Course Description

A study of Christology, giving particular emphasis to both the Person and Work of Jesus Christ. The course will attempt to survey the material from an exegetical, biblical-theological, historical and creedral basis, giving particular attention to points of interest and debate in our own time.

“…the battle cry of ‘Exegesis, exegesis, exegesis!’ that I hear coming from some sections of the evangelical world has its shortcomings here as well. Of course, exegesis is a basic element of all sound theology; but, like the foundations or frame of a house, if that’s all there is, you’re going to get wet, very wet, when it rains. It can lead to a fragmentary approach to the Bible which never sees the whole picture, or the priorities which exist within the overall witness of scripture. It can be profoundly anti-intellectual, eschewing all questions that a superficial reading of the text does not raise. Its frequent failure to rise to theological and ethical synthesis, and to engage modestly and thoughtfully with the priorities of the creedral and confessional trajectories of the church, leaves it inadequate to deal with really big issues in any kind of historical, social or ecclesiastical perspective. Exegesis is important; but it needs to stand in relation to other theological and ethical tasks if it is not to prove itself the basis for a highly unstable, selective and inconsistent church policy. Preachers, as well as believers, have their pick-'n-mix priorities, against which the testimony of the centuries, embodied in the creeds and confessions, can go some way to help. No-one, therefore, should be allowed within a million miles of a pulpit who does not have a proper respect for biblical theology in terms of the overall story of redemptive history, a firm grasp of the importance of systematic theology, creeds and confessions, and a critical handle on contemporary culture. Only then can he begin to deal with the latest big thing in any kind of biblical, theological and historical perspective.”

Carl Trueman
The Wages of Spin
(Mentor, 2005)

Course Objectives

The principal aim of the Systematic courses (1ST508, 1ST512, and 1ST518) is to provide students with a comprehensive understanding of the main doctrines of Christianity. The course aims at introducing the student to the discipline of systematic theology, in particular, to Theological Prolegomena, and the doctrines of Scripture, God and man. Students should have a competent grasp of the issues involved and a facility to communicate them with some fluency. Some memorization is essential in this process. Theology is both exegetical and historical, sociological and ecclesiastical, biblical and systematic. Tensions often arise when one aspect is stressed at the expense of another. This is a course in systematic theology—concerned with the answer to a series of inter-related questions: What does the entire Bible teach on a specific issue? How have theologians of the past and present formulated this issue? Answers to these questions are often expressed confessionally, and many branches of the church require of their ordained clergy (teaching elders) a commitment to these doctrines in a more or less strict sense. Students ought to be able to handle themselves well in the modern debate over controversial issues. Many students
will be examined on these doctrines in church courts and this objective will also be maintained. Additionally, all good theology should be doxological. Obedience in worship will be the chief objective of this course.

Note should be taken of the following quotations:

“Theology seems often to the outsider just so much word-spinning air-borne discourse which never touches down except disastrously.” [Ian Ramsey, Models for Divine Activity (London: SCM Press, 1973), 1.]

“There are theologians in the bottom of hell who are more interested in their own thoughts about God than in God himself.” [C. S. Lewis]

“Theology is the science of living blessedly for ever” [William Perkins, The Golden Chaine (1590), 1]

Students should achieve the following:

1. A basic familiarity with the traditional loci of Christian theology
2. Acquaintance with the history of Christian thought, particularly its Patristic, Protestant, Puritan (Westminsterian) and Modern phases.
3. Awareness of contemporary challenges to Christian orthodoxy and an ability to assess their strengths and weaknesses
4. Critical awareness of current trends in Christian theology
5. Familiarity with the tools and resources available for study of theological issues; and an ability to use these tools for independent research and analysis
6. A sense of theological proportion, enabling the student to distinguish between what is primary and what is secondary in Christian doctrine
7. The development of a respect for traditional theological formulations together with an ability to critically evaluate them

Theological Standpoint

The course will be taught from the standpoint of a personal commitment to the Westminster Confession of Faith (full disclosure of presuppositional bias!). In particular, it reflects the theology of sixteenth and seventeenth century theologians (students advocating separation rather than continuity in theological expression here need to read the 4-volumed work of Richard Muller, Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics 4 vols. (Baker, 2003), before challenging the professor about it!). In particular, students will detect a penchant for puritan theologians of the caliber of Owen, Manton, Sibbes and Charnock. Scottish sympathies abound, especially for William Cunningham (his view of Calvin on the Supper notwithstanding). Additional input will be evidenced from the Princetonians (Warfield and Hodge), the wisdom of John Murray (his four-volume set of “complete writings” ought to be in every student’s library). As the professor gets older, greater recognition of theology’s Patristic roots are taking shape.

Teaching/Class Methodology

Lectures will cover all the major topics, but there will not be uniformity. Some topics are more important than others. Some topics are covered adequately in the reading material (when this is the case, it will be pointed out in class). Due to the mixed nature of the class-room, questions will be limited, but welcome. Special seminars will be arranged on a voluntary basis for students who wish to ask questions of a “I don’t understand this” nature. It is all too easy to slow things down to a snail’s pace if this is not adhered to. All lectures are given via Powerpoint.
**Course Requirements**

I. **READING**

Required Texts

*Careful reading is required of the following materials:*

- John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* 2.12-17 (1:464-528) 64 pp
- Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics* Volume 3: 233-482 250pp
- Donald MacLeod, *The Person of Christ* (IVP) 300pp
- Hill, James, *The Glory of the Atonement* (Chaps 14, 15, 19, 20) 79 pp
- Ovey, Sachs, *Jeffery Pierced for our Transgressions* 336 pp
- John Owen, *Death of Death in the Death of Christ* 300pp
- Athanasius: *On the Incarnation* 70 pp

II. **Class Attendance**

Class attendance will be imperative for successful completion of this course.  
*I do not permit the use of LAPTOPS during class time.*

Students are expected to bring their copies of the *Westminster Confession of Faith* (Free Presbyterian), and the Bible to class every day.

III. **Evaluation**

The course will be divided into three unequal parts: Quizzes (20%), précis requirements (20%), and a final examination (60%).

a. **Quizzes (40%)**

There will be ten quizzes based on the scheduled reading assignments. Quizzes will be available from February 7th onwards on a weekly basis. Please send my TA, Ryan Biese, an e-mail address of your proctor. The quizzes will be sent to the proctor and should be returned to my TA in a timely fashion.

b. **Final Exam (60%)**

The examination will cover the entire material, including the reading material, and will test the student’s competence to integrate it into his overall theological skills. You may expect the examination to lengthy, requiring detailed knowledge.

c. **Procedure**

The procedure for quizzes and final exam will be as follows: you will need to provide the TA with the name of an RTS faculty member or pastor who will function as your proctor (email to my TA). The TA will email a packet to your proctor with all of the quizzes and the final exam as well as the necessary instructions they will need to function as your proctor. As you complete each quiz, your proctor will need to collect them so that they can be all mailed to Dr. Thomas at the Seminary once all the work for this course has been completed.
All of the assigned work will be turned in at one time. No work will be accepted electronically; it must be mailed or dropped off as a single packet after all of the material has been completed. All work must be completed and delivered (postmarked for those mailing it) by close of business on Wednesday, May 11, 2011.
### Reading Schedule

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<th>Author</th>
<th>Book</th>
<th>Chapter</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Calvin</td>
<td>Institutes</td>
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<td>Bavinck</td>
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<td>Bavinck</td>
<td>Reformed Dogmatics</td>
<td>Christ’s Humiliation</td>
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<td>Calvin</td>
<td>Institutes</td>
<td>II, Chapter XIV</td>
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<td>Bavinck</td>
<td>Reformed Dogmatics</td>
<td>Christ’s Exaltation</td>
<td>418-482</td>
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<td>Calvin</td>
<td>Institutes</td>
<td>II, Chapter XV</td>
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<td>MacLeod</td>
<td>Person of Christ</td>
<td>Intro, Part One</td>
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<td>Institutes</td>
<td>II, Chapter XVI</td>
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<td>MacLeod</td>
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<td>Part Two, Epilogue</td>
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<td>Calvin</td>
<td>Institutes</td>
<td>II, Chapter XVII</td>
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<td>Hill</td>
<td>Glory of the Atonement</td>
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<td>Athanasius</td>
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<td>Selected passages</td>
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<td>Owen</td>
<td>Death of Death</td>
<td>Intro, Book I, Book II</td>
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<td>Owen</td>
<td>Death of Death</td>
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<td>Pierced for our Transgression</td>
<td>Part One</td>
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