Catalog Description
An in-depth examination of the minister’s role in preaching with a particular stress on theological assumptions and difficulties from the perspective of Calvinism. In particular, the course will focus on those points of tension in which Calvinism has impacted preaching positively and negatively as it collides with Arminianism, easy-believism, and other theological systems.

Course Overview
Lectures. This course will begin with an overview of the preaching ministry of John Calvin, its nature, role, parameters and implications in the context of Geneva in the sixteenth century. The course will also explore issues of Calvinism as they developed in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, including the Marrow Controversy, Preparationism, Supralapsarianism, the Free Offer, etc. from diverse sources (e.g. William Perkins’ 'Ocular Catechism,' The Auchterader Creed of 1717, Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress) in order to see how some of these issues affected the content and manner of gospel preaching. Taking Luther's statement that "he who can discern the difference between law and gospel is a theologian" we will range over contemporary issues of grace, law and faith. In particular, we will examine those points of tension in preaching where issues of divine sovereignty impact mission, evangelism, urgency, and the experiential element.

Workshops. Within this context the class time will be punctuated by a series of “hands-on” workshops in which class members will participate and share, examining and discussing how biblical thinking shapes and informs preaching ministry in the local church.
Required Reading:

The following works should be considered required reading:

T H L Parker  *Calvin’s Preaching* (Westminster John Knox, 1992)  


Ernest Kevan *The Grace of Law: A Study in Puritan Theology* (Soli Deo Gloria, 1997)  


Donald MacLeod, *The Person of Christ* (IVP, 1998)  
ISBN: 978-0-83081-537-1

ISBN: 978-0802847751

ASSIGNMENTS

**(NOTE THE RESPONSE PAPERS ARE REQUIRED DURING CLASS TIME)**

1. **Response Papers** (50%) The following papers should be written—maximum length two pages single spacing, responding to the following questions, and written specifically with another pastor in view. These must be written prior to the class and brought to the class for discussion.

   **Paper 1:** Reflect on the relationship of preaching to theology and vice versa.
   **Paper 2:** Reflect on your present series of sermons (say, the last 15-20) and highlight in bullet form areas where Calvinism has been an issue.
   **Paper 3:** From the reading material, consider and assess the different style of approach in one of the books from your current practice of preaching.
   **Paper 4:** Write a brief tract on ONE of the following topics (this should be one that you haven’t already written on!): Divine Sovereignty and evangelism; Election and the urgency of mission; Predestination and the Free Offer of the Gospel.
Paper 5: Write a brief letter to, or tract for your congregation entitled: *Preaching Christ*

2. **Term Paper (50%)**. This paper is to apply what has been learned from the assigned readings, the lectures, and class discussions of this course to the local situation in which the student serves. Some description of the ministry situation in which you serve should be included. The paper should develop a biblical philosophy of pastoral care fine-tuned by way of application and implications to your specific local context. In particular this should reflect on three questions:

1: Where are we now in our congregation in relation to the topic?
2: In what ways, do we need to develop, grow, and if need be reform in this/these areas?
3: What, if any are the obstacles to, and means of development involved in this?

The paper should be grounded in a biblical theology of pastoral care, and informed by a sensitivity to the lessons of history and ecclesiology. The paper should be between fifteen and twenty pages in length, including footnotes or endnotes. Note that the length is itself part of the exercise. The final date for submission is **OCTOBER 31, 2015**. It should be submitted by email to the professor (DThomas@FirstPresColumbia.org) and the Jackson D.Min. office (mwestbrook@rts.edu).