

ST 3, The Doctrines of Soteriology and
Eschatology



Reformed Theological Seminary
Washington
Revised Syllabus

6ST520 (3 Credits)¹
Spring 2012
Monday 7:30-10
February 6-May 14 (no class April 2, 9, or 23, 2012)

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Office Hours: call me – 703/408-3157—I will be happy to meet with you.

Course Description:

We will study how we come to salvation in Christ and what that salvation brings us in Christ.

Goals

1. To increase understanding and confidence in historic Christian doctrine.
2. To present God's eschatological work of saving sinners, and ways of speaking about his salvation presented in Scripture.
3. To elicit a greater love for our God and his Christ.

Texts

Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, Volume 3 (HB 3).

Richard B. Gaffin, *By Faith, Not By Sight: Paul and the Order of Salvation*
(Waynesboro, GA: Paternoster, 2006), available on the course homepage.

Richard B. Gaffin, "Theonomy and Eschatology: Reflections on Postmillennialism"
found at
<http://newhopefairfax.org/files/Gaffin%20Theonomy%20and%20Eschatology.pdf> (also
on the course homepage).

¹ Taking the systematic theology courses in sequence—though not required—will increase your ability in theology. However, first-time students may like to look at S. Grenz, *Pocket Dictionary of Theological Terms* or J. van Genderen et al, *Concise Reformed Dogmatics*.

Howard Griffith, “‘The First Title of the Spirit’: Adoption in Calvin’s Soteriology”
http://www.biblicalstudies.org.uk/pdf/eq/2001-2_135.pdf (you may have to paste this link into your browser).

Anthony A. Hoekema, *The Bible and the Future*. (BF)

Peirre C. Marcel, “Brothers and Sisters of Christ” on the course homepage.

John Murray, *The Collected Writings of John Murray, Volume 2*. (JM 2)

The *Westminster Confession of Faith* (WC) and the *Westminster Shorter Catechism* (SC).

Assignments (Note items 1-5, below)

1. Class attendance is required.
2. Reading: You are asked to complete all reading assignments by the dates indicated below. I will quiz you about them in class. Completed reading will be worth 20% of your final grade. I will ask about it on the final exam.

Weekly Reading Assignments

Lecture Topic	Date	Required Reading
Orientation to Soteriology and Eschatology	February 6 th and 13 th	JM 2, Chapter 10; HB 3, Chapter 9, pp. 485-540; WC Chs. 8, 9.
The relationship of “Salvation” and “Last Things” in Scripture	February 20 th	JM 2, Chapter 11; Gaffin, <i>By Faith</i> , Chapters 1-2; SC 29-30.
Union with Christ	February 27 th	HB 3, Chapter 9, pp. 541-595.
Union with Christ	February 28 th	JM 2, Chapter 15.
Regeneration	March 5 th	JM 2, Chapter 16; WC 10; SC 31-32.
Faith	March 12 th	JM 2, Chapters 19-20; WC 14; SC 32, 86, 87.
Sanctification	March 19 th	JM 2, Chapters 21-22; Gaffin, <i>By Faith</i> , Chapter 3; WC 13, 15, 16; SC 35, 39-83.
Justification	March 26 th	Gaffin, <i>By Faith</i> , Chapter 4 and Epilogue.
Justification	April 16 th	JM 2, Chapter 17-18; WC 11; SC 33.
Sanctification and	April 30 th	JM 2, Chapters 23-25;

Perseverance		Griffith, ““The First Title of the Spirit...””; WC 12, 17, 18; SC 34.
Death, Judgment, Heaven and Hell	May 7 th	BF, Chapters 7-9, 19; Marcel, “Brothers and Sisters;” WC 32, 33; SC 37, 38.
Millennial Views, The Return of Christ	May 14 th Paper due	BF, Chapters 10-18, 20; Gaffin, “Theonomy and Eschatology...”

3. Research paper: In 12-15 pages (no more, no less, double spaced, 12 point font) discuss a topic in the area of Soteriology.²

Let your interests lead you to a topic. What would you like to understand or clarify for others? See “How to Write a Theological Paper” on the course homepage.

The paper is due, in hard copy (no electronic submissions) at the **beginning of class, on May 14th, 2012**. I do not accept late papers.

The paper must have a thesis statement—it must assert something. (Make this clear *somehow near the beginning*.) Then develop an argument that proves your thesis. In other words, there must be accurate description, but also more than description, namely evaluation *according to the Bible*. All M.Div. students are expected to make significant use of the original languages of Scripture. Here I am not looking for a few proof texts, but for real interaction with a central passage (or passages) of Scripture in context. (This means you will use commentaries.)
 Bad: “Baptism is an ordinance of Christ meant to be continued in his church until he returns (Matthew 28:18-20).” Good: “Baptism is an ordinance of Christ meant to be repeated in his church until he returns, because ...”—thesis statement follows—then there are paragraphs which explain the Scripture in its context in Matthew. Other theological points may now be mentioned and evaluated, showing how Moltmann, or Horton, for example, agree or how far they might agree, but what has been left unsaid, for example. Bad: “Roger Nicole is a credo-baptist, while Meredith G. Kline is a paedo-baptist.” Good: “In denying infant baptism Beasley-Murray takes a position that proves unbiblical, because he says the New Testament teaches that baptism saves. It is true that a number of passages of the New Testament indicate that God does signify salvation with water baptism, but a number also indicate that not all the water-baptized are saved”—Scripture exposition follows, showing what you mean by “signifies” and what scriptures indicate this—Then further elaboration: “Beasley-Murray answers this point about this text by saying ‘No!’ because he ...”—then you reply, “However, what he fails to state, or notice, is...” At the end of the paper, you should sum up what you have found.

You should be familiar with the readings assigned for the course, and go beyond them in the paper. You must use at least eight good (solid-scholarly, not popular-theological, no magazines

² You may like to evaluate a contemporary theological position on soteriology—is justification forensic? How is faith related to it? Does a certain position on the law/gospel antithesis compromise effort in sanctification? How is forgiveness related to sanctification? How is adoption not only forensic but transformative? “‘Sonship’ as taught by ____ makes no place for _____. This is not faithful to _____ in Scripture.” How is ‘casting out of demons’ related to biblical soteriology? Etc.

like *Christianity Today* or *Modern Reformation*), non-internet, sources (of course you may find articles on the internet, but in no case may you cite a blog), including the Westminster Standards. You may not use a study Bible as a source.

Formal Term Paper Standards

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. Failure to follow these conventions will reduce your grade. Please include a title page with your name, but **omit headers or footers that include your name. Also, do include a bibliography.** You may collect your graded paper at the RTS office.

Beware of plagiarism. See “RTS Student Handbook,” p. 12 for discussion and note http://www.nytimes.com/2010/07/13/opinion/13tue4.html?_r=1.

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! M.Div. students, and MAR students who have studied Greek or Hebrew, must make relevant use of the meaning of Scripture in the original languages to receive the grade “A.” This will require extra work.

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 whether the 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: Shows effort but absolutely nothing more.

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

The paper will be worth 30% of your final grade.³

4. Final exam on the reading and lectures. This will be worth 50% of your final grade. The exam will be on the course homepage. You are to download it, and take it in a 3-hour period, with an elder or minister as a proctor. Then upload your exam paper to the course homepage by the midnight on **May 19th, 2012**. I do not accept late exams.

5. Memorize and recite Romans 8:28-30 (any translation) and *Westminster Larger Catechism* 69. I will ask about this on the Final Exam. Here it is:

Q. What is the communion in grace which the members of the invisible church have with Christ?

A. The communion in grace which the members of the invisible church have with Christ is their partaking of the virtue of his mediation, in their justification, adoption, and sanctification, and whatever else, in this life, manifests their union with him.

Completed reading 20%, research paper 30%, final exam 50%.

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

Approximate Time Investment

Lectures	39 hours
Reading (includes reading for the paper)	64 hours (@ 20 pages/hour)
Memorization	2 hours
Paper	15 hours
Final exam (3 hours, plus preparation)	12 hours
Total	132 hours

Grading Scale: standard RTS grading scale (*Catalog*, p. 42).

³ Abbreviations for Comments on Papers: A – awkward; Amb – ambiguous; Arg - more argument needed; C – compress; Circle (drawn around some text)- usually refers to misspelling or other obvious mistake; D – define; E - expand, elaborate, explain; EA - emphasis argument; F - too figurative for context; G - grammatical error; Ill – illegible; Illus - illustrate, give example; Int – interesting; M - misleading in context; O - overstated, overgeneralized; PS- problem in paragraph structure; R – redundant; Ref- reference (of pronoun, etc.); Rel- irrelevant, or relevance unclear; Rep – repetitious; Resp - not responsive (In a dialogue: one party raises a good question to which the other does not respond.); S - summary needed; Scr - needs more scripture support; Simp – oversimplified; SM - straw man (a view nobody holds); SS - problem in sentence structure; St - style inappropriate; T - transition needed; U – unclear; V – vague; W - questionable word-choice; Wk - weak writing (too many passives, King James English, etc.); WO - word order; WV - whose view? yours? another author?

Appendix
Policy on Late Assignments

Simply put, late exams and papers are **not** accepted based on the following rationale:⁴

- 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.”

Course Objectives Related to MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes

Course: 6ST520, Soteriology and Eschatology
 Professor: Howard Griffith
 Campus: Washington
 Date: Spring 2012

<u>MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes</u>	<u>Rubric</u>	<u>Mini-Justification</u>
<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</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Strong ➤ Moderate ➤ Minimal 	

⁴ Adapted from Professor Bruce K. Waltke.

<p><i>contributes to these overall outcomes. This rubric shows the contribution of this course to the MDiv outcomes.</i></p> <p><i>*As the MDiv is the core degree at RTS, the MDiv rubric will be used in this syllabus.</i></p>		➤ None	
Articulation (oral & written)	Broadly understands and articulates knowledge, both oral and written, of essential biblical, theological, historical, and cultural/global information, including details, concepts, and frameworks.	Strong	Exam and a paper on doctrinal matters vitally related to everything.
Scripture	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	Not an exegesis class, but we read and lecture on both systematic and biblical-theological aspects of each doctrine. Scripture memory.
Reformed Theology	Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards.	Strong	These are the most distinctive of Reformed doctrines.
Sanctification	Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student's sanctification.	Strong	There is no more moving exhibition of the grace of God than in these benefits of salvation.
Desire for Worldview	Burning desire to conform all of life to the Word of God.	Moderate	Stresses the importance of God's law for all of life.
Winsomely Reformed	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	I will seek to show the value of Reformed theology for the benefit of all Christians.
Preach	Ability to preach and teach the meaning of Scripture to both heart and mind with	Moderate	I do some preaching in this class, but do not require the students to

	clarity and enthusiasm.		do any.
Worship	Knowledgeable of historic and modern Christian-worship forms; and ability to construct and skill to lead a worship service.	None	
Shepherd	Ability to shepherd the local congregation: aiding in spiritual maturity; promoting use of gifts and callings; and encouraging a concern for non-Christians, both in America and worldwide.	Strong	I stress the importance of these issues as people deal with them in the Christian life.
Church/World	Ability to interact within a denominational context, within the broader worldwide church, and with significant public issues.	Moderate	We do consider common grace—thus the value of God’s mercy expressed beyond the elect.