

Introduction to Pastoral and Theological Studies
Course Guidelines, Syllabus, and Assignments
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Welcome to Introduction to Pastoral and Theological Studies at Reformed Theological Seminary! This document contains all you need (I think!) to make your way in this course!

My Background...

- 100% Scottish (all the stereotypes are true in my case)
- Married to Katie, with children Calli, Colin, and Bonnie
- An ordained minister in the Presbyterian Church in America since 1986
- Educational Background
 - BA from Washington University in St. Louis
 - M Div from Westminster Theological Seminary
 - D Min from Fuller Theological Seminary, Los Angeles, California
 - MBA from Georgia State University, Atlanta, GA
- Ministry History
 - 1986-1988 -- Assistant Pastor, Redeemer Presbyterian Church, Doraville, GA
 - 1988-1994 -- Senior Pastor, Cornerstone Community Church (PCA), Los Angeles, CA
 - 1994-200 – Senior Pastor, Brookwood Presbyterian Church, Snellville, GA
 - 2000-2002 – Associate Director and Professor of Practical Theology, Atlanta Seminary for Ministry and Theology, Atlanta, GA
 - 2002-2003 – Executive Pastor, North Park Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Pittsburgh, PA
 - 2003 and currently – Executive Pastor, PCA Church of the Redeemer, Atlanta, GA; teacher of practical theology at Reformed Theological Seminary.

Please...Send me an email right away so I can capture your email address for my class email list.

Course Purpose

The catalogue course description for ST502, Introduction to Pastoral and Theological Studies, states that the purpose of this course is “An introduction to biblical, theological, and practical ministry studies within the Reformed tradition.” That is rather broad, isn’t it? Not surprising, since ministry is a rather broad profession. So, in this course, that is exactly what we are going to do: this course is an attempt to give you a broad introduction to the field of biblical theology and ministry. Ministry is, of course, a field which involves both theory and practice, both theology and practical ministry. God never gave his Word simply to fill our heads, but to change our entire lives. So, if you are going into a more academic profession, it is necessary for you to understand the relationship of theology and practical ministry. And, if you are going into a field of practical ministry, it is necessary to understand the theological basis for gospel ministry.

I define gospel ministry in very broad terms for this course – it could be pastoral ministry, missions work, campus ministry, church staff ministry, para-church ministry, or lay ministry in a church or para-church. If you are called to gospel ministry, you are called to a theologically driven leadership position, in which

you connect the word of God to the lives of people. Therefore, in this course, we will continuously focus on the relationship of theology to practical ministry. This will even show itself in the way we divide up our class sessions. Typically, the first half of the class will focus on theological reflection, and the second half of the class will focus on some area of practical ministry. However, it is hard to draw a hard and fast line between theology and ministry. In ministry, on a daily basis you have to constantly jump back and forth between biblical theology and practice, and so in this class, we will constantly be making the same kind of jump.

Goals for the course

1. To give you a broad, birds eye view of the whole range of theology. Other courses at RTS will focus in more detail on these aspects of theology. Our purpose in this course will be to introduce you to the terminology of theology, the different theological schools of thought, and the practical relevance of why it is important to understand these different schools of thought. In other words, you need to understand that people's theology affects the way they live!
2. To show you the importance of having a theological vision in your life, and to help you begin to develop your own theological vision. Note: in this class, you will not be penalized if you disagree with the theological vision of the instructor! What is important is that you be able to defend your own theological vision from Scripture!
3. To develop an understanding of the theological task from an evangelical perspective within the Reformed tradition by:
 - Introducing the historical development of theology.
 - Understanding issues and struggles the church has faced in the past, and seeing how it handled them
 - Introducing the primary categories of evangelical theology
 - Identify where evangelical theology is located in the theological spectrum.
 - Examine the various strands of evangelical perspective, with an emphasis on the Reformed tradition.
 - Learn what it means to "think theologically", developing a Biblical world & life view
4. To set a model of how to "do theology." We will take practical, real life ministry situations, and discuss how to theologically interpret and act in those situations. In other words, we will grapple with real life issues theologically. Also, we want to set a model of how to do theology in a way that is Christ-centered, gracious, humble, and winsome.
5. To show you the critical importance of godly living as the basis and foundation for your ministry, and how spirituality and academic studies are mutually dependent. In particular, we will focus on how the grace of the gospel is life transforming.
6. To discuss the whole issue of calling to ministry. In particular, we will do a personal assessment of your gifts and passions, and you will produce a Personal Mission Statement of how you believe God might best use you.
7. To give the rudiments of a theology of ministry – how theology drives ministry, and how the grace of the gospel is essential in bringing and renewing vitality in ministry
8. To discuss various aspects of spiritual leadership in various ministry situations

Guidelines for Assignments

1. Class attendance is important! If you are going to miss a class, please let me know ahead of time, and please let me know the reason. I understand that life will cause many of you to miss a class from time to time. I will take into account legitimate excuses for missing class, such as required travel for work, illness, etc. Just let me know
2. Assignments are due the day listed on the assignment sheet at the end of this course syllabus. Please turn in a hard copy at the beginning of the class period on the due date. I will take off 10% from the grade for each week that an assignment is due.
3. If you are going to miss a class, you may email me your assignment if one is due that day. It is due by 6:00 pm on the due date, and I will check the time and date stamp on the email you send me. However, I prefer and want hard copies of all assignments. I am a techno-geek, but there is still no substitute for sitting down and grading an assignment on real paper with a real red pen!
4. If you find it necessary to email me an assignment, you **MUST** attach it in a Microsoft Word Document, and you **MUST** use the following format for the title of your email to me **AND** the title of your document:

”Assignment Title – Your Name” –

i.e., “Personal Mission Statement – John Smith.”

Why is this important? It is important that I file these assignments by the particular assignment and by your name. I get so many emails, and I receive so many attachments, I simply do not have time to re-title all of the documents I receive by email! And, generically titled or unnamed assignments are more likely to go unread, or go deleted! If an assignment is not titled with the proper format, I will send it back to you and ask you to title the assignment properly! Thank you for helping me in this matter!

Required Textbooks

Jerry Bridges, The Discipline of Grace

Walter Marshall, The Gospel Mystery of Sanctification: Growing in Holiness by Living in Union with Christ (a new version, put into modern English by Bruce H. McRae). Note: this book is only available from me. You can buy it on the first day of class.

James Montgomery Boice and Philip Graham Ryken, The Doctrines of Grace

Wayne Grudem, Bible Doctrine

Course Assignments

The course assignments will consist of reading assignments from the books listed above, reading from articles that I will give you, 2 assignments of an interactive or reflective nature, and three exams, consisting of written interaction with textbook materials and class lectures.

Guidelines for the exams: Each exam will be due at the beginning of class on the date they are due. The exams will consist of answers to a few questions involving biblical issues or case studies. I expect you to answer the questions with reflection on what you have read, reflection with Scripture, and reflection on your personal experience. The exams will be take-home, and they will not focus on simply repeating what you have read. They will involve critical thinking and reflection. You can consult any resources you wish in writing your answer. The only limitation is that you may **not** consult with any other person in writing your answers, either within or outside the class. The exam must be no longer than 10 pages, double-spaced, 1 inch margins, and 12 point fonts! If it is any longer, I won't read it!

Due September 29 – Exam One

Due October 13 – Personal Mission Statement

The purpose of this assignment is to get you to begin to think about God's call and mission for your life. The assumption is that God is calling you to do what he has already equipped you to do. Therefore, it is important that you have a proper view of how God has made you, and what that might mean for your vocation in life. You are going to find this assignment great fun. On the first day off class I will hand out a model and an example of how to do this assignment. It consists of doing several spiritual gift and personality profiles, using instruments that I will give out, or to which I will send you on the internet. I only want you to hand in the fruit of your analysis, a two to three page personal mission statement. I will provide you with a model.

As part of this personal mission statement, I want you to hand in a 2 page summary of an interview that I would like you to do. Think of the vocation that you would most like to do. If you are going into ministry, think about what kind of ministry you would like to go into – pastor, missionary, church planter, campus worker, etc. There is no limit on what these vocations might be. Or, if you are already happy in your vocation, dream and think of a vocation that you have sometimes dreamed about doing. Then, find someone who is in that vocation, and go and interview them. Find out some basic things: what qualifications – educational and otherwise – are required to get into, and succeed in, the profession? What are the basic job responsibilities of the profession? What does the person do on a weekly basis? What are the upsides and downsides of the profession? I simply want you to think about what you believe God is calling you to do, and then go interview someone who is already doing it, so you have a better idea of what you are getting into!

Also as part of this personal mission statement, I want you to hand in a 2 page summary of an interview of someone who has *left* the profession you are thinking you would like to go into. I believe you will find this interview extremely valuable. There is as much to learn from bad experiences as there is from “successful” ones; I want you to draw upon the experience of someone who tried the vocation you are thinking of entering, but left for some reason.

Please let me know if you have any trouble finding people to interview for either of these two assignments. Do a phone interview with someone in another part of the country if you have to. But, it must be a personal conversation interview, not just a written interview via email. You may have a bit more trouble finding someone who has left the profession you are thinking of entering, but you should be

able to find someone if you ask around enough. Let me know if you have difficulty finding people to interview.

Also, if you are currently quite happy with your vocation, and make no plans to change, here is my advice: go interview a pastor about their vocation, and go interview someone who has left the pastoral ministry. You will still learn a great deal about the ministry. Even if you yourself are not in pastoral ministry, and have no plans to go into pastoral ministry, I believe it will be highly valuable for you to learn what pastors go through on a daily basis. It will help you to understand them better, and know how to pray for them and support them better, according to exhortation of Hebrews 13:17: “Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you.”

Due October 27 – Exam Two

Due November 7 – Exam Three

Due December 1 – Theological Vision of a Church

Submit a 3-page, double-spaced, paper on the Theological Vision of a Church. Here is what I want you to do. Go and visit a church other than the one you regularly attend. Attend Sunday school class or a small group, and a worship service at that church. Carefully observe what you see and hear. Pick up literature from the church. And then, having gone there, write a three page double spaced paper on this basic question: What theological vision did you see at that church? Remember, every church has a theology, whether explicitly stated or not, which drives everything it does. So, what did you observe? What did the church present about God, about Christ and the gospel, or anything else you observed about its priorities? For instance, if the church had 15 minutes of worship, and 50 minutes of preaching, what does that tell you about the church’s priorities, and thus about its theological vision?

I would encourage you to do this assignment in a group. You can make the visit together, and then discuss what you observed. If you do it as a group, you are to submit one paper for the entire group, which you have written as a group. Every member of the group will get the same grade for the paper.

Course Grading System for Introduction to Pastoral and Theological Studies

The following chart gives the number of points and the percentage of your grade for each assignment. .

Assignment	Points	Percentage
Exam 1	100	20%
Personal Mission Statement	50	10%
Exam 2	150	30%
Church Theological Vision Paper	50	10%
Exam 3	150	30%
Total Points	500	100%

Summary Chart of Reading Assignment, Assignments Due, and Class Discussion Topics

	Date	Reading Assignments	First Half of Class	Reading Assignments	Second Half of Class	Articles to Read, and Assignments Due
1	Sep 1		Class Introduction		Class Introduction	
2	Sep 8		Sanctification by Grace through Faith	Bridges, 1-4 Marshall, 1-4	Sanctification by Grace through Faith	
3	Sep 15		Sanctification by Grace through Faith	Bridges, 5-8 Marshall, 5-8	Sanctification by Grace through Faith	
4	Sep 22	Grudem, 1-3	Scripture, Theological Vision	Bridges, 9-13 Marshall, 9-13	Theological Vision	
5	Sep 29		Theological Survey		Theological Survey	Exam 1 Due
6	Oct 6	Grudem, 4-10	God, Trinity, Creation, Providence	Grudem, 11-16 Boice, 1-3	Man, Sin, Person and Work of Christ	
7	Oct 13	Grudem, 17-18	The Doctrines of Grace	Boice, 4-7	Calling to Ministry	Personal Mission Statement Due
8	Oct 20	Grudem 19-25	The Doctrines of Grace	Boice, 8-9	Calling to Ministry	McKim, "The Call in the Reformed Tradition"
9	Oct 27		Covenant Theology – Introduction, Law and Gospel		Calling to Ministry	Exam 2 Due
10	Nov 3	Grudem, 26-28	Covenant Theology -- The Church		Sacraments: Baptism and Lord's Supper	Shelton, "A Theology of the Lord's Supper" Bromily, "The Meaning and Scope of Baptism"
11	Nov 10	Grudem 31-34	The Last Things		Leadership in Ministry – Church Government	
12	Nov 17		Leadership in Ministry		Leadership in Ministry	Exam 3 Due
	Nov 24		Thanksgiving		No Class!	
13	Dec 1		Exam Review		Leadership in Ministry	Theological Vision of a Church Due