

# New Geneva Theological Seminary

(Fredericksburg Campus)

**Person and Work of Christ (Doctrine of Christ)**

**ST 505**

**Summer 2023**

**Instructor: Andrew Miller**

**Course Meeting Time:** Tuesdays 6-8pm, June 6-Aug 29

**Course Meeting Location:**

## Course Goal:

The primary goal of this course is to give instruction on the system and biblical basis of the Christology of the Reformed confessional and theological tradition, in its relation to the Christology of the broader Christian church, with special emphasis upon the biblical covenants, the incarnation, and the atonement.

## Classroom Procedures:

Class meetings will begin promptly, and both professor and students should be prepared to start at the stated time. Classes will consist primarily of lectures by the professor, but students will also be called upon from time to time to help in the teaching of the material. Students need not be anxious about this, and no special preparation for this is expected beyond a thoughtful reading of each week's assignments. Limited class time will also be allotted for discussion and questions from students. Do not record the class without the professor's permission.

## Course Grading:

Each student's grade will be determined by four factors: a good-faith estimation of completed assigned reading by the final exam (15%); the quality of his/her term paper (35%), by the performance on the final examination (35%), and the quality of his/her midterm book reviews (15%). You must do *passing* work on *both* the term paper and the final exam in order to pass the course. Repeated absence without excuse will result in failing the course.

## Final Exam:

The final exam will be 2 hours in length and will consist of several essay questions. The questions will be based primarily on the content of the course lectures, though demonstrating an ability to interact with the required reading is encouraged and will be beneficial for one's grade.

Please see the appendix at the end of the syllabus for suggestions about preparing for and taking this exam.

## Term Paper:

Each student must prepare a term paper. The paper is to be no more than 10 pages in length, including footnotes but not including bibliography. The text must be in 12 point font and double-spaced (footnotes may be 10 point and singlespaced). The paper is due

by 8:00 p.m. on August 25. No paper exceeding the page requirement will be accepted. The grade of the paper will be lowered by one grade for each 24 hour period it's late (not counting the Lord's Day). Please **follow the directions** below and in the appendix **at the end of this syllabus**.

**You must address the question whether God purposed to save his people through a substitutionary violent atonement**, according to the guidelines that follow. You must choose a contemporary theologian who believes that God **did not** purpose to save his people through a substitutionary violent atonement. Many feminist, pacifist (Anabaptist and other), and liberationist theologians have made such claims, though you are not limited to choosing someone identified with one of these schools.

The body of your paper should, first, explain why your theologian rejects the idea that God purposed to save his people through a substitutionary violent atonement and what his or her alternative view of God's purpose in the atonement is; and, second, should provide a biblical and theological response from a Reformed perspective. In your response, you must interact with and show familiarity with relevant material presented in the course lectures and readings, though you should also seek to offer your own creative points of critique as well. (Please note that you should write your response from a Reformed perspective even if you personally disagree with it)

Please note that you will be graded in part on your writing style. If you struggle with English style, please seek editorial help from someone competent to give it.

Students are encouraged to consult with the professor in the process of preparing their papers.

#### Midterm Book Reviews:

To put slightly less pressure on you at the end of the semester, and to help you assimilate the course content, two short book reviews are due at the start of class on the 7<sup>th</sup> class (July 18). Each review should be between 1000-1500 words, and you must choose two of these:

1. Michael Reeves, *Rejoicing in Christ*
2. J.V. Fesko, *Death in Adam, Life in Christ*
3. J.V. Fesko, *The Covenant of Redemption*
4. Michael Horton, *Lord and Servant*
5. Vos, *Reformed Dogmatics*, vol. 3
6. Robert Letham, *The Work of Christ*
7. Gustaf Aulen, *Christus Victor*
8. Stephen J. Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate*
9. Maximus the Confessor, *On the Cosmic Mystery of Christ* (St. Vladimir's Seminary Press)

In your review, you should summarize the main point, outline, and content of the book, and provide your own assessment. You do not need to agree with the author, but you need to state your own opinion and argue cogently for it. I encourage you to familiarize yourself with the

principles on writing explained in *They Say, I Say: The Moves That Matter in Academic Writing* by Gerald Graff and Cathy Birkenstein. It will help you go far! For more help on writing quality book reviews, read <https://stevelaube.com/6-elements-of-a-good-book-review/>

## Required Reading:

The required reading is listed below, and each week's reading should be completed **before** class so that students will be prepared to interact with the readings on a basic level.

The readings come primarily from Reformed sources whose theology is in line with that of the confessional denominations in NAPARC. Some of the readings, however, may be drawn from non-Reformed sources in order to expose students to some of the range of thought on these doctrines in other Christian traditions.

A list of works from which reading assignments are drawn appears below. When deciding which books to purchase, students should note how much reading is assigned from each book, consider their monetary budget, and keep in mind that there will be competition for books in the library.

## Required Monographs:

1. Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, vol. 3
2. Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*
3. John Murray, *Redemption Accomplished and Applied*
4. B. B. Warfield, *The Plan of Salvation*
5. Herman Witsius, *The Economy of the Covenants between God and Man*, vol. 1
6. Bobby Jamieson & Tyler Wittman, *Biblical Reasoning*
7. Michael Horton, *The Christian Faith: A Systematic Theology for Pilgrims on the Way*

## Required Articles Provided by Professor:

The following articles will be provided electronically via a Google Drive folder:

- R. Scott Clark, "Baptism and the Benefits of Christ: The Double Mode of Communion in the Covenant of Grace," *The Confessional Presbyterian* (2006)
- R. B. Strimple, "Philippians 2:5-11 in Recent Studies," *WTJ* (1979), 247-268

## Additional Recommended Reading

- Robert B. Strimple, *The Modern Search for the Real Jesus*
- Bobby Jamieson, *The Paradox of Sonship*
- J.V. Fesko, *The Covenant of Redemption*
- J.V. Fesko, *Death in Adam, Life in Christ*
- Michael Horton, *Lord and Servant*
- John Owen, *The Death of Death in the Death of Christ* (and note J.I. Packer's introduction)
- Danny Hyde, "In Defense of Descendit"
- Anselm, *Cur Deus Homo*

- John Webster, “Christology, Theology, Economy, the Place of Christology in Systematic Theology” in *God Without Measure: Working Papers in Christian Theology*, Vol. 1 God and the Works of God, 43-58.
- Vos, Geerhardus. “The Alleged Legalism in Paul’s Doctrine of Justification,” in *Redemptive History and Biblical Interpretation: The Shorter Writings of Geerhardus Vos*, ed. Richard B. Gaffin, Jr. (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 1980), 383-99

Note: In the course schedule below, the following abbreviations are used: WCF (Westminster Confession of Faith), WLC (Westminster Larger Catechism), WSC (Westminster Shorter Catechism), HC (Heidelberg Catechism), BC (Belgic Confession), and CD (Canons of Dort)

## Lecture and Reading Schedule

### June 6 - Week 1: **Introduction to Systematic Theology (Biblical Reasoning) and the Study of Christology; Modern Christology & The Search for the Historical Jesus**

Bobby Jamieson & Tyler Wittman, *Biblical Reasoning*, xvii-22 (Intro & ch 1)

Berkhof, 305-311

Horton, 446-467

### June 16? (I’m at OPC GA on the 12<sup>th</sup>) - Week 2: **Elected in Christ (The Plan of Salvation and Election in Christ)**

WCF 3.1-8; WLC 12-13; WSC 7; BC 16; CD 1.6-18

Berkhof, 109-125

Warfield (all)

### June 20 - Week 3: **Christ the Fulfiller of God’s Covenants - The Covenant of Redemption**

WCF 7.1-3; WLC 31

Bavinck, 196-216

Witsius, 1.163-192

### June 27 - Week 4: **The Covenant of Grace**

WCF 7.3-6; WLC 32-33; WSC 20; BC 25

Bavinck, 216-232

July 7? (I'm guessing folks will not want to meet on July 4!) Week 5: **The Covenant of Grace (Continued)**

Clark, "Baptism and the Benefits of Christ"

Witsius, 1.281-324

July 11-- Week 6: **The Incarnation & Two Natures**

WCF 8.1-2, 7; WLC 36-40

Bavinck, 238-259, 286-319

Horton, 468-482

July 18-- Week 7: **One Person, Two Natures**

WSC 21-22; HC 35, 47-48; BC 17-19

Strimple article (247-268)

Bobby Jamieson & Tyler Wittman, *Biblical Reasoning*, 126-178 (ch. 7 & 8)

*Mid-Term Book Reviews Due*

July 25-- Week 8: **The Necessity and Nature of the Atonement**

WCF 8.4-7; WLC 46-50; WSC 27; HC 10-18, 34, 36-45; CD 2.1-4; BC 20-21

Murray, 1.1

Berkhof, 367-391

Aug 1 - Week 9: **Christ our Atonement**

Horton, 483-520

Bavinck, 328-340, 368-406, 421-436

Murray, 1.2

Aug 8 - Week 10: **The Perfection and Extent of the Atonement**

WCF 7.8; WLC 57-60; CD 2.8-9

Murray, 1.3-5

Bavinck, 406-417, 447-475

Aug 15- Week 11: **The Three Offices of Christ**

WCF 8.3; WLC 41-45; WSC 23-26; HC 29-31

Berkhof, 356-366, 406-412

Bavinck, 364-368

Aug 22- Week 12: **The Resurrection, Ascension, and Heavenly Ministry of Christ**

WLC 51-56; WSC 28; HC 46, 49-52; BC 26

Bavinck, 436-447, 475-482

Horton, 521-547

**Final Exam held on August 29, 7pm. Bring two blue books and a pen or pencil or two.**

## HOW TO WRITE PAPERS FOR PASTOR MILLER

1. Your paper should consist of three parts: a) an **introduction** (@ 1-1.5 pages), which describes the topic that you are addressing and contains a thesis that states the claim that you are arguing; b) the **body**, in which you make an argument in support of the thesis statement; and c) a **conclusion**, in which you briefly summarize the claim and argument that you have made (@ ½-1 page)

Here is one example of the flow of such a paper:

½ of paper describing their problem with substitutionary atonement (explanation of the person, being fair); then ½ with a reformed defense of sub. atonement. 10 page max

1. Introduction and Thesis

- a. “Dr. \_\_\_ rejects a violent atonement for several reasons. These reasons can be placed under two (or three) categories. First, he rejects... Second... Third...
- b. However, these three lines of argumentation can be refuted. Each argument is briefly explained in more detail and then critiqued.

2. Body: (each objection is explained and then critiqued)

- a. “Dr. \_\_\_’s Objection 1”

b. Dr. \_\_\_'s Objection 2

3. Conclusion – summarize and offer a *short* contrasting defense for the reformed view.

2. Setting forth a good **thesis statement** in your introduction is crucial. Your thesis statement should describe, in one or two sentences, what claim you are arguing in your paper. Please note that a thesis statement is not the posing of a question (i.e., not “Does Romans 5:12-19 support the Reformed doctrine of justification?”), nor is it the description of the purpose of the paper (i.e., not “In this paper I investigate whether Romans 5:12-19 supports the Reformed doctrine of justification”). Rather, a thesis should state a claim that is to be argued (i.e., “In this paper I argue that Romans 5:12-19 supports the Reformed doctrine of justification”). Note: you certainly may pose questions and describe the purpose of a paper in the introduction, but these are not substitutes for a thesis statement.

3. If you state a good thesis, then it is clear what your task is in the body of your paper: make an **argument** in defense of your thesis statement. Demonstrate the truth of your claim. If you are not able to do this, then you need to change your thesis. How you go about making your argument and what steps need to be taken to prove your claim will, of course, vary widely from paper to paper. However, keep asking yourself, throughout the body of your paper, whether what you are writing is advancing the argument. Note that the kind of academic papers that I assign does not ask for general surveys of a particular topic, but for an argument in support of a claim. I believe that it is more important (and realistic) for seminary students to learn how to state a claim (however prosaic) and make a cogent argument in support of it than to make some brilliant breakthrough in theological research.

4. In your argument, **say things in your own words**. It may be a temptation to advance your argument by stringing together quotations from interesting authors writing on your subject. I strongly encourage you to keep quotations to a minimum, especially long, block quotations. Your task is to make an argument, not to be a facilitator of other people’s debates and claims. Even when you are relying upon the research of another person, it is generally better to summarize his or her conclusions in your own words (and then cite the source in a footnote). Use quotations only when there is a particularly pressing reason demanding that your reader hear another author’s voice.

5. I have a few stylistic concerns that not all professors necessarily share. When writing papers for me, I ask that you take note of them. While they may seem like minor matters, I believe that they are subtle ways to give your paper a better, more professional, feel. First, **avoid use of the first person plural**. Thus, do not say: “In this paper we argue that...” Unless there is really a co-author of your paper (which there should not be for papers that I assign), just say: “In this paper I argue that...” Likewise, do not say: “Let us now examine the implications of this exegesis.” The “let us” language is quite appropriate in a sermon, but, generally speaking, people reading academic paper don’t like to be bossed around. Second, **avoid use of the future tense**. The tendency, especially in the introduction, is to use the future tense when speaking of subsequent parts of your

paper (e.g., “I will argue that Romans 5:12-19 supports the Reformed doctrine of justification”). It is better, I believe, to keep it in the present tense (e.g., “I argue that Romans 5:12-19 supports the Reformed doctrine of justification”). Third, **avoid use of contractions**. We use contractions all the time in speech and in informal writing, and this is entirely appropriate. In academic papers, however, write out phrases in full. Hence, say “cannot” instead of “can’t,” “have not” instead of “haven’t,” “they are” instead of “they’re.” Fourth, **use people’s full names the first time you refer to them in the body of your text**. Hence, speak of “Louis Berkhof” the first time you mention him, not just “Berkhof” or even “Professor Berkhof.” Subsequently, it is appropriate to refer to him simply as “Berkhof.” Fifth, **paginate your paper**. I always assign page limits to my papers, and I’d prefer not to flip through each paper counting pages myself. Pagination also allows me to refer to parts of your paper specifically when making comments at the end. And, by the way, don’t try to skirt page limits by eliminating margins or switching to 1.5 line spacing on the last page. I’m not a moron—I’ll be able to tell. Sixth, **keep your paper in the indicative**. I mentioned above that imperatives are generally not an appropriate way to speak in an academic paper, unlike in sermons. Also, asking questions, though often very effective in a sermon, is generally to be avoided in academic papers. Do not proceed in your argument by asking and answering questions.

6. Let me offer two reminders about common stylistic matters. First, **punctuate correctly**. I especially encourage you to **use commas appropriately**. There are few things that promote clear writing more than commas, but few things are more underused, overused, and misused than commas. If you are not sure whether you know how to use commas in a consistently appropriate way, please find a proofreader who can help you. Otherwise your professor, will find that, your paper is extremely, difficult to read to understand and to evaluate. Second, **be consistent with your footnotes**. Which style of footnotes you use is less important than maintaining consistency throughout your paper. I might add, however, that Turabian/Chicago Manual of Style is what I would recommend. You must use footnotes—they are standard for scholarly theological writing.

## HOW TO TAKE EXAMS FOR PASTOR MILLER

1. In preparing for the exam, concentrate first on mastering the general outline of the Reformed approach to Christology (and its similarities with and differences from other approaches to Christology) and its chief biblical and theological rationales. When this is accomplished, try to incorporate as many of the more precise details of doctrine and exegesis as is possible in the time you have available. In other words, the details are very important, but you should be sure that you understand the big picture first. Build your study around the lecture material, and incorporate the reading material into this.

2. **Answer each question as asked**. You will not receive any credit for answering questions that I do not ask, no matter how intelligent and orthodox such an answer may be. Hence, it is better to answer poorly the question you are asked than to answer well a question I do not ask.

3. **Answer every part of every question**. Most of the exam questions will have several sub-parts. I assign a certain number of possible points for each sub-part, so failing to answer part of a question



means a significant loss of points which cannot be made up for by writing brilliantly on the other parts. Even dealing briefly with a part of a question will serve you much better than ignoring it altogether. Thus, before you begin answering a question, be sure that you have identified everything that I am looking for.

4. **Answer questions in an organized way.** I do not take into account stylistic matters when grading exams, as I do for papers. Nevertheless, the more clearly and in more organized a fashion you answer questions the easier it is for me to grade and hence more likely that you will receive as many points as you have coming to you. Particularly when answering questions with several sub-parts, please take one issue at a time rather than being scattered in your approach.