

#311 Theology 1: The Word of God  
Western Reformed Seminary  
John A. Battle, Th.D.  
Pastoral Mentorship Program  
Academic year 2016-2017

## **COURSE INFORMATION**

### ***Welcome!***

Welcome to the study of the doctrine of the Word of God in the Pastoral Mentorship Program. This part of theology is foundational to all the rest. You have undertaken a difficult but very rewarding study, and we trust that the Lord will enable you and bless you as you pursue this program. Be sure to keep in contact with me as you work through the material (battle@wrs.edu), and feel free to call the office when you have any question. Of course, your pastoral mentor will be available and anxious to help you as well. Your goal should be to work through all the material, do all the reading and written assignments, and take both tests at home, so that our time spent together in the concentrated classes will be of maximum benefit.

### ***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 assignment***

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 assignment***

At the end of each of the assigned three chapters in A. A. Hodge, *The Confession of Faith*, is a list of questions. Please 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 assignment***

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 assignment***

You will make an oral presentation during an on-campus session. You will take 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, and then provide a refutation of that view, offering a clear definition and support for the corresponding correct view. One copy of the outline of the presentation must be turned in for the library. These will be summary presentations, and should take about half an hour.

## ***Examinations***

Included in the course syllabus is a list of study questions. These questions are arranged in the order they are discussed in the syllabus. Each has a number in parenthesis showing the number of points awarded that question on the examination. The questions for the midterm and final examinations will be selected from these study questions. Your pastoral mentor will oversee your taking of these examinations. You may use an unmarked Bible during the exams.

## ***Grading***

- Required Reading 20%
- Written Questions 10%
- Elective Reading 15%
- Special Presentation 15%
- Midterm Examination (Study Questions #1-21) 20%
- Final Examination (Study Questions #22-39) 20%