

Introduction to Pastoral and Theological
Studies
(6ST502, 3 Credits)

Revised Syllabus
Reformed Theological Seminary
Washington D.C.

McLean Presbyterian Church
Spring 2008
Wednesday 7:30 PM - 10:00 PM, February 6th – May 14th (no class March 18th)

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Office Hours: make an appointment – I will be delighted to meet with you.

Spring Fling: All students and spouses/dates (sorry, no children) are invited to dinner at the Griffith home on Saturday March 8th at 5 p.m. Dress is casual. Please come and enjoy a relaxed soiree. Our address is 13939 Malcolm Jameson Way, Centreville, Virginia 20120.

Course Description:

This course introduces biblical, theological and ministry studies in the Reformed tradition. We will seek to observe something of the ethos of the Reformed tradition in its history, piety and worldview. Most important, we will work at constructing a theology – what is a true theology?

Brief Lecture Outline

1. “God saves sinners.”
2. Contours of the Reformed tradition in history, worship and worldview.
3. Beginning biblical interpretation.
4. Knowing God and doing theology.

Assignments:

Reading: (@ 800 pages)

1. Reformed Soteriology: “God saves sinners” – James I. Packer, “Introduction to John Owen’s *Death of Death in the Death of Christ.*” 1 hour.
2. The Reformation tradition:
 - Peter A. Lillback, ed., *The Practical Calvinist: An Introduction to the Presbyterian and Reformed Heritage* (Ross-shire: Mentor, 2002), Part I (all), Part II, the essays by

Ferguson (A.i.b.), Trueman (A.i.c.), and Oliphint (B.iv.), **and** from Part II ten other essays of your choice. There will be a paper responding to these. (See below.) 14 hours.

- *The Westminster Confession of Faith*. 2 hours.
- Current issues in Reformed discussion – John M. Frame, “Machen’s Warrior Children” available at http://www.frame-poythress.org/frame_articles/2003Machen.htm. 1 hour.

3. Biblical interpretation the basis of it all – Dennis E. Johnson, *Him We Proclaim: Preaching Christ from All the Scriptures* (Phillipsburg, N.J.: P & R Publishing, 2007). 20 hours.

4. How we know – John M. Frame, *The Doctrine of the Knowledge of God, A Theology of Lordship* (Phillipsburg, N.J.: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1987). Use the study guide available at http://thirdmill.org/newfiles/joh_frame/frame.he2005.studyguidetodkg.pdf. 19 hours.

Papers:

1. Ten pages (double-spaced, twelve point font), your response to the essays in Lillback, Part II. What issues did you find interesting or challenging there? What questions did it provoke? Were the authors’ answers adequate? How will you seek to answer them better? What impact did it have on your sense of call to ministry? The paper is due postmarked by **March 29th**. 10 hours.

2. A bible study or sermon on a selected whole Psalm. The manuscript should be 10 pages with footnotes and bibliography. In the bible study, you should explain how your interpretation has been shaped by three sources: Frame, *The Doctrine of the Knowledge of God*, Johnson, *Him We Proclaim* (which you will have finished reading by the time of writing), and John Calvin’s *Commentary* on the Psalm. You are not required to agree with the conclusions of these authors, but to interact seriously with them. This is intended to be a practical exercise (which does not mean scholarly questions are irrelevant!); please place scholarly exegetical points in the footnotes. The Bible Study is due postmarked by **May 10th**. 10 hours.

I expect you to use standard paper conventions found in Kate Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*. Failure to follow these will reduce your grade.

The papers are due in hard copy, postmarked by **the dates above**. Please mail them to me at 13939 Malcolm Jameson Way, Centreville, Virginia 20120.

Grading System for Papers:

A: Good grasp of basic issues, plus something extraordinary, worthy of publication in a technical or a popular publication. That special excellence may be of various kinds: formulation, illustration, comprehensiveness, subtlety/nuance, creativity, argument, insight, correlations with other issues, historical perspective, philosophical sophistication, and research beyond the requirements of the assignment. One of these will be enough!

A-: An A paper, except that it requires some minor improvement before an editor should finally accept it for publication.

B+: Good grasp of basic issues but without the special excellences noted above. A few minor glitches.

B: The average grade for graduate study. Good grasp of basic issues, but can be significantly improved.

B-: Shows an understanding of the issues, but marred by significant errors, unclarities (conceptual or linguistic), unpersuasive arguments, and/or shallow thinking.

C+: Raises suspicions that largely these terms and concepts are used appropriately. Does show serious study and preparation.

C: Uses ideas with some accuracy, but without mastery or insight; thus the paper is often confused.

C-: The student has a relatively poor, but barely competent, understanding of the subject.

D: I don't give D's on papers.

F: Failure to complete the assignment satisfactorily. Such performance would disqualify a candidate for ministry if it were part of a presbytery exam.

Most of my students get B's. I try to keep A's and C's to a relatively small number. F's are extremely rare.¹

Final Exam:

There will be a three-hour final exam on the lectures and Frame, *The Doctrine of the Knowledge of God*. You should use the study guide found at http://thirdmill.org/newfiles/joh_frame/frame.he2005.studyguidetodkg.pdf as you read. The test will be given in class on **May 14th**. In answering the questions, I expect you to give as much detail as possible (biblical texts, terms, and explanation). Preparation for final exam, 30 hours.

Approximate Time Required

Class lectures	33 hours
Introduction to <i>The Death of Death</i>	1 hour
<i>Practical Calvinist</i> plus essay	24 hours
<i>Westminster Confession of Faith</i>	2 hours
"Machen's Warrior Children"	1 hour
<i>Him We Proclaim</i>	20 hours

¹ Adapted from Professor John M. Frame.

<i>Doctrine of the Knowledge of God</i>	19 hours
Psalm paper	10 hours
Preparation for the final exam	30 hours
Total	140 hours

Grades:

Completed Reading 10%
 Essay 20%
 Psalm Paper 20%
 Final Exam 50%

Total points: 1000

Extra Credit: Complete the exercises from Jacques Barzun, *Simple and Direct: A Rhetoric for Writers*, Chapter 2. You can receive up to 50 extra points by performing well on this assignment. **Due May 14th.**

Grading Scale: The standard RTS grading scale will be used.

A	(97-100)	4.00
A-	(94-96)	3.66
B+	(91-93)	3.33
B	(88-90)	3.00
B-	(86-87)	2.66
C+	(83-85)	2.33
C	(80-82)	2.00
C-	(78-79)	1.66
D+	(75-77)	1.33
D	(72-74)	1.00
D-	(70-71)	.66
F	(below 70)	0.00

Policy on Late Papers:

Simply put, late papers are **not** accepted based on the following rationale:

- “a. The issue is not so much an inconvenience to the professor. If that were the primary issue, then he would grade late papers because it is fundamental to his Christian commitment to put the interests of others before his own.
- b. The issue concerns the apparent laxity with which extensions are often granted. This is not Christian education. Wisdom is living within boundaries. The cosmos exists because the Creator provided boundaries for air, water, land. Moreover, he provided temporal boundaries for seasons. Without boundaries, the cosmos would degenerate back into anarchy. It is the essence of Christian living that we live within boundaries. Liberals want no boundaries. They want freedom without form, liberty without law, lovemaking without marriage. This is a fundamental

battle. It is distressing when Christians do not show respect for boundaries and when students do not respect temporal boundaries.

c. Wisdom also entails knowing the goal and devising a strategy to achieve it. Students must be aware from the syllabus what is required of them and should be able to strategize a successful model to achieve it. Laxity and uncertainty with regard to deadlines actually confuse the students and militate against a good Christian education. Paradoxically, “grace” sounds Christian and pastoral and “law” sounds non-Christian; but, sometimes so-called “grace” and “pastoral concerns” encourage libertarianism and in truth is non-Christian and non-pastoral. Consciously or unconsciously students realize that there is a fudge factor here, enabling them to rationalize their not turning in work on time.

d. The issue also pertains to spiritual life, a subject on which a seminary rightly prides itself. However, the spiritual life includes self-control, discipline, etc. Students reap good fruit from hard work.”²

Supplemental Bibliography:

Clowney, Edmund P. *CM* Christian Meditation*.

Frame, John M. *Salvation Belongs to the Lord: An Introduction to Systematic Theology* (Phillipsburg, N.J.: P & R Publishing, 2006).

Goldsworthy, Graeme. *Gospel Centered Hermeneutics: Foundations and Principles of Evangelical Biblical Interpretation* (Downers Grove, Ill.: Intervarsity, 2006).

Kuyper, Abraham. *Lectures on Calvinism*.

McNeill, John T. *The History and Character of Calvinism* (New York: Oxford, 1954).

Murray, John. *The Collected Writings of John Murray*. Four volumes. (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1976-82).

Packer, James I. *A Quest for Godliness: The Puritan Vision of the Christian Life* (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway, 1990).

Packer, James I. *Concise Theology* (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway).

Ward, Rowland S. *The Westminster Confession of Faith, A Study Guide EXPANDED EDITION*.

Warfield, Benjamin B. “A Brief and Untechnical Statement of the Reformed Faith,” available at <http://www.graceonlinelibrary.org/etc/prINTER-friendly.asp?ID=59>

² Adapted from Professor Bruce K. Waltke.