

#311 Theology 1: Doctrine of the Word of God
Western Reformed Seminary (www.wrs.edu)
John A. Battle, Th.D.
Fall 2020

COURSE INFORMATION

Course objectives

The seminary catalog describes the subject matter of this course as follows: “God’s manifestation of himself and methods of theological studies; discussion of revelation, Word, inspiration, inerrancy, authority, and the methodology of theology.” In this course you will become familiar with the orthodox and reformed views of natural and special revelation, the relationship by which God has revealed himself to mankind (covenant), the process and results of biblical inspiration, and the manner in which we understand the truth of God and that which he reveals to us. Topics (such as inerrancy) which are controversial today will receive special attention. The course will involve lectures, considerable reading, responses to direct questions, and a special project.

Course outcomes

By successfully completing this course, you should be able to do the following:

- Define and distinguish the various branches of systematic theology
- Effectively define and defend the orthodox doctrines of revelation and the word of God
- Defend the inspiration, infallibility, and inerrancy of Scripture
- Explain the relation of the inspiration of Scripture to Bible manuscripts and translations
- Employ sound hermeneutical principles to the different sorts of biblical literature
- Identify and refute interpretations of Scripture based on false hermeneutical principles
- Identify the main historic and contemporary errors regarding the Scripture’s inspiration and authority
- Demonstrate the covenant structure of biblical revelation
- Preach or teach on the subject of the Bible and revelation
- Pass ordination examinations dealing with the inspiration and interpretation of Scripture

Required reading

John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Book 1: ch. 1-9 (in Westminster Press edition, Vol. 1, pp. 35-96)

Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, Introduction, ch. 1-6 (Vol. 1, pp. 1-188)

A. A. Hodge, *The Confession of Faith*, Introduction, ch. 1-2, and Commentary, ch. 1 (pp. 1-45)

Ned B. Stonehouse, "The Authority of the New Testament," in *The Infallible Word*, pp. 88-136

Written questions

At the end of each of the assigned three chapters in A. A. Hodge, is a list of questions. You are to write these questions with the proper answers. This may be done by writing either complete sentence answers, or by writing the questions with short answers.

Elective reading

In addition to the required reading assignment, you are to read a total of 300 pages or 15 clock hours in the fields covered in this course. While these books are your choice, they must be of standard quality and scholarly level. Keep a log of your reading; this log must be turned in to complete the assignment.

Special presentation

You will make a class presentation by taking a faulty position regarding the inspiration and inerrancy of the Bible which is presented by some group or writer, accurately presenting that view and its main support, then providing a refutation of that view, and offering a clear definition and support for the corresponding correct view. Please provide a printed outline handout for the class or use a PowerPoint presentation. These will be summary presentations, and should take no more than 30 minutes.

Tests

There will be two tests during the semester, a midterm and a final examination. These tests will be based on the notes and the supplied study questions.

Grading

- Attendance and participation 10%
- Required Reading 15%
- Questions 10%
- Elective Reading 10%
- Special Presentation 15%
- Midterm Examination 20%

- Final Examination 20%

Class schedule

Sept.	2	Introduction to the course
	9	
	16	
	23	
	30	(G. W. Presbytery – no class)
Oct.	7	
	14	Required Reading Assignment due
	21	Midterm Examination
	28	
Nov.	4	Questions due
	11	
	18	
	25	Special Presentation
Dec.	2	
	9	Elective Reading Assignment Due
	16	Final Examination