Welcome to Reformed Theological Seminary in Atlanta! You have come to RTS in order to grow in Christ, especially through preparation for Christian service. This season of preparation will at times be exhilarating, frustrating, gratifying, and humbling. The workload is substantial, but the benefits are far greater. There is no better time to learn to depend upon God for wisdom and strength.

This handbook is provided so that you might make the most of your time while studying at RTS. It is designed to help you know what to expect in seminary as well as what is expected of you. Please read it carefully and keep it for future reference.

Reformed Theological Seminary is a distributed seminary with multiple campuses. As a student at RTS Atlanta, you are a member of the combined student body of Reformed Theological Seminary. You are welcome as a student at every RTS location. The RTS Catalog is the official document governing your study program. This handbook is intended for use as a supplement to the Catalog. The policies and procedures described in the RTS Catalog remain applicable to you as a student at RTS Atlanta.

**Facilities.** The Atlanta Campus of Reformed Theological Seminary is located on the campus of the Church of the Apostles in Atlanta, Georgia. Most classes are held in those facilities, as well as at other local churches throughout the Greater Atlanta area. While using these facilities, please be respectful of their property and grateful for their generosity.

**Faculty.** The most notable distinction of RTS is the quality of its faculty. Surveys of new students year after year indicate that they chose RTS primarily because of its outstanding professors. While members of the faculty are selected for their teaching and scholarly abilities, they must also possess a caring, nurturing spirit and be committed to cultivating mentoring relationships with students.

Courses at your campus are taught either by resident or visiting faculty members.

*Resident* faculty members are those who teach full-time at RTS Atlanta or an RTS resident campus (Jackson, Orlando, Charlotte, or Washington) and who travel to your campus to teach courses. They are available for academic counseling while they are at the campus and also can be reached by e-mail or by phone at the resident RTS campuses.
Additionally, students are encouraged to have meals with faculty members or set up appointments for before or after class.

*Visiting* faculty members are typically persons living within the greater Atlanta area who have been approved by RTS to teach. *Visiting* faculty are required to have academic credentials similar to *Resident* faculty, and also are available for counseling.

Both resident and visiting faculty members are prepared to offer academic counseling and advice related to personal, spiritual, or ministry-related matters.

**Class Schedules.** Generally, each course meets approximately thirteen classroom hours for each semester hour of credit offered. A classroom hour includes fifty-five (55) minutes of teaching time. Thus, a three credit hour course would normally meet for approximately thirty-nine (39) classroom hours. As a rule, courses taught at RTS Atlanta will be offered for the same credit value and bear the same course title and description as outlined in the current catalog. The chief exception to this policy is that four credit-hour courses have been reformatted to maximize the benefits of the flexible RTS Atlanta scheduling.

The formats most often used at RTS Atlanta are the *traditional* format, the *weekend* format, and a *modular* format. In the *traditional* arrangement, a course meets one evening or day each week for three hours for thirteen weeks. This format is used when local instructors are utilized.

When faculty members must travel greater distances, classes may be scheduled on a *weekend* format. Usually this will mean three to five "weekends" over the span of six to ten weeks. While there are variations in the schedules, a typical weekend format is:

Friday 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.
Saturday 8:30 - 11:30 a.m.
12:30 -3:30 or 4:30 p.m.

*Modular* classes are normally completed within a single week. For example a 3-credit class might meet Monday through Friday, 8:30 - noon and 1:00 – 4:30.

While we encourage students to take classes for credit, the nature of adult learners is such that there will be different learning objectives for various students. Auditors are expected to attend each class session. Their degree of participation is left to the discretion of the instructor. Faculty are not expected to review the work of auditors.
Graduate credit expectations include a minimum of two hours of work outside the class for each hour of class participation. Often the time requirements will be more extensive. This includes reading, projects, research for and writing of papers, as well as preparing for examinations.

**Style of Written Work.** All term papers must conform to the thesis style as presented in *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations (7th Edition)* by Dr. Kate Turabian. At their discretion, professors may reserve the right to retain term papers and other written materials that are submitted as class assignments. It is the responsibility of the professor to announce such a policy at the beginning of the course. If you wish to reserve a copy for yourself, you must prepare two copies of such written work.

**Course Grading System.** RTS Atlanta follows the grading system outlined in the *RTS Catalog.*

1. **Grading Scale**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A (4.0)</td>
<td>97-100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-(3.7)</td>
<td>94-96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+ (3.3)</td>
<td>91-93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B (3.0)</td>
<td>88-90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-(2.7)</td>
<td>86-87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+ (2.3)</td>
<td>83-85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C (2.0)</td>
<td>80-82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-(1.7)</td>
<td>78-79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+ (1.3)</td>
<td>75-77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D (1.0)</td>
<td>72-74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D-(.7)</td>
<td>70-71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F (0.0)</td>
<td>0-69</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. **Other Nomenclature**

*I* Incomplete

*** Withdraw

* The grade "I" indicates that the work required for the course was not completed. It is given only when special, extenuating circumstances (such as illness) prevent the student from completing the work or taking the examination. A written request for an extension must be submitted to the registrar before the due date of the work concerned. The request should include the reason for the request and the date by which the work will be completed. If the request is granted, it remains the responsibility of the student to complete all work for the course as soon as possible. At the end of the extension period, the appropriate grade will be assigned.

*** If a student drops a course before the drop deadline, the course is erased from the student's permanent record. If a student withdraws from a course after the drop deadline, the grade “W” will be entered on the student’s record.
**Course Extensions and Final Exam Changes.** The deadline for submitting all work for any course is the scheduled time of the final class meeting or at the time designated by the instructor in the course syllabus. Permission to postpone the completion of course requirements beyond this time or to change the time for the final examination is granted only for emergencies and must be requested by the last day of classes unless you are physically unable to do so.

The course instructor may grant permission for an extension or a change in final exam time (up to two weeks). For an extension beyond two weeks, a student must request an Incomplete for the course. An incomplete is given only when special, extenuating circumstances (such as illness) prevent the student from completing the work or taking the examination. A written request for an extension must be submitted to the Student Services office prior to the due date of the work concerned. If the request is granted, it remains the responsibility of the student to complete all work for the course as soon as possible. At the end of the extension period, the appropriate grade will be assigned. Normally, grade penalties will be involved.

Any changes of time for midterms, examinations, quizzes, and deadlines for written work before the end of the semester are at the discretion of the instructor.

In all cases, you have the right of appeal any decision that you consider to be unfair.

**Withdrawal from Courses.** If a student drops a course prior to the drop deadline (through the first five weeks of a regular semester schedule, the second weekend of a weekend course, the second day of a week-long intensive, or the equivalent in other formats), the course is erased from the student’s permanent record. If a student withdraws from a course after the drop deadline, the grade “W” will be entered on the student’s permanent record. The Director of Student Services should be consulted whenever a student considers withdrawing from a course.

**Inactive Status.** If you have been admitted to a program and do not enroll in courses for two consecutive semesters (not including summer), you are considered to be inactive in the program. Inactive students may be asked to submit a Request for Re-admission to the program; readmission, however, is not guaranteed.

**Textbooks.** Textbooks are available through a variety of sources. The following list is by no means comprehensive, but is derived from sources that include your fellow students. If you have additional recommendations, please inform your classmates (and us!).

Reformed Theological Seminary is perhaps the first place to which you should look. The seminary operates a fully online bookstore. You can access the bookstore by visiting [www.rts.edu](http://www.rts.edu) and choosing Bookstore from the left-hand Navigation Bar.

Locally, students have had good success with the Presbyterian Church in America’s bookstore. The manager, Mr. Tim Schirm (direct number: 678/825-1112; tschirm@pcanet.org) has been an RTS/Atlanta student. (CE&P Bookstore, 1700 North
Students report that some other book sources have assisted, as well. A source that specializes in used theological books is the Archives Bookshop (1396 E. Washington Blvd., Pasadena, CA 91104; Telephone: 1-800-204-2063; 1-626-797-4756; Fax: 1-626-797-5237; E-mail: archives@archivesbookshop.com). Search their inventory at TheologyBooks.com.

Evangelical Bible Book Store (3812 Grim Avenue, San Diego, CA 92104; 619/291-4381; 1-800450-5858; www.evangelicalbiblebookstore.emerchantpro.com) is renowned for maintaining an active inventory of obscure titles, and their prices are friendly.

Do not forget some of the online sources such as Christianbook.com; Amazon.com; bookfinder.com; ebay.com; and even www.walmart.com!

**Student Services.** For advising, you should first consult your *Catalog*, this Student Guide, and your RTS Atlanta personnel. Because the Atlanta Campus office is the official repository of enrollment records, student files, and transcripts, requests for transfer credit, enrollment confirmation, or for the sending of transcripts must be submitted in writing to this office. RTS Atlanta personnel are important sources of counsel on a wide range of questions.

**Library Resources.** Two types of library resources are available to you: borrowing privileges at local university and theological libraries, and the services of the RTS library system.

Atlanta Campus students are privileged to have access to the outstanding resources and services of the RTS Library. Services include inter-library loans and research assistance. The Orlando Campus library may be reached by calling 407/366-9493.

Locally, RTS students have enjoyed the bibliographic holdings of nearby theological libraries. In some instances, usage fees may be required for checkout. Please remember to honor the generosity of those entities by exercising great respect and responsibility. Those libraries include:

- The New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary campus (1000 Johnson Ferry Road, Suite C-115, Marietta, GA 30068);
- The [superb!] Pitts Theology Library of Emory University (505 Kilgo Circle, Atlanta, GA 30322, 404/727-4166);
- The Columbia Theological Seminary library (701 S. Columbia Dr., Decatur, GA 30030, 404/687-4610);
Luther Rice University (3038 Evans Mill Road, Lithonia, GA 30038, 770/484-1204), and,
The theology library of the nearby Psychological Studies Institute (2055 Mount Paran Rd., Atlanta, GA 30327, 404/233-3949).

Georgia residents also have the privilege of utilizing the Georgia Public Library Service (http://www.gpls.public.lib.ga.us/), which is a unit of the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia. A list of the extensive network of branch libraries may be downloaded at http://www.public.lib.ga.us/pls/plsites.html.

Georgia residents also have free access to GALILEO, which is Georgia's electronic library. The acronym stands for Georgia LIbrary LEarning Online. A Web-based virtual library, GALILEO provides access to multiple information resources, including secured access to licensed products. The free service allows access to over 100 databases, including WorldCat, EBSCO Databases, ProQuest, and many more, indexing thousands of periodicals and scholarly journals. Over 2000 journal and magazine titles are provided in full-text. Other resources include encyclopedias, business directories, and government publications, as well as resources related to philosophy and religion. Through GALILEO, Georgia citizens have access to authoritative, subscription-only information that is not available through free search engines or Web directories.

Consult the web site: http://www.galileo.usg.edu/welcome/
OR
http://www.galileo.peachnet.edu/
OR
http://triton3.galib.uga.edu/cgibin/homepage.cgi?style=&_id=43c021b911296831885338&_cc=1  
Password access (changed quarterly) is available to registered Georgia public library borrowers.

External Education Courses. More than 30 courses are available through RTS’ Virtual Campus (1-800-227-2013). These courses use recorded lectures, textbooks, online resources, and programmed study guides to lead you. Courses may be started at any time and completed over a six-month period.

Taping of Class Lectures. The video recording of RTS courses by students is prohibited. Audio recording is by permission of the instructor and is allowed if the taped material is to be used solely for personal study and spiritual edification and is not distributed privately or publicly in any manner.

Transfer Credit (to RTS). General guidelines for transfer credit may be obtained from the Student Services office. To be considered, courses to be transferred must match the program requirements listed in the RTS Catalog, and will be determined by the Academic Dean. Official determination of transfer credit is made only after you have been admitted to an RTS program.
Transfer Credit (from RTS). If you have enrolled in RTS courses and are in good standing with the institution (academically, financially), a transcript will be issued for you by the Student Services Office. Requests for transcripts must be made in writing and signed by you. Such requests must include your name, Social Security or RTS ID number, and birth date. The fee for each official transcript is $10 (payable to RTS). Unofficial transcripts are free.

Preparing for Seminary. God’s call to service normally leads along the path of preparation. That preparation involves the whole person. The most obvious dimensions of your preparation for RTS are your spiritual, intellectual, and even financial preparation.

God’s call to study demands our commitment to excellence. This has long been a part of our Reformed heritage. The study of God’s truth requires energy and discipline.
**The Whole Person.** When the best and most important parts of life are distorted, they become deformed and dangerous. The Word of God always makes demands on us, and if we fail to change in godly ways, we become hardened to God and to his Word. Your commitment to growth in holiness must be not less than your commitment to academic excellence.

These two are not contradictory pursuits. God made both mind and heart; God has redeemed your mind and your heart; and God calls on you to love him with all your mind and all your heart. As Archibald Alexander, the first professor of Princeton Seminary put it, “Truth is in order to holiness and between truth and holiness there is an indissoluble connexion.” Your pursuit of academic excellence and progress in godliness cannot be carried out in isolation. God did not make you that way. Truth and holiness can be found only in connection with each other, and only in the context of family, church, and community.

**Family.** Sometimes the families of seminary students feel that they have been neglected during seminary. It is important that families be committed to the process of seminary, even if it is only going to be part-time studies. And that commitment grows best when your family is involved.

There are many ways to involve families in the program. For a minimal fee, spouses may audit courses at the same time as the student earns credit. Devotional lessons based on parts of course work provide tangible, immediate benefit to families. Regular, fervent prayer by a family on your behalf can also be a means of strengthening commitment in those who pray.

You should make sure that you keep any promises made during courses. If, as a father, you promise to take your kids to hike along the Chattahoochee River Trail after final exams are done, you must stick to that promise. A broken promise is worse than no promise at all. Although school is important, your family should not feel that it has been relegated to second place.

Spouses and children are great aides also. If you prepare good notes and study sheets, spouses and older children can serve greatly in helping your review and quizzing you. This also provides valuable learning for them.

Spouses of full-time students and staff members may take courses for credit at half price. Spouses must apply and be accepted to RTS in order to take classes for credit. They may audit courses without charge, provided there is room in the class and they have registered. These courses not only provide opportunity for spiritual growth, but also help spouses get acquainted with professors and others in the seminary community.

**Church.** When a student moves to a traditional campus, often the support, resources, and opportunities of the home ecclesiastical community is left behind. As an RTS Atlanta student, however, you likely still have the great benefit of remaining in your church,
ministry, and mentoring relationships. Recognizing the pragmatic role that it has in the students’ lives, the Atlanta Campus does not attempt to draw students out of their own faith communities, or to substitute the faith community of the seminary. RTS Atlanta exists to serve, not to supplant, the local church.

To receive the maximum benefit from your theological studies, therefore, it is essential that you maintain or establish an active involvement with a congregation in your community. Regular participation in worship, ministry, and fellowship of the Christian community is essential for well-rounded spiritual development.

Since the program is designed for increasing effectiveness in ministry, there should be opportunity for relating your studies to actual ministry situations. While some ministry responsibilities may need to be curtailed during study time, others fit quite naturally into the work being done for the program. Careful planning may help you to make courses match ministry opportunities.

You should let your church and/or parachurch agency know that you are participating in the program. By encouraging members and co-workers to audit courses that you are taking, they will gain an understanding of the unique demands that you have as an campus student. They should be invited to pray and be given periodic updates of progress. Giving them samples of your work may help them to understand and support the training.

Always be gracious for the opportunity that a church gives for training and service. It is their investment in future ministry.

Community. Your peer group should be used as an environment for testing material and seeing immediate fruit from work in the program. The process of obtaining feedback as work is being done will help you produce better products. Some papers are to be written so that someone in the church who has not been trained in seminary can understand the subject. In these cases, make a few copies and distribute them to people in the church. This will add a very real practical touch to course work.

If you work in a non-Christian environment, working on readings and assignments during lunch can open great opportunities for witnessing. The academic nature of the program may make it more approachable for the non-Christian who is not comfortable with personal Christianity.

You may find yourself in peer groups that include those who have already been to seminary. In these instances, you have great resources at your disposal. These friends may have books for loan. They may be able to assist in curriculum planning and goal setting. They may answer questions and provide sounding boards for issues. Usually, seminary graduates are delighted to impart their wisdom to others.

Peer Interaction. Some of the best resources in a seminary program are other students. The variety of backgrounds, experiences, and denominations represented by our student
body greatly strengthens the program. The classroom, breaks, and group projects all become valuable forums of interaction between the practical and the theoretical. Both formal classroom assignments and informal discussions have great value. This community of peer interaction may also allow you to build relationships with others in your area, which will last long beyond the courses themselves.

**Meal Times During Weekend and Modular Classes.** One of the best opportunities for talking about issues that are of concern to you is the meal times during weekend and modular classes. You are encouraged to gather with other students and your instructor for fellowship and informal discussions. Busy students may feel a need to take the meal times to run errands or do tasks related to ministry. As important as such activities may be, you are encouraged to use the entire time to enrich your theological development so that when you return to your ongoing commitments you will bring both the formal (classroom) and informal (co-curricular) contributions from your RTS experience.

**SPIRITUAL LIFE AND SERVICE**

During your time studying at RTS you will be faced with many questions regarding priorities. Judgments about balance and appropriateness must be made according to careful consideration and dependence on God. The foundation of all such difficult decisions must be the Word of God. Our maturing wisdom and sensitivity to the Holy Spirit leading us through the Word are essential in determining what is appropriate.

You must be careful to avoid ungodly temptations to falsely define “balance”. Balancing commitments does not mean loving God with half your mind and half your heart. God offers you no such easy way out. Biblical balance is the whole pursuit of God’s blessing on the whole person in order to minister to the whole world.

"Watch your life and doctrine closely," Paul wrote to Timothy (1 Tim. 4:16a). While RTS will help you watch your doctrine, your personal walk with God merits your first priority. If your academic studies, even of Scripture and its teaching, take the place of your private devotions and personal Bible study, your spiritual life will quickly become dry and joyless. You can expect this to happen to you unless you take some steps to prevent it.

**Spend time with God.** Do not neglect to examine yourself, to pray, and to seek the Lord in his Word. Knowing God is not the same thing as knowing about him. As the Word of God shapes your mind, the Spirit of God is at work to shape and transform your heart. "Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life" (Prov. 4:23). How is the Holy Spirit currently at work to form Christ within you?

**Develop honest relationships with others.** RTS is more than an academic institution; it is a community of believers who help each other on to godliness. "But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness" (Heb. 3:13). There is no sweeter fellowship with others than that of intimate, broken-hearted prayer to the Father. Who can you pray with in this way?
Look for present ministry beyond your studies. While your studies are a high priority, they are not the only way to prepare for ministry. You have come to RTS to receive an education, but "the Lord Jesus himself said: `It is more blessed to give than to receive (Acts 20:35).'" Ongoing present ministry helps to bring about a merger of your learning and your life. Those who are truly called by God cannot help speaking about what they have experienced (cf. Acts 4:20). What have you deeply learned about God that you cannot keep to yourself?

The Lord's Day is set aside for worship and rest. Students are expected to participate actively in a local congregation as a member or associate member. In addition to being their community of faith, for seminarians the local church is both their ministry observatory and laboratory. The congregation where you are active should be a valuable part of your seminary experience. Invest your life in someone else: get involved in a local church!

Having said all this, remember that study is your immediate stewardship. Thorough preparation for class may be a spiritual exercise to the glory of God. This is the present vocation (calling) that your enrollment at RTS indicates.

ACADEMIC LIFE
You may have come to RTS with a clear sense of calling to vocational ministry, or you may have little sense of the kind of ministry for which the Lord is preparing you. Whatever your state of mind and heart, the seminary's goal is to provide an opportunity for self-evaluation and analysis before you commit yourself to a career.

Several courses have been developed to meet a wide range of student needs for basic and advanced preparation for Christian service. The RTS Catalog is designed to acquaint you with the different courses.

Scheduling. Be sure to consult the catalog, the semester schedule available from the website (www.rts.edu), and seminary personnel as you plan your schedule of classes.

Class attendance. You are responsible to attend class, even when term papers or exams are pending.

Pedagogy. Adjust yourself to each professor's teaching method. Part of your education consists of learning how to learn. Decide what kind of notes you need for each class to master the material. Taping class sessions is permitted. Each class has a goal. Find out what it is, and adjust your studies to meet that goal.

Tests/exams are developed and administered according to each professor's requirements. Most professors indicate their exam schedule at the beginning of the semester, but this does not preclude unscheduled exams. Ask your professor what his policy is and the kind of response he expects on his examination. Then be prepared!
Extensions for papers or other work must be requested prior to the last day of classes. Extension forms are available from the Student Services office. Students are required to state the reason for the extension on the form, request the approval and signature of the professor, and return the form to the Student Services office. The professor may impose a grade penalty. Extensions are granted, "only when special extenuating circumstances (such as illness) prevent the student from completing the work or taking the examination." (RTS Catalog). Remember, if a course assignment is submitted late, the instructor may refuse to accept it; accept it without penalty; or accept it and assess a penalty. All assignments must be completed within six weeks after the last day of classes (or earlier at the instructor's discretion).

Extended absence of more than a week requires permission of the Sr. Vice President of the Atlanta Campus and is never granted without a written request. If you need special consideration in any course, consult the professor involved.

Grades are posted approximately one month after the last exam in any semester. The grades will be made available to you on your IQ Web account. Please remember for courses with long papers to be graded, or with a large number of students, grades may not be available as quickly.

Study, or its lack, is the primary reason for success or failure in any course. Students are expected to spend at least two hours of study for each hour of class. Self-discipline is indispensable. Do not procrastinate. Get into a good study routine as quickly as possible. Schedule your work with your own deadlines well in advance of due dates. Then, work your schedule. When you do, you are most fully able to enjoy the academic, communal, and recreational aspects of your seminary experience.

Confusion. Students often express feeling bewildered by new terminology and overwhelmed by the mass of new information. Do not hesitate to ask questions, when you do not understand what a professor is talking about. The only really dumb question is the one that is not asked. Persevere in your studies; seek faculty help, if necessary, and you will master the material.

Books are both tools and temptations for seminarians. Get good advice before you buy. Most professors provide bibliographies of recommended works. Use libraries to acquaint yourself with other authors. Then buy books that will have lasting value for you. You will probably want to keep your textbooks for future reference. Check your whole library from time to time to identify weak areas. Buy books of lasting value, but watch your budget.

Plagiarism. Research papers require borrowing other people's ideas and words. However, the source of such borrowing must be acknowledged properly. If the source is not acknowledged properly, your work is plagiarism. At issue is your academic honesty.
1) The *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* says "to plagiarize is to give the impression that you have written or thought something that you have in fact borrowed from someone else."

2) *Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary* defines plagiarize as "to steal and pass off (the ideas or words of another) as one's own; use (a created production) without crediting the source; to commit literary theft: present as new and original an idea or product derived from an existing source."

Plagiarism includes word-for-word copying, lifting terms, restatement of someone's argument or line of thought, copying what the writer of *Ten Steps in Writing the Research Paper* calls "perfect phrases" -- all without acknowledgment of source. Plagiarism also includes giving a source partial credit when more is taken from that source than indicated and quoting or paraphrasing in patchwork fashion.

Plagiarism, whether intentional or unintentional, is considered academic theft. When discovered, it results in loss of reputation or position and other punishments. The academic consequences of plagiarism at RTS are as follows:

1) First offense: The student must rewrite the paper and receive no better than a passing "D" grade for it.

2) Second offense: The student fails the entire course.

**Help When You Need It.** Every student needs assistance from time to time. Sometimes it will be as simple as getting some information. Sometimes it will involve help with a financial, personal, or family issue that needs an objective viewpoint. Sometimes it will involve academic matters. Whatever your need, there is someone available to help. Let us know if you are having difficulty.

**Academic Matters.** If your problem involves only one class, consult that professor. If the issue is broader, you should consult the Senior Vice President, who will help you with the problem or direct you to an appropriate person within the faculty or administration.

**Academic Appeals.** The Academic Affairs Committee of the Charlotte faculty is authorized to handle appeals from students pertaining to academic matters of the Atlanta Campus. Appeals must be submitted in writing to the Academic Dean. It is your responsibility to secure, in writing, any faculty or administrative recommendations that might have bearing on the appeal. Any such recommendations must also be submitted with your appeal. Written appeals preferably should be no longer than one page in length. You will receive a written response either permitting or denying the request. Students who are unsure whether an item should be taken to the Committee should consult the Dean.

**Conduct.** Students are expected to conduct themselves at all times as mature believers. Exemplary Christian conduct should control our words and our actions, both public and
private. In today’s technological environment our “words” can include texting, emails, and blogging, in addition to our speech. Godly behavior, expected of all Christians, is especially required of those who are preparing themselves to become ministers of the Word.

The seminary reserves the right to dismiss any student whose conduct is found to be unsatisfactory on the basis of spiritual or moral principles found in the Scriptures, after a hearing and due process according to the following procedures.

Judicial Due Process. "Judicial Due Process" simply means that any behavioral or academic matter which cannot be dealt with satisfactorily through routine measures will be dealt with in such a way as to assure fairness to all parties concerned. If other measures fail, the following "due process" will be followed:

1. The Chancellor of the Seminary will appoint a Judicial Committee to hear the case.
2. The Judicial Committee will render a decision, which may be appealed by either party.
3. Appeal may be made to the entire faculty. The faculty decision will be final, subject only to a review by the Executive Committee of RTS to affirm that due process was observed.

Study Habits and Self-Discipline. Failure in academic work is most often linked with neglecting to devote enough time to study or not using study time efficiently. You have undoubtedly already learned this during your undergraduate days. With the increased tempo and quantity of academic effort in Seminary, and with the increased demands of life on seminary students, it becomes even more important that you discipline yourself in this regard and work hard at efficiency in study.

If you are just beginning your seminary work you may experience a sense of being overwhelmed. "I haven't the foggiest notion of what he's talking about!" may be your reaction. Dogged persistence is critical at such times. Keep working hard at your studies, seek help from faculty members, and join other students in study groups to talk things over together when that is appropriate. The "fog" will lift. You will find your views expanding in the right way; you will be making application to current situations, and your labors will take on more meaning.

Such self-discipline is indispensable. Procrastination can doom you. Emergencies have a way of coming up and ruining those great plans to do something "later." Establish a firm work schedule and stick to it. Most professors hand out course requirements at the start of the semester. Check stated deadlines carefully and plan your work accordingly. Then stick with your schedule.
IMPORTANT ADDRESSES AND PHONE NUMBERS

Reformed Theological Seminary/Atlanta

3585 Northside Parkway NW
Atlanta, GA 30327-2309

Voice: (404) 995-8484 or (888) 995-8665
Fax: (404) 995-8997
Email: admissions.atlanta@rts.edu

Sr. Vice President, Atlanta Campus: Mr. John Sowell, jsowell@rts.edu
Director of Student Services: Mr. Jonathan Stuckert, jstuckert@rts.edu

Emergency Contact Information:
In event of an emergency while in class, notify RTS Atlanta personnel immediately, and, if circumstances warrant, dial 911.

After 6:00 p.m., the security desk (404/787-8096) at the Church of the Apostles is staffed by highly–trained law enforcement officers.

Seminary Chancellor: The Rev. Dr. Robert C. “Ric” Cannada (rcannada@rts.edu)
Chief Academic Officer for RTS: Dr. Robert Cara (rcara@rts.edu)
Academic Dean of Charlotte Campus: Dr. Michael Kruger (mkruger@rts.edu). Dr. Kruger oversees academic matters related to the Atlanta Campus.

Other RTS Campuses

RTS/ Jackson
5422 Clinton Boulevard
Jackson, MS 39209-3099
(601) 923-1600
Fax: (601) 923-1654

RTS/Orlando
1231 Reformation Drive
Oviedo, FL 32765
(407) 366-9493
Fax: (407) 366-9425

RTS/Charlotte
2101 Carmel Road
Charlotte, NC 28226-6399
(704) 366-5066
Fax: (704) 366-9295

RTS/Metro Washington
1028 Balls Hill Road
McLean, Virginia 22101
(703) 448-3393
Fax: (703) 738-7389

RTS/Virtual
2101 Carmel Road
Charlotte, NC 28226
(704) 366-4853
Fax: (704) 366-9295

RTS Web Site: www.rts.edu

Last revised May 22, 2008
MASTER OF ARTS IN RELIGION DEGREE PROGRAM

The Atlanta Campus of RTS offers a complete Master of Arts in Religion degree in Atlanta. A foundational academic degree program of general theological studies, the MAR is a sixty-semester hour program that can be completed entirely in Atlanta. Although its primary intention is not to serve as preparation for ordained pastoral ministry, students frequently do utilize it in their full-time vocational ministries. Since this versatile degree program offers approximately two-thirds of the courses typically contained in the three-year Master of Divinity degree, many students complete MAR courses in anticipation of transferring those credits into an M.Div. program. Others appreciate how the MAR equips men and women for other areas of service in Church, academia, and society.

In addition to the fifty-five core and elective semester hours (which may be taken in any sequence, according to your convenience), a five hour Integrative Paper is required for the MAR degree. This paper allows for thoughtful application of the MAR program to a particular area of interest to the student.

In order to achieve its purposes, the Master of Arts in Religion program provides concentrated work in theological studies building upon a background of biblical studies with a view toward cultural and social concerns. It is designed to strengthen the religious basis for life and work in secular careers and some positions on a church or parachurch staff. It is also sometimes taken as a prelude to further graduate studies.

While many prefer to extend their studies over a longer period of time, it is possible for students to complete their MAR course requirements in as few as three years taking classes only at the Atlanta Campus. By careful planning, courses from other RTS campuses may be blended with RTS Atlanta courses in fulfillment of degree requirements.

The course requirements for the Master of Arts in Religion are listed below. Most courses may be applied either to the MAR degree or toward other RTS degrees. With the exception of the integrative paper, these courses may be completed in any order. The RTS Atlanta Campus personnel are available to assist you in selecting the most appropriate courses each semester.

**MAR Curriculum**

*Biblical Studies (12 credit hours)*

- 4OT508 Genesis – Joshua 3
- 4OT516 Isaiah – Malachi 3
- 4NT508 Gospels 3
- 4NT518 Acts & Pauline Epistles 3
Historical Studies (8 credit hours)
4HT502 History of Christianity I   3
4HT504 History of Christianity II  3
5HT506 The Church & the World   2

Theology (18 credit hours)
4ST504 History of Philosophy and Christian Thought  3
4ST510 Systematic Theology: God & Scripture  3
4ST514 Systematic Theology: Christology & Anthropology  2
4ST520 Systematic Theology: Soteriology & Eschatology  3
4ST524 Systematic Theology: Ecclesiology & Sacraments  2
4ST528 Pastoral and Social Ethics  3
4ST530 Apologetics  2

Integrative Studies (10 credit hours)
4ST502 Introduction to Pastoral and Theological Studies  3
4PT513 The Christian Life  2
4ST777 Integrative Paper  5

Free Electives (12 credit hours) 12

Total Credit Hours 60

MAR candidates are required to maintain an overall "C" (2.00) average. Thirty of the sixty hours will be taken with resident RTS faculty, including four of the following courses (Gospels, Pauline Epistles, Soteriology & Eschatology, History of Christianity II, Apologetics). These courses shall be offered at least once every two years in Atlanta.

Integrative Paper

At the culmination of biblical and theological study in the MAR program, you will attempt to integrate your theological training with your vocational field or ministry. This integration is to be expressed in the form of a major paper submitted during your last semester. Although the paper should be completed as you near the conclusion of your studies, it is important to begin planning for the paper as soon as you enter the program.

It is anticipated that a student will spend a minimum of 195 hours on this summative project, consistent with the normal minimum requirements for five hours of academic credit. However, it is not unusual for better papers to involve significantly more time.

Procedure

2. **Topic Approval.** You should initiate the topic approval process after you have completed 40 semester hours of credit. The process is initiated by discussing the proposed paper with your academic advisor. Your advisor will be a Resident RTS Faculty member of your choosing that has agreed to work with you. Your advisor may serve as the mentor for the paper or may suggest another exceptionally qualified person with special interest and/or expertise within the general area of research.

After agreeing together on a topic, you should then prepare an overview of your study proposal. This typed proposal should include the following information:

- A cover page with the title of the proposal, your name, your contact information, the name of your advisor, and a space for the advisor's signature.
- A brief biographical sketch indicating your anticipated vocation after graduation.
- A one-page description of your topic.
- An explanation of how this topic will integrate your studies at RTS with your anticipated vocation.
- A projected outline of your paper.
- A preliminary bibliography

This proposal should be submitted to your academic advisor for approval. Your advisor may ask you to make modifications to the proposal before it is approved. When it is approved, your advisor will sign the cover page and keep the proposal on file. You should also keep a copy of the signed cover page for your records, and submit a copy of the entire proposal to the RTS Atlanta Student Services office.

If you and your advisor agree on another mentor for the project, you then should take the proposal, as approved by your advisor, to the mentor for his or her consideration. In this case, your cover page also should include the name of your mentor and a space for the mentor's signature. (Please bear in mind that the approval and recommendation of a mentor by your advisor in no way obligates someone to accept the role of mentor. You may find it necessary to approach several persons approved by your advisor before identifying someone agreeable to assisting you as your mentor.) Again, your mentor may ask you to make modifications to the proposal before it is approved. At the time that it is approved, your mentor should sign the cover page. Please keep a copy of this page for your records and give another copy to your academic advisor to keep on file.

It should be noted that although the bibliography for this proposal is preliminary, it is not a list that can be generated overnight. On the contrary, this is a preliminary bibliography for your integrative paper. As such, it should integrate a number of topics that you already have researched during the course of your studies. Please keep this in mind as you progress through the MAR program.

3. **Registration.** Once your topic has been approved, you should register for the Integrative Paper, course number 4ST777. To satisfy the requirements for the Master of Arts in Religion, you must complete five credit hours of study on the Integrative Paper.
Although some students complete these five hours in one semester, it is more common for students to work on the paper over the course of a full academic year. In this case, you might want to register for three hours of credit in the fall, and two more hours of credit during the spring semester. You should make this decision in consultation with the registrar. Please note that if you plan to graduate in the spring, the paper must be completely finished and submitted by March 15.

4. Writing the Paper. You should plan to meet regularly with your mentor while researching and completing the requirements of the project or paper. It also will be helpful for you to interact with other persons with expertise in fields of study related to your topic. As much as possible, it is in your best interests to have qualified persons interact with your work as you complete the components. At the same time, you should bear in mind the time required for this work and recognize the kindness and generosity of such assistance.

As you near the conclusion of the project, a draft of the full paper should be provided to your mentor for review. Please allow enough time for the mentor to make recommendations and for you to act on those recommendations before the March 15 deadline. The paper should be typed, double-spaced, and follow the style defined in the most current edition of Kate L. Turabian's A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations (University of Chicago Press). In most cases, the paper should be 50-75 pages in length, excluding title page and bibliography. Your mentor should then interact with the overall project and provide you with a list of recommendations for how the paper should be improved.

5. Submission of Your Paper or Project. You will prepare an original copy of the paper with title page. If you used a mentor other than your advisor, then this original initially shall be given to the mentor for approval and evaluation as appropriate. The mentor shall forward the paper and a written evaluation to your academic advisor. This final draft, which will be the revision that will be graded, should be received by the advisor no later than March 15 of the spring you plan to graduate.

Two bound copies of your paper will be required for our archives. Please consult the Integrative Paper Guidelines for binding directions. The two bound copies must be received by the Student Services office before graduation, otherwise your diploma will be held until the receipt of your bound copies.

Applying for Graduation

Prospective graduates of either the Certificate or MAR programs must submit an Application for Graduation to the Student Services office no later than November 15 of the year prior to the year in which they hope to graduate at the June commencement. This application is available through the Student Services Office.

Once a completed application is received, then the Registrar will conduct a degree audit to ensure that all requirements have been or will be met. Students may want to
request a degree audit from the Registrar prior to this time, in order to allow sufficient time to address any deficiencies.

The graduation fee will be assessed at the time of the application. To receive a refund of the graduation fee, applications of students not able to graduate at the June commencement may be withdrawn by March 1. If the request to withdraw the application arrives after March 1, then no refund will be available.