

**4ST510 : Systematic Theology I**  
**Fall 2010 : Course Syllabus**

**Instructor: William C. Davis, Professor of Philosophy, Covenant College**

[davis@covenant.edu](mailto:davis@covenant.edu)

**10 Krupski Loop; Lookout Mountain, GA 30750-4503**

**Texts, Required:** (any edition, hard/paper, new/used will work; these ISBNs are for reference)

Berkhof, Louis, *Systematic Theology*, 1996 republication, but any version is acceptable, for example Eerdmans, ISBN 978-0802838209.

Frame, John M., *The Doctrine of God* (Presbyterian & Reformed, 2002), ISBN 978-0875522630

Holcomb, Justin, *Christian Theologies of Scripture: A Comparative Introduction* (NYU Press, 2006), ISBN 978-0814736661

Reymond, Robert, *A New Systematic Theology of the Christian Faith* (Thomas Nelson, 1998), ISBN 978-0849913174

Young, E.J., *Thy Word is Truth*, 1963 original publication has been reissued (as ISBN 978-0851511726), but any edition.

**Texts, Recommended:**

Calvin, John, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (any edition)

Nash, Ronald, *The Concept of God* (Zondervan, 1983), ISBN 978-0310451419

**Exams:** **Final Exam** distributed Dec. 4, due (postmarked or e-mailed) by Dec. 11.

**Papers:** **BOOK/LITERATURE REVIEW:** An 8-10 page (2500-3000 word) review of an important title (150 page, minimum), published since January, 2000, bearing directly on either the doctrine of God or the doctrine of Scripture. (Books published before 2000 will be considered, but *early* approval needs to be sought. None of the required or recommended books for this course may be reviewed.) Instead of a book, students may choose to review the theological content of a Christian artist's work, provided the artist (musical, visual, etc.) has a large enough body of work to review. The review should summarize the principal claims advanced by the publication or body of work, assess the strengths and weaknesses of the argument(s) advanced, and explain the significance the work should have for the Christian community (using your home church as the model audience). Works (or artists) that have been assigned for other courses at RTS in the past two years may not be reviewed. No work may be reviewed by more than two students in the class. **A Proposal for the Review is due by Sept. 18** that identifies the work to be reviewed and explains (in one paragraph) why the (body of) work merits consideration. Because some works will be in demand, permission to be one of the two allowed to write on any work will be extended on a first-come, first-served basis. Serious Rough Drafts submitted prior to midnight on Saturday, October 30<sup>th</sup> are assured of instructor comments, and the Final Draft

would not be due until Dec. 18 or 10 days after receiving comments, whichever is later. **The Final Draft of the Review is due Dec. 18 (unless later because a serious Rough Draft was submitted and comments are delayed).**

**Applied Systematics Answers:** During each of the first four weekends, students will be given a practical situation that calls for applying their knowledge of systematic theology. Students are to prepare 1 page maximum *written* “solutions” to these difficulties and bring five copies of their solution to class for the next meeting. Answers received later than Saturday morning will have a maximum grade of B-; the lowest ASA grade will be dropped.

**Quizzes:** Both Friday evening and Saturday morning sessions will begin with a brief quiz over the assigned readings and prior class lectures/discussions. The lowest quiz grade will be dropped.

**Grading:** Grades will be calculated using the following percentages:

Final Exam.....	30%
Book/Literature Review Proposal.....	10%
Book/Literature Review (Final).....	30%
Applied Systematics Answers (best 3).....	20%
Quiz Average.....	10%

### **Schedule of Topics, Readings & Assignments:**

*Note: It is necessary to assign rather more reading than normal humans with other responsibilities can hope to get through in a thoughtful way. The following list assumes that you will take advantage of the "syndicates" the professor will describe on Sept. 4. Syndicate members may make use of their syndicate's notes on the readings any time access to the readings themselves will be allowed. Since most quizzes and much of the final will allow such access, sharing notes will be quite beneficial.*

**Sep. 3**      ***The Need for Systematic Theology: Prayer as a Case Study***

**Sep. 4**      ***The Nature and Possibility of Systematic Theology***

Readings: None

Writing: None

**Sept. 17**    ***The Doctrine of Scripture: How We Know the Bible is God's Word***

Reading: Reymond to p. 128; Berkhof, pp. 610-615; [Calvin, I.vi-ix]

Writing: ASA #1

**Sept. 18**    ***The Doctrine of Scripture: Inspiration, Inerrancy, Infallibility, Objections***

Reading: Young, pp. 13-188

Writing: Proposal for Book/Literature Review

**Oct. 1**      ***The Doctrine of Scripture: Modern Views, Postmodern Worries***

Reading: Young, pp. 188-276; Bloesch, *Holy Scripture* [handed out Sept. 18]

Writing: ASA #2

**Oct. 2**      ***The Doctrine of God: Lordship, Existence, Incomprehensibility***

Reading: Reymond, pp. 129-159; Frame, pp. 1-35, 103-115, 199-213, 343-386; Berkhof, pp. 19-51; [Nash, all]

- (Oct. 30 Serious Rough Draft of Book/Literature Review optionally due)**
- Nov. 5**     **The Doctrine of God: God's Attributes**  
Reading: Reymond, pp. 160-204; Frame, pp. 387-616; Berkhof, pp. 52-81  
Writing: ASA #3
- Nov. 6**     **The Doctrine of God: Trinity, Decree**  
Reading: Reymond, pp. 317-341; Frame, pp. 688-735; Berkhof, pp. 82-125  
[Calvin, I.xvii, III.xxi-xxiv]
- Dec. 3**     **The Doctrine of God: Creation & Providence**  
Reading: Reymond, pp. 380-414; Frame, pp. 241-339; Berkhof, pp. 126-180  
Writing: ASA #4
- Dec. 4**     **The Doctrine of God & Scripture: Comparing Christian Theologies of Scripture**  
Reading: Holcomb, all
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- Dec. 11**   **Final Exam Due (postmarked or e-mailed)**
- Dec. 18**   **Final Draft of Book Review Due (postmarked or e-mailed)**