



**COVENANT BAPTIST
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY**

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INFORMED SCHOLARSHIP • PASTORAL HEART

ST47 • Recovering the Orthodox Van Til

Dr. Lane Tipton, Visiting Professor of Systematic Theology
2 Credit Hours

Course Description

The course will cover the context, background, structure and implications of the trinitarian theology of Cornelius Van Til. Topics will cover Van Til's theology of the Creator-creature relation, reception of Calvin's doctrine of trinitarian personhood, integration of continental Dutch and English Puritan trinitarian theology, the bearing of the doctrine of perichoresis on image of God, the covenant of works, and revelation. Special attention will be given to close readings of Van Til's primary sources.

Educational Objectives

The educational objectives include grasping the trinitarian theology of Van Til in relation to other theological traditions, applying the insights of confessional trinitarian theology to other doctrinal loci, assessing trends in medieval and modern trinitarian theology in light of classical Reformed theology, enriching teaching and preaching the glory of self-contained triune God, informing the worship of the church in light of the revelation of God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Required Reading:

Section I Van Til's Confessional Trinitarianism: Old Princeton and Old Amsterdam

Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics: God and Creation*, 148-336.
Cornelius Van Til, *An Introduction to Systematic Theology*, 1-19; 159-252.
Cornelius Van Til, *The Defense of the Faith*, 25-28 (first edition).
Cornelius Van Til, *The Theology of James Daane*, 33-35.

Section II: The Voluntary Condescension of Immutable Trinitarian Persons

Dorner, *Divine Immutability: A Critical Reconsideration*, 1-38, 131-197.
Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, vol. II, Chapter 8, 426-429.
Tipton, *Locating the Mystery: Bavinck and Van Til on Immutability and Anthropomorphism*, (all).
Van Til, *An Introduction to Systematic Theology*, 210-213.
Van Til, *The Defense of the Faith* (first edition), 23-39.

Section III: A Distinctively Reformed Doctrine of Natural Revelation and the Natural Knowledge of God

Aquinas, *Commentary on Romans*, (Emmaus Academic, 2020), 54-70.
Spezzano, *The Glory of God's Grace: Deification According to St. Thomas Aquinas* (Sapientia Press, 2015), 1-104; 328-346.
Tipton, Robert Strimple on the Image of God, *New Horizons*.
https://opc.org/nh.html?article_id=1112
Tipton, *The Deeper Protestant Conception of Natural Theology*,
Van Til, *A Survey of Christian Epistemology*, 14-115.

Section IV: Creation and Voluntary Condescension: Natural and Special Revelation

Cassidy, *Karl Barth's Analoga*, *Reformed Forum Conference Lecture* (2018).

Strimple, God’s Created Image, Lectures 11 and 12 on Karl Barth’s Doctrine of the Image of God, (iTunes).
 Van Til, Apologetics, 23-37.
 Van Til. Common Grace and the Gospel, 68-72.
 Van Til, “Nature and Scripture” in The Infallible Word: A Symposium by the Faculty of Westminster Theological Seminary, 255-293.

Section V Image of God and the Covenant of Works in Vos and Kline

Olinger, Geerhardus Vos and the Covenant of Works, Reformed Forum Conference Lecture 2021.
 Olinger, Geerhardus Vos: Confessional Presbyterian and Biblical Theologian (Reformed Forum, 2018), 163-83
 Vos, Reformed Dogmatics, Volume II: Anthropology, 1-74.
 Vos, Pauline Eschatology, 137-171.

Suggested Reading

Section I Van Til’s Confessional Trinitarianism: Old Princeton and Old Amsterdam

A. A. Hodge, The Confession of Faith, 45-62.
 A. A. Hodge, Outlines of Theology, 129-99.
 A. A. Hodge, Evangelical Theology: Lectures On Doctrine, 97-117.
 Charles Hodge’s Systematic Theology, vol. I, 366-92; 442-534.

Section III: A Distinctively Reformed Doctrine of Natural Revelation and the Natural Knowledge of God

Calvin, Institutes of Christian Religion, translated by Battles, Book I, chapters 1-6.
 Van Til, An Introduction to Systematic Theology, 2-146.
 Warfield, Calvin and Calvinism, Chapter II, “Calvin’s Doctrine of the Knowledge of God.”

Section V Image of God and the Covenant of Works in Vos and Kline

Kline, Kingdom Prologue, 42-117.
 Vos, The Doctrine of the Covenant in Reformed Theology, Redemptive History and Biblical Interpretation: The Shorter Writings of Geerhardus Vos, edited by Richard B. Gaffin, Jr., 234-270.

Course Requirements

The two requirements for the course consist in attending lectures and engaging in discussion, as well as writing a research paper on some aspect of trinitarian theology as summarized below.

Students will be expected to write a paper on some aspect of Van Til’s Trinitarian theology. The paper can be either (1) an exposition and analysis of Van Til, or (2) a critique of another trinitarian theologian from a Van Tilian perspective (or a combination of [1] and [2]). M.Div. papers should be around 10-15 pages. However, length is a function of content, so aim for *clarity, cogency, and quality of argument*, not necessarily length! The paper should include a clear thesis statement that each section of the paper supports.

Academic Performance

No student will be deemed to have successfully completed the work in any course who does not achieve a cumulative grade of 75% or above for his course work. The letter equivalents for the percentile grades assigned are as follows:

A 96-100	B+ 88-90	C+ 78-80
A- 91-95	B 85-87	C 75-77
	B- 81-84	C- 71-74

Times and Places of Class Meetings:

TBA

Schedule of Lectures

TBA