
- Nov 24
 - Topics covered: Fall and Sin
 - Required reading:
 - Taking God at His Word, Chapters 7-8
 - Basham, "Cancer may take my life"
 - Berkhof, Systematic Theology (section 2), pp. 165-178

Reading report: Due November 24

Course Requirements (in order of due date):

1. Memorize WSC 1-20 (5%). **Due date: Tuesday, October 13 (must be uploaded to Canvas).**
2. 'Speak with a Saint' interviews (5%): Students will interview three godly individuals, asking them what they have learned about God over the course of their lives and, crucially, *how* they learned those things. The goal of this assignment is to recognize that while abstract theological truths can be difficult to communicate, the truth about God is made vivid through real-world life and experience. Students should investigate how

God's Word and its truth came alive to these individuals practically, rather than notionally. Ask each person to identify the few most important things they have ever learned about God, and the specific ways in which they came to understand those truths. What are the truths about God most beautiful to them, and what would they love for younger believers to know and enjoy about God? There is no time limit for the conversations, but they should be long enough that students can write out a 500-word summary of each. **Due date: Tuesday, October 13 (must be uploaded to Canvas).**

3. Midterm exam (20%): Midterm must be taken in Canvas by **Saturday, October 24**. (Available October 21)
4. Reading (20%): Students should complete required readings prior to each class. Student-led, in-class seminars (see requirement #7) are based on readings. All course reading must be completed by **Tuesday, November 24 (reading % reports must be uploaded to Canvas).**
5. Final exam (20%): Final must be taken in Canvas by **Saturday, December 05**. (Available December 02)
6. Research paper (20%): students must write a research paper on a topic of their choice relating to the course contents. The topic must be approved by the professor. The paper must be between 3,500-4,500 words (generally 12-15 pages). *Points off* for papers that are too short or too long. The paper must be masters-level quality. That is, it must have a clear thesis, coherent structure, interact with popular and scholarly sources⁷ (at least 3 each), and demonstrate a nuanced understanding of the topic. Use Turabian format. **Due date: Saturday, December 19 (must be uploaded to Canvas).**

7. Student-led seminars (10%):

Each student will lead a 30-minute in-class seminar in which he/she guides students through primary source material. The student's aim is to draw the participants into a deeper understanding of the material. These graded class

⁷ "Scholarly" refers to academic journals or monographs.

discussions for all students also satisfy the required professor-to-student and student-to-student interactions required for Sync students.

Effective seminars involve posing questions to participants, probing their understanding. When run well, each student will thoughtfully engage with the material and refine other participants' understanding. The professor will demonstrate this approach during class on Tuesday, September 08 @ 1 PM, based on Calvin's *Institutes* Book 1; Chapters 1-3 (all sections). Therefore, students must come to this class prepared to engage these three chapters at an in-depth level.

Seminar discussions will be based on assigned, primary source material. Students will be graded on how well they lead their seminar, as well as their level of participation when others lead. *At the first class students will sign up for their seminars*, the first of which begins on September 15. Seminars will run at the start of each class (01:00-01:30 PM), so please be punctual. **Due date: Varies.**

Computer and Phone Policy:

Internet use is not permitted during class lectures, whether on laptops or phones. Students must keep their phones on silent and internet turned off during class time.

Zoom Policy

Your professor may allow you to Zoom into class or watch Zoom recordings for excused absences based on the professor's discretion and subject to the availability of equipment. Students should contact their professor well in advance of the class meeting. For a third absence the Registrar should be consulted. Your professor may require additional interactive assignments to offset the absence of classroom interaction. Sync or Remote Live courses have priority for the limited Zoom equipment.

Extension Policy

All assignments and exams are to be completed by the deadlines announced in this syllabus or in class.

Extensions for assignments and exams due within the normal duration of the course must be approved beforehand by the Professor. Extensions of two

weeks or less beyond the date of the last deadline for the course must be approved beforehand by the Professor. A grade penalty may be assessed.

Extensions of greater than two weeks but not more than six weeks beyond the last deadline for the course may be granted in extenuating circumstances (i.e. illness, family emergency). For an extension of more than two weeks the student must request an Extension Request Form from the Registrar's Office. The request must be approved by the Professor and the Academic Dean. A grade penalty may be assessed. (RTS Catalog p. 46 and RTS Atlanta Student Handbook p. 18)

Any incompletes not cleared six weeks after the last published due date for course work will be converted to a failing grade. Professors may have the failing grade changed to a passing grade by request. (RTS Catalog p. 49)



Course Objectives Related to MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes

Course: ST 5150

Professor: Dr. Nathan Parker

Campus: RTS Atlanta

Date: August 25 - November 24, 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>		➤ 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 develop and learn to articulate deep doctrinal frameworks through two exams, a 12-15 page scholarly research paper, and interview reflections. Oral clarity is honed by leading and defending historic doctrines during the 30-minute student-led seminars.

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	The foundational unit on bibliology establishes the inspiration, authority, infallibility, and inerrancy of the Bible. Canon and textual criticism are also brief, though vital, modules. Students are required to anchor every formulation of theology (proper) and anthropology directly in exegesis, testing systematic claims against the authoritative text of Scripture.
Reformed Theology	Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards.	Moderate	This course centers on core commitments of Reformed theology. Students are immersed in the Westminster Standards, specifically demonstrating their grasp of these doctrines by memorizing WSC Q1-20. Most doctrinal sections include elaboration upon the WCF.
Sanctification	Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student's sanctification.	Strong	Theology is pursued as a catalyst for doxology and personal holiness (orthopraxy). Rather than treating the attributes of God and the Trinity as sterile abstractions, the experiential interview assignment forces students to see how doctrinal truths directly sustain real-world faith, support the believer under life's trials, and fuel sanctification.
Desire for Worldview	Burning desire to conform all of life to the Word of God.	Moderate	By engaging with robust doctrines of creation, providence, and the <i>Imago Dei</i> , students gain the necessary foundational tools to evaluate modern cultural assumptions and

			conform all of life to a biblical worldview.
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.	Moderate	Wrestling with the gravity of total depravity and human inability, the anthropology unit fosters intellectual and spiritual humility. Students learn to engage with theological disagreements in a patient, truth-conveyed-in-love posture.
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.	Strong	Shepherding God's people consistently requires clear answers regarding God's character, sovereignty in suffering, and the nature of human sin. This course provides future pastors and ministry leaders with the systematic bedrock needed to counsel, preach, and teach with theological integrity.