

Instructor: Dr. Derek W. H. Thomas

*Feb* 6, 13, 27

*Mar* 5, 12, 26

*Apr* 9, 23, 30

*May* 7

AM: 9.30 -12.00

Instructor: Dr. Derek W. H. Thomas  
[dthomas@rts.edu](mailto:dthomas@rts.edu)

## **I 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 creedal 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 creedal 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)

## **II 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 aims:

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.

### III 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.

#### **IV 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).

#### **V Course Requirements**

##### **I. READING**

*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

Ovey, Sachs, Jeffery *Pierced for our Transgressions* 336 pp

John Owen, *Death of Death in the Death of Christ* 300pp

##### **II. CLASS ATTENDANCE**

Class attendance will be imperative for successful completion of this course.

##### **III. EVALUATION**

The course will be divided into three unequal parts:

Quizzes (25%) (*see, reading schedule*)

Paper (30%)

Final examination (45%) (*based on class work only*)

*Reading Quizzes will take place at the beginning of each class period and will last no more than ten mins. Typically, there are three questions of a general nature for which a couple of sentences should suffice by way of an answer.*

## Reading Schedule

- WEEK 1. Calvin Institutes Book II, Chapter XII 464-474  
Bavinck Reformed Dogmatics Person of Christ 223-319
- WEEK 2. Calvin Institutes Book II, Chapter XIII 474-481  
Bavinck Reformed Dogmatics Christ's Humiliation 323-417
- WEEK 3. Calvin Institutes Book II, Chapter XIV 482-493  
Bavinck Reformed Dogmatics Christ's Exaltation 418-482
- WEEK 4. Calvin Institutes Book II, Chapter XV 494-503  
MacLeod Person of Christ Intro, Part One 15-152
- WEEK 5. Calvin Institutes Book II, Chapter XVI 503-528  
MacLeod Person of Christ Part Two, Epilogue 155-264
- WEEK 6. Calvin Institutes Book II, Chapter XVII 528-534  
Owen Death of Death Intro, Book 1
- WEEK 7. Owen Death of Death Book II
- WEEK 8. Owen Death of Death Book III, Book IV 124-312
- WEEK 9. Ovey/Sachs Pierced for our Transgression Part One 13-203
- WEEK 10. Ovey/Sachs Pierced for our Transgression Part Two 205-333

## Extension Policy

All assignments and exams are to be completed by the deadlines announced in this syllabus or in class.

Extensions for assignments and exams due within the normal duration of the course must be approved beforehand by the Professor. Extensions of two weeks or less beyond the date of the last deadline for the course must be approved beforehand by the Professor. A grade penalty may be assessed.

Extensions of greater than two weeks but not more than six weeks beyond the last deadline for the course may be granted in extenuating circumstances (i.e. illness, family emergency). For an extension of more than two weeks the student must request an Extension Request Form from the Student Services Office. The request must be approved by the Professor and the Academic Dean. A grade penalty may be assessed. (RTS Catalog p. 42 and RTS Atlanta Student Handbook p. 14)

Any incompletes not cleared six weeks after the last published due date for course work will be converted to a failing grade. Professors may have the failing grade changed to a passing grade by request. (RTS Catalog p. 42)

## **Bibliography (2010)**

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**Course Objectives Related to MDiv\* Student Learning Outcomes**

Course: 4ST513 Jesus: God and Man

Professor: Derek Thomas

Campus: Atlanta

Date: Spring 2012

<b><u>MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes</u></b>		<b><u>Rubric</u></b>	<b><u>Mini-Justification</u></b>
<i>In order to measure the success of the MDiv curriculum, RTS has defined the following as the intended outcomes of the student learning process. Each course contributes to these overall outcomes. This rubric shows the contribution of this course to the MDiv outcomes.</i> <i>*As the MDiv is the core degree at RTS, the MDiv rubric will be used in this syllabus.</i>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Strong</li> <li>➤ Moderate</li> <li>➤ Minimal</li> <li>➤ None</li> </ul>	
<b>Articulation (oral &amp; written)</b>	Broadly understands and articulates knowledge, both oral and written, of essential biblical, theological, historical, and cultural/global information, including details, concepts, and frameworks.	Strong	Students will articulate key theological concepts, appreciate historical perspectives and cross-cultural issues.
<b>Scripture</b>	Significant knowledge of the original meaning of Scripture. Also, the concepts for and skill to research further into the original meaning of Scripture and to apply Scripture to a variety of modern circumstances. (Includes appropriate use of original languages and hermeneutics; and integrates theological, historical, and cultural/global perspectives.)	Strong	Students will examine in detail key Scriptural passages in both the original languages and translations.
<b>Reformed Theology</b>	Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards.	Strong	Evaluation of major tenets of Reformed Christology
<b>Sanctification</b>	Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student's sanctification.	Strong	Christology rightly understood encourages holiness
<b>Desire for Worldview</b>	Burning desire to conform all of life to the Word of God.	None	
<b>Winsomely Reformed</b>	Embraces a winsomely Reformed ethos. (Includes an appropriate ecumenical spirit with other Christians, especially Evangelicals; a concern to present the Gospel in a God-honoring manner to non-Christians; and a truth-in-love attitude in disagreements.)	Strong	Christology and humility are intimately related
<b>Preach</b>	Ability to preach and teach the meaning of Scripture to both heart and mind with clarity and enthusiasm.	Minimal	Students will be encouraged to rightly formulate Christological ideas
<b>Worship</b>	Knowledgeable of historic and modern Christian-worship forms; and ability to construct and skill to lead a worship service.	Strong	Acknowledgement of Christ as LORD invokes worship. Students will be asked to write a paper in which implications for worship are included.
<b>Shepherd</b>	Ability to shepherd the local congregation: aiding in		Christ is the Great Shepherd.

	spiritual maturity; promoting use of gifts and callings; and encouraging a concern for non-Christians, both in America and worldwide.	Strong	Integration of Christology to Pastoral work will be included in the course.
<b>Church/World</b>	Ability to interact within a denominational context, within the broader worldwide church, and with significant public issues.	None	

