Goals

1. To give reasons for confidence in the absolute authority of Scripture as God’s Word.

2. To show that disbelief and disobedience to Scripture are inconsistent with faith in Jesus Christ.

3. To present God as covenant Lord and ways of speaking about him consistent with his Lordship as revealed in Scripture.

4. To elicit a greater love for our Triune God and his revelation.

Texts

Herman Bavinck, “Common Grace” (available on the iqweb course homepage).

Herman Bavinck, Reformed Dogmatics, Volumes 1 and 2 (HB 1 and 2). Focus your reading by using the Study Guide found on iqweb.


1 Taking the systematic theology courses in sequence (despite statements to the contrary!) will increase your ability in theology. First-time students may like to look at S. Grenz, Pocket Dictionary of Theological Terms, and J. I. Packer, Concise Theology (they are not assigned).
Meredith G. Kline, *The Structure of Biblical Authority, Revised Edition*.

John Murray, “The Attestation of Scripture” (on iqweb).


Cornelius Van Til, “Nature and Scripture” (on iqweb). Do not worry about the philosophers – I am interested in the relationship between general and special revelation.

N. T. Wright, *The Last Word: Scripture and the Authority of God – Getting Beyond the Bible Wars*.

The *Westminster Confession of Faith (WC)*.

**Assignments**

1. Class attendance is required. I will not call the roll, but students who are often absent or late without excuse will be penalized.

2. You are asked to complete all reading assignments on the dates indicated below. Completed reading will be worth 10% of your final grade. I will ask about it on the final exam.

**Weekly Assignments**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Lecture Topic</th>
<th>Reading</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>September 8th</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>HB 2, Editor’s Introduction, Chapters 1-2; <em>WC</em> 1.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 15th</td>
<td>God’s Names</td>
<td>HB 2, Chapter 3; <em>WC</em> 2.1-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 22nd</td>
<td>Incommunicable Attributes</td>
<td>HB 2, Chapter 4, Frame, “Is Open Theism Biblical?”; <em>WC</em> 2.1-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 29th</td>
<td>Communicable Attributes</td>
<td>HB 2, Chapter 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 6th</td>
<td>Trinity</td>
<td>HB 2, Chapter 6; <em>WC</em> 2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 13th</td>
<td>Trinity</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>October 20th</td>
<td>Decree</td>
<td>HB 2, Chapter 7; <em>WC</em> 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 27th</td>
<td>Midterm due</td>
<td>Creation; HB 2, Chapters 8-10; <em>WC</em> 4</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 3rd</td>
<td>Providence</td>
<td>HB 2, Chapter 14; “Common Grace”; <em>WC</em> 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 10th</td>
<td>Special Revelation and</td>
<td>“Nature and Scripture”; <em>WC</em> 1.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 17th</td>
<td>Scripture</td>
<td><em>Structure of Bib. Auth.</em>, Part I and Part II: Chapters 1 and 2; “NT as Canon”; <em>WC</em> 1.2-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 1st</td>
<td>Inspiration</td>
<td>HB 1, Chapter 13</td>
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<tr>
<td>December 8th</td>
<td>Inerrancy</td>
<td>“Attestation of Scripture”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 15th</td>
<td>Paper due</td>
<td>Authority, Necessity, Clarity, HB 1, Chapter 14; <em>WC</em> 1.6-10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. Midterm Exam on the Doctrine of God (everything we have covered to that point). The test will be on iqweb, and you may take it any time from Tuesday October 21st until Monday October 27th. The exam is due at the beginning of class on Monday, October 27th. I do not accept late exams. This exam will be worth 30% of your final grade.

4. Final Exam, only on Creation, Providence and the Doctrine of Scripture (material covered since the midterm). This 2-hour exam will be given in class on the evening of December 18th at 7:30 pm. The exam will be worth 30% of your final grade.

5. Dialogue paper: Students will write a dialogue on the doctrine of Scripture between two Anglican theologians, J. I. Packer and N. T. Wright. The dialogue should demonstrate a solid grasp of the assigned reading and lectures and should address issues related to the doctrine of Scripture: the role the Bible plays in God’s redemptive purposes (i.e., the Bible as a means of grace), the nature of biblical authority, the meaning of inspiration, and the nature of inerrancy.

The paper should be in hard copy (not electronic) typed, 12-point font, double-spaced, maximum of 10 pages in length. I expect you to use standard paper conventions found in Kate Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*. There is a quick version at [http://www.press.uchicago.edu/books/turabian/turabian_citationguide.html](http://www.press.uchicago.edu/books/turabian/turabian_citationguide.html). Failure to follow these conventions will reduce your grade.

**N.B.** The paper will be graded based on its (1) clarity, accuracy, and fairness in representing the views of Packer and Wright (I want you to be biblical and orthodox as a matter of conviction, not convention); (2) thoroughness and critical grasp of the issues at stake in relation to the doctrine of Scripture; (3) creativity, style, and clarity of prose. The paper is due at the beginning of class on December 15th. I do not accept late papers. The paper will be worth 30% of your final grade.


### Approximate Time Investment

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<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lectures</td>
<td>36 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading (includes reading for the paper)</td>
<td>64 hours (@ 20 pages/hour)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm Exam (3 hours, plus preparation)</td>
<td>12 hours</td>
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<tr>
<td>Memorization</td>
<td>2 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper</td>
<td>15 hours</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final exam (2 hours, plus preparation)</td>
<td>11 hours</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>140 hours</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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2 104 hours (not including class hours)/69 days (= 5 days/week, not including class days or Sundays, minus Thanksgiving week) = 1.5 hours/day.
Grading Scale: The standard RTS grading scale will be used (*Catalog*, p. 45).

*Appendix*

*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.”

*Supplemental Bibliography*

1. The Doctrines of Revelation and Scripture


_____. *Hermeneutics, Authority and Canon* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986).


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3 Adapted from Professor Bruce K. Waltke.


Geisler, Norman, ed.  *Inerrancy*.


McCartney, Dan and Clayton, C.  *Let the Reader Understand*.


Nicole, Roger R.  *Standing Forth: Collected Writings of Roger Nicole* (Fearn: Mentor, 2002).


Vanhoozer, Kevin.  *First Theology: God, Scripture and Hermeneutics* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002).


2. The Doctrine of God: see comprehensive bibliography in Bavinck, or Frame, *Doctrine of God*. 
3. The Doctrine of Creation


Moreland, J. P. and Reynolds, John M. *Three Views on Creation and Evolution* Counterpoints (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1999).

4. The Doctrine of Providence


Muow, Richard J. *He Shines in All That’s Fair, Culture and Common Grace* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001).