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# Systematic Theology I

Lectures by

Douglas F. Kelly, Ph.D.

REFORMED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY  
Virtual Campus

# RTS Distance Education

The Virtual Campus of Reformed Theological Seminary offers students the convenience of home study with the quality of on-campus instruction. This course is based on classroom lectures using the GUIDE approach to learning.

Each lesson contains the following:

**G**etting Started      To prepare adequately for each lesson, a reading assignment and audio lecture are listed.

**U**nderstanding      To maximize student learning, the purposes and objectives for the lesson are given.

**I**nvestigating      To integrate readings, audio lectures, and outline, students are encouraged to notate information in a manner that will prove beneficial for study and examination. The study guide allows space for note-taking to expand the outline.

**D**eveloping      To further develop the concepts presented, suggested readings and applications are offered.

**E**valuating      To help students summarize and synthesize the material covered, study questions are provided.

COURSE SYLLABUS  
Systematic Theology I, OST508 3 hours  
Dr. Douglas F. Kelly  
Reformed Theological Seminary, Virtual

*Professor*

Dr. Douglas F. Kelly is J. Richard Jordon Professor of Theology at the Charlotte campus of Reformed Theological Seminary. Dr. Kelly is the author of *Creation and Change; If God Already Knows, Why Pray?; The Emergence of Liberty in the Modern World*; co-author of *A Guide to the Westminster Confession of Faith*; and translator for *Sermons on 2 Samuel* by John Calvin.

*Course Description*

This course is a survey of theology with emphasis upon the practical application of the doctrines to the ministry of the Gospel in contemporary culture. Topics include Scripture, theology proper, and anthropology.

*Course Objectives*

It is our intention to base the content of this survey of doctrine on the exegesis of Scripture. We will be making continual reference to the Reformed tradition, and will deal with the Patristic heritage where this has particular relevance. Reference will be made to other theological traditions and periods as well. All through, we shall attempt to relate these truths to contemporary life, thought, and ministry.

*Required Textbooks*

Bavinck, Herman. *The Doctrine of God*. Carlisle: Banner of Truth, 1997.

Berkhof, Louis. *Systematic Theology*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996.

*The Bible*.

Calvin, John. *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Edited by John T. McNeill. Translated by Ford Lewis Battles. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960.

Geisler, Norman, ed. *Inerrancy*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1980.

Kelly, Douglas F. *Creation and Change: Genesis 1.1 - 2.4 in the Light of Changing Scientific Paradigms*. Ross-shire: Mentor, 1997.

Kelly, Douglas F. Various readings (downloadable from the Virtual Classroom).

*Westminster Confession of Faith*. Glasgow: Free Presbyterian Publications, 1997.

All required books are available through the RTS Online Bookstore at [www.mindandheart.com](http://www.mindandheart.com).

*Suggested Reading*

At the end of most lessons, a list of suggested reading is provided. These books are not part of the required material for the course. They have been included solely to point interested students to more comprehensive and in-depth treatments of the subjects covered in this course.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS  
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*Online Student Handbook*

The Online Student Handbook has been designed to assist you in successfully navigating the online Virtual campus experience, whether you are taking a single course or pursuing a certificate or degree program. In it you will find valuable information, step-by-step instructions, study helps, and essential forms to guide you through every aspect of your distance education opportunity from registration to graduation. Please use this resource as your first-stop reference manual. You will find it located at the RTS/Virtual website (<http://virtual.rts.edu>) under the Student Services tab.

*Requirements in Brief*

- \* Follow the Study Guide provided.
- \* Listen to all Recorded Lectures.
- \* Complete all Readings.
- \* Participate in Forum Discussions (with other students and Professor)
- \* Take the Mid Term Exam
- \* Take the Final Exam.
- \* Write a Major Response Paper
- \* Submit Mentor Report/Course Application Paper

*Forum Discussions (10%)*

The student is to participate in forum discussions in the online tutorial. 10% total (5% Student to Student, 5% Student to Professor, with minimum of 5 posts each, including the introduction and 4 topical question responses.)

*Major Response Paper (25%)*

Each student is required to submit, at the completion of the course, a 10- to 15-page major response paper on a topic relevant to the course (see “Major Response Paper Topics” at the end of this syllabus for further instruction and possible topics). This paper should integrate as much of the lecture material as possible. Although this paper is not a research paper *per se*, primary and secondary sources should be incorporated whenever possible. This will show that the student has interacted with the material appropriately. Give fair treatment to opposing viewpoints. The paper must not be over 15 typewritten pages (12-point type font size, Times New Roman font style or equivalent) and must use the guidelines in the current edition of *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, by Kate L. Turabian.

*Examinations (Mid Term: 30%, Final: 30%)*

There are two examinations for this course. The mid-term examination will cover the lectures and readings from Lesson One through Lesson Eight. The final examination will cover the lectures and readings from Lesson Nine through Lesson Eleven.

All exams are to be requested online via the links in the Virtual classroom during week 6 for the mid term and week 12 for the final. All exams are proctored. Upon completion, please upload your exam in the Virtual classroom.

### *Mentor Report/Course Application Paper (5%)*

Each MA (Religion) student must submit a completed Mentor Course Report Form at the conclusion of the course. For students who are not registered in the MA (Religion) program, you must submit a 200-word Course Application Paper communicating how this course will fit into the objectives you have for your ministry, your educational goals, or other objectives you wish to achieve in life.

### *Assignments*

Best practice for your time management is for you to finish and/or submit all assignments at the end of the week in which they fall in the Virtual classroom, using the upload links provided. All work must be submitted by midnight of the course end date, per your course start letter. You are responsible for turning in all assignments on time. No late submissions are permitted. Any student who needs an extension must get approval from the Registrar prior to that time.

### *Contact Information*

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COURSE OUTLINE  
Systematic Theology I, OST508 3 hours  
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*Lesson One*

Syllabus Lecture  
Knowledge of God  
Introduction to Systematic Theology

*Lesson Two*

The Phenomenon of Man's Religiousness  
Revelation

*Lesson Three*

The Biblical Testimony Regarding Inspiration  
Inerrancy and Perspicuity

*Lesson Four*

The Knowability of God  
The Names of God

*Lesson Five*

General Approach to the Trinity  
New Testament and Early Church Trinitarian Theology

*Lesson Six*

Central Affirmations of Trinitarian Doctrine

*Lesson Seven*

Traditional Theological Distinctions  
Practical Application of Trinitarian Doctrine

*Lesson Eight*

The Attributes of God

*Lesson Nine*

The Divine Decrees

*Lesson Ten*

Creation and Providence

*Lesson Eleven*

Anthropology and Covenants

COURSE BIBLIOGRAPHY  
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## SUPPLEMENTARY EXAM STUDY QUESTIONS

Systematic Theology I, OST508 3 hours

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Reformed Theological Seminary, Virtual

NOTE: This guide is designed to *supplement* the various Developing and Evaluating questions found at the end of each lesson in the Study Guide, which should be the foundation of your study and preparation for the Mid-term and Final exams. You will not be required to turn in the work you do for these Supplementary Exam Study Questions or the Developing and Evaluating questions from the Study Guide.

1. Meaning of “theology”
2. Vos on the four departments of theology (exegetical, historical, systematic, practical)
3. Vos on the relationship between biblical and systematic theology
4. The traditional reformed starting point in theology
5. The Marxist theory of the origin of religion
6. Freud’s explanation of the origin of religion
7. Distinguish natural and supernatural revelation.
8. Distinguish between general and special revelation.
9. Why is natural revelation insufficient to lead us to a saving knowledge of God?
10. For what does general revelation hold all men responsible?
11. What does Calvin compare to a pair of eyeglasses?
12. Mention 3 types of special revelation.
13. What is meant by the “perspicuity of the Scripture?”
14. The importance of sound doctrine of Scripture
15. What is meant by: Christ as “the epistemological logos?”
16. What, basically, does Calvin mean by God’s “accommodation?”
17. How do you deal with the argument since God is infinite and man is finite, God cannot truly speak in limited human words?
18. What does 2 Timothy 3:16 mean by theopneustos?
19. What is the basic teaching of 2 Peter 1:19-21 concerning the mode of the inspiration of the Scriptures?
20. Discuss the attitude of the New Testament towards the OT.
21. How does the NT witness to its own authority?
22. What is the relationship of Christ and the apostles in the writing of Scripture?
23. What NT passage refers to the other NT writings as “Scriptures”?
24. Discuss the internal testimony of the Holy Spirit.
25. Does the internal testimony of Holy Spirit add anything new to the Scriptures?
26. What is our starting point in knowing God?
27. What is the difference between apprehending and comprehending God?
28. What is meant by: the “noetic effects” of sin?
29. Compare and contrast the concept of the names of God and human names.
30. Compare and contrast analogical, univocal and equivocal language.
31. Discuss the place of anthropomorphisms in Scripture.
32. What does Warfield see as the attitude of the NT writers to the God of the OT?
33. According to Gregory Nazianzus, why was the Trinity not clearly revealed in the

OT?

34. What is “the fundamental proof” of the Trinity in the NT?
35. List some passages in which the three persons of the Trinity are brought together in the NT.
36. Discuss the significance of the homoousios.
37. Discuss “one substance (or ousia), three persons”.
38. What is meant by perichoresis in the Trinitarian doctrine?”
39. What does Zizioulas say that the definition of substance (being) implies when used of God?
40. What is the problem with thinking that God was something like “bare being” to which three personalities were somehow later added?
41. What is wrong with setting up a “casual structure” or “series of dependence” among the Persons of the Trinity?
42. What is the problem with attempting to anchor the unity of the Trinity in the Person of the Father rather than in His being?
43. What is the distinction between ontological and economical trinity?
44. Within traditional Trinitarian doctrine, to what does “filiation” and “spiration” refer? Who is said to be “ingenerate”?
45. Compare and contrast the definitions of personality of Boethius and Richard of St. Victor.
46. Discuss the Docetic heresy briefly.
47. Discuss the Ebionite heresy briefly.
48. What was the Modalistic Monarchianism?
49. What was the Dynamic Monarchianism?
50. What ancient heresy is Jehovah’s Witnesses most like?
51. What ancient heresy is Mormonism most like?
52. What was Ariansim?
53. Discuss the relation of God’s attributes to His being/essence.
54. Distinguish between communicable and incommunicable attributes.
55. Which attributes of God are considered to be “incommunicable?”
56. Which attributes of God are considered to be “communicable?”
57. Distinguish between “moral” and “natural” attributes.
58. How can God remain immutable and yet be involved in changes in history?
59. Infinity means that God is not limited in three regards. What are they?
60. What is God’s simplicity?
61. Discuss God’s spirituality.
62. What are the “mental attributes” of God?
63. Discuss the wisdom of God.
64. In what three traditional ways is God’s veracity thought of?
65. Where is the standard of goodness?
66. What is the connection between God’s being and the ultimate standard of goodness?

\* These Questions Begin the Final Exam Material

67. Discuss God and joy.
68. Discuss God and humility.
69. What are some scriptural passages and concepts that, according to Wollebius, speak of the decrees of God (74)?

70. Memorize the Westminster Shorter Catechism, question 7.
71. What connection does Warfield draw between “plan” and “person”?
72. According to Boettner, why is the biblical doctrine of sovereignty comforting?
73. What three points does the Westminster Confession of Faith (III. 1) deny about God and the eternal decrees?
74. Discuss this statement: Men are “free” from external compulsion, but not from the control of their own nature.
75. Deal with this objection: “If you are elect, does it not make any difference what you do, you will still be saved?”
76. Answer this question: “What if someone wanted to be saved, but was not elect?”
77. What does the main OT word for election (*bahar*) basically mean?
78. How does the OT use the word knowledge (*yada*)?
79. Discuss the OT background of Israel’s election.
80. Discuss Israel’s election in the covenant context.
81. Discuss the remnant concept.
82. What shift of emphasis regarding election occurs after the Incarnation?
83. Discuss the meaning of: “Not all were Israel which were of Israel” (Rom. 9:6).
84. Discuss what Romans 11 teaches about the future of the Jews.
85. How does Paul deal in Rom. 9 with the objection that if election depends on God, then for someone to be lost is God’s fault?
86. Discuss Christ as the elect one.
87. Does Dabney consider the decrees of election and reprobation to be parallel?
88. What is the basic meaning of reprobation?
89. Why do you think the doctrine of creation is important?
90. What, basically, does T. S. Kuhn mean by, “a paradigm shift?”
91. What type of literature is found in Genesis 1 and 2?
92. What is the NT view of the early chapters of Genesis?
93. What is the very basic outline of Genesis?
94. Discuss the OT words and concept of absolute creation.
95. What is the alternative to absolute creation?
96. What are the basic points of the two laws of thermodynamics and what are their implications?
97. What happened on the first day of creation?
98. Discuss the “gap theory.”
99. Discuss the meaning of “day” in Genesis 1 and 2.
100. What happened on the second day of creation?
101. What three “divisions” are noted on the third day of creation?
102. Summarize the events of the six days of creation.
103. List the “four-fold state” of man in relation to the possibility of sinning.
104. Discuss Calvin on man’s “twofold knowledge.”
105. How do you explain the difference between Gen. 1:1-23 and 2:4-25 as accounts of creation?
106. Discuss the implications (as listed in the class lectures) of God having created man’s body (Gen. 2:7).
107. What does Scripture basically teach concerning one’s soul? (Do not discuss Dichotomy or Trichotomy here).
108. What is the trichotomist position concerning the soul and spirit?

109. What scriptural evidence is used to support trichotomy?
110. What is the dichotomist position?
111. What scriptural evidence supports dichotomy?
112. If the dichotomist position seems more scriptural in light of the majority of relevant passages, how would you interpret 1 Thess. 5:23 and Heb. 4:12?
113. Discuss briefly “truduciansim” and “creationism” in the context of the origin of the soul.
114. Discuss Biblical evidence for why the image of God was or was not retained in man after the Fall. Be specific.
115. What, according to class notes, is involved in man’s being created in God’s image?
116. Discuss the pros and cons of the phrase “Covenant of Works” (or “Adamic Administration,” etc.).
117. Did the Fall relieve man of the responsibility to love and serve God? Why or why not?
118. Discuss the prohibition involved in the Covenant of Works (Adamic Administration).
119. What was the three-fold aspect of death in the threat given to Adam (Gen. 2:17; 3:17-19)?
120. What was the implied promise?
121. Why do you think fallen man was not allowed to eat of “the tree of life?”
122. Discuss briefly Adam’s headship and the principle of representation in human society.
123. Discuss the continuing relevance of the covenant of works.
124. If the Fall is foreordained, why is God not the author of sin? (See Westminster Confession III. 1.)
125. Discuss how man’s relationship to God changed after the Fall. Discuss the curse on the woman and the meaning of “thy desire shall be to thy husband.”
126. Discuss the curse on the man and its side effects on work and the body (dust).
127. Discuss the character of sin as something more than “privation of the good.”
128. Discuss sin as guilt and pollution.
129. Discuss guilt as involving “demerit” and “the judgment of demerit.”
130. What is meant by original sin?
131. What is the relation of original sin to actual sin?
132. Distinguish voluntas from arbitrium.
133. Discuss the implications of the statement: “Man’s actions are based upon his character.”
134. Give scriptural evidence that in the Fall, man lost arbitrium (see Westminster Confession IX.3).
135. The concept of common grace as compared to special/saving grace.
136. What are the specific effects of common grace?
137. What are the things that common grace does not do?
138. What are the purposes of common grace?
140. List the five major characteristics given in John Murray’s definition of covenant. In light of Gal. 3:17-22, what is the relationship of the Abrahamic and Mosaic covenants?
141. Discuss the main contrast between Sinaitic Covenant and the New Covenant in Heb. 8:7-13; 10:16-17 (and cf. Jer. 31:31-34).

142. What is the main point of the contrast between law and grace in II Cor. 3:6-15?
143. What does Hebrews 11 teach about the continuity (or discontinuity) of the Covenant of Grace in the history of redemption?
144. What are the two major characteristics of the Mosaic covenant?

MAJOR RESPONSE PAPER TOPICS  
Systematic Theology I, OST508 3 hours  
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This paper should be from 10-12 pages in length (typed and double-spaced) with appropriate footnoting and bibliography. Do not include a string of long quotations. Make sure you (1) deal with the relevant information competently and fairly to all sides; (2) interact with the material yourself so that you demonstrate that you have “thought about it theologically”; (3) have a proper introduction and conclusion and a clear structure for your essay; (4) use good grammar and write clearly.

Choose 1 out of 5 options.

(1) Has revelation ceased with the close of the canon of Scripture, or does it continue today? (Look at this matter exegetically, theologically and pastorally.)

(2) Prepare an exegetically-based theological paper on relevant sections of the first two chapters of Romans, with special reference to the knowledge of God held by pagans. What are the implications of this knowledge for societal morals, for final judgment, and for the missionary enterprise?

(3) Discuss the central Trinitarian truth of circumincession or perichoresis or mutual indwelling. What does this mean within the Godhead? What are its wider implications for the corporate life of Christians? Be sure to deal with scriptural passages. (You may wish to consult T. F. Torrance’s *Trinitarian Faith* and John Zizioulas’ *Being as Communion*).

(4) Discuss the basic Biblical teaching on marriage as “one flesh” (refer to appropriate Biblical texts such as Gen 2, Matt 19, Eph 5, etc.). Particularly deal with this current problem: in light of what marriage was designed to be, why do so many of them go astray? Discuss why people are attracted to one another; then why problems in their marriage develop, and especially, how to deal with such problems in light of God’s grace and purpose. You may wish to refer to such works as:

R.C. Sproul, *The Intimate Marriage*

L. Crabb, *The Marriage Builder*

E. Worthington, *Counseling Before Marriage*

D. and R. Friesen, *Counseling and Marriage*

H. Hendrix, *Getting the Love You Want*

(5) Compare and contrast the Christian view of God as Triune and the Islamic view of God as one (either unipersonal or an impersonal monad).