

ST 501: Introduction to Reformed Theology

New Geneva Theological Seminary

Dr. Christopher Sterling

Online Course Syllabus

I. General Course Requirements:

1. Reading: Louis Berkhof, Systematic Theology.
2. Research Paper: This paper may be on a subject contained within the class lectures. The form used MLA Style Manual. The standard text is available in any bookstore. (See below for guidelines on the paper.)
3. Final Exam: You will be able to use no helps, not even a Bible. It will include all the class notes and the reading from Berkhof.

II. Course Goals

Knowledge:

- To gain a basic understanding of the theological principles that drove the Reformation.
- To understand these principles in the light of the history of the church
- To see the unity and scope of the Scriptures as God's message to all people, cultures, and nations.

Skills:

- To be able to explain the distinctives of Reformed Theology
- To be able to begin to apply Biblical doctrines to personal piety and obedience
- To be able to make a beginning in applying biblical doctrines to modern moral and societal problems
- To be able to synthesize the Redemptive story of the Bible from a Reformed Theological perspective

Character:

- To fear God as our Father and Creator, Sustainer, and Governor of all things.
- To be humble under the hand of God, in having Christ formed in us by the Holy Spirit.
- To be fervent in devotion, earnest in prayer, actively obedient in every aspect of our lives: personal, family, church, society, missionary, and national.

III. Online Course Procedure

Methods: Instruction will be by recorded video lectures, a research paper, and final examination. Exams will be taken online in the presence of the student's mentor, and the research paper will be uploaded via the Canvas Learning Management System.

Modules: Although this online course is divided up into seven modules, you have up to fifteen weeks to complete the course. The seven modules are designed to be completed in order over the course of thirteen to fourteen weeks. To see a detailed outline of the structure, click the "Modules" link on the left side of any Canvas page.

Discussion Forum Requirement: In the discussion forum you can make comments related to the contents of this course, raise questions for your instructor, and interact with the instructor and your fellow students on matters related to the course. Please do not discuss the contents of any quizzes or tests in this forum. As you progress through the course, you are expected to make at least five meaningful contributions to the forum of roughly a one paragraph each.

Conferences: Your course instructor will want to meet with you at least monthly using the conferencing capabilities of Canvas. Contact your instructor about setting up a conference within the first couple of weeks of the course.

Mentor: Unless you are also a residential student, you will need to obtain the services of a course mentor who will meet with you on a monthly basis to interact with you regarding your studies and to proctor the course exam. Ideally, your course mentor will be a pastor, youth pastor, or other spiritual authority in your church who can guide and counsel you as you pursue biblical and theological training. In the course materials there is a mentor agreement form that your mentor will need to sign and return to New Geneva Seminary before you begin the course.

IV. Lecture Schedule

Lecture One: The Biblical Doctrine of Man

Lecture Two: The Biblical Doctrine of God

Lecture Three: The Biblical Doctrine of Christ

Lecture Four: The Biblical Doctrine of the Scriptures

Lecture Five: The Biblical Doctrine of the Trinity

Lecture Six: Salvation: Calling and Regeneration

Lecture Seven: Salvation: Conversion and Perseverance

V. Text Book List:

Required:

Berkhof, Louis Berkhof. *Systematic Theology*. Revised Edition; ISBN: 0802838200 (See assignments)

Recommended:

Westminster Confession of Faith

Westminster Larger and Shorter Catechisms

Heidelberg Catechism

Calvin, John. *Institutes of the Christian Religion*

Reymond, Robert. *A New Systematic Theology of the Christian Faith*, 2nd Edition

Schaeffer, Francis. *The God Who Is There*

Schaeffer, Francis .*Escape from Reason*

Wells, David F. *No Place for Truth*

Witsius, Herman. *The Economy of the Covenants between God and Man*

K. McGregor Wright: *No Place for Sovereignty*

Any of the great systematic theologies by C. Hodge, Turretin, Berkhof, Strong, Reymond, etc.

VI. Reading Assignments

All readings are from Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*.

Please Note: Those who have newer editions of Berkhof will find that there are two sections, numbered separately. Unless noted, all the assignments below are from the *second section*.

Module 1: The Biblical Doctrine of Man, Pages 181-236

Module 2: The Biblical Doctrine of God, Pages 41-81

Module 3: The Biblical Doctrine of Christ, Pages 312-324; 367-383

Module 4: The Biblical Doctrine of the Scriptures, Pages 116-169 (FIRST SECTION)

Module 5: The Biblical Doctrine of the Trinity, Pages 82-125

Module 6: Calling and Regeneration, Salvation: Conversion and Perseverance; Pages 415-431; 447-526

VII. Research Paper Guidelines

- The paper may be on one of the subjects covered within the class; i.e., to “dig deeper” into one of the areas of Reformed Theology.
 - For example, while the class lecture may not have enough time to go deeper into the theological controversy over “Sola Scriptura” between the Reformers and the Catholic Church the student may do his/her paper on this subject.
 - If you have questions on the topic please consult with the instructor first.
- The student is required to use the standard MLA format.
 - A simple guideline is provided at <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>
 - Extended parentheses (For example, a “long winded excursus stuck in the middle of a sentence to explain a complicated idea or concept) are frowned upon in this format. It breaks up the train of thought and makes it very difficult for the reader to follow.
 - Dr. Faria prefers footnotes at the bottom of the same page.
 - Font is Times New Roman, 12 point.
- The paper must be written from two standards:
 - It must be *academically proficient*: as a graduate student always remember that your research is to be of the highest caliber.

- It must be *professionally proficient*: a theological paper is written concerning the deep truths of God.
- Avoid excessive use of internet citations.
 - One example is above with the MLA format address. There is no telling how long that address will exist on the internet since it changes so often, servers go down, etc.
 - With the internet, there is a “flattening” of authority; i.e., anyone with a keyboard is now a self-proclaimed authority. Good research isn’t googled.
- Include a correctly formatted bibliography.
 - If you footnote a source it must be in your bibliography.
 - The student might research Endnote software program: <http://endnote.com/>. Endnote “grabs” library database publishing information on books and articles that you cite and inserts them into your research paper, properly formats them for footnotes, endnotes, then creates the bibliography for you.
- Length of Paper
 - A standard length for a graduate paper is twenty pages, not including bibliography.
 - You may have less, but no less than 15 pages if you sense you have addressed the topic well and it is well researched and well written.
- Late papers will be docked one grade for each day the paper is late.