



BLUE RIDGE INSTITUTE FOR THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

Growing Together as Church Leaders in Christ

(Paul on Resurrection, Eschatology, and Leading Ministry in Christ)

Location
Day/Time
Start/end dates

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Brite-VA.org

Course Description

This course identifies and applies the biblical graces, contexts, and responses that promote Christian leader growth. This offering leads the Master of Divinity student first to explore and apply the Biblical-theological norms associated with communion with the Triune God through union with the risen Christ. This provides the foundation, secondly, for developing Christian leader identity and character in their ministry contexts of marriages, families, churches, and communities. This will help students equip other leaders in Christian leader functions.

Course Objectives

Upon completion of course requirements, the student will:

1. Articulate their saving faith-union with the risen Christ and their uniquely grace-based communion with the Triune God as ministry leaders.
2. Show how they apply the graces that comprise God's forensic acts and renovative works in Christ to their ministry contexts as marriage, family, and church leaders.
3. Apply how they may grow through their sharing in Christ's resurrection with their fellow leaders in their respective ministry contexts.
4. Know how to facilitate communities of grace in Christ that build relationships of trust among leaders and members. This will help fellow leaders grow as they serve in the wake of the student's influence.

Required Texts (NOTE: BRITE requires a 750-1000 pages of reading for a 3-credit class)

Jonathan Landry Cruse, *The Christian's True Identity- What it Means to be in Christ*. Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2019. ISBN 9781601787255 (155 pp.)

Richard B. Gaffin, Jr. *By Faith, Not By Sight*. Bletchley: Paternoster Press, 2006. (111 pp.)

Paul E. Miller, *J-Curve: Dying and Rising with Jesus in Everyday Life*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2019. Trade Paperback ISBN 978-1-4335-6156-6 (314 pages)

John Murray, *Redemption Accomplished and Applied*. Grand Rapids: Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1984. ISBN-10-0802811434 (182 pp).

Grades

- 20% Preparation of short paper and practical exercises
- 30% Final Paper
- 30% Class Attendance and Participation
- 20% Course reading completed

Assignments

Short paper:

Papers should be typed, single space, 12-point Times New Roman font, with standard 1-inch margins around the page.

Final Paper: Students will define, defend, and document in their 15 page course final paper a biblical-theological plan for growing leaders. They will identify their relevant leader norms, describe their planned ministry context, and apply their chosen leader functions in their growth and development plan. (See details at website below).

<https://s3.amazonaws.com/5mt.brite-va.org/2019/01/BRITE-Style-Sheet1.pdf>

Participation and Attendance: Each student is required to attend each course, answer questions when asked, and participate in class discussions. The course consists of two hours of lecture intermingled with some discussion covering assigned readings; assigned readings should be completed prior to the beginning of class.

Reading: Completion of all assigned reading. This portion will be included as part of the final exam. Course readings include all assigned PDFs. Students are expected to read the assigned materials. Class lectures will not reteach what is in the course readings.

Miscellaneous

Attendance

Class attendance is required. If a student anticipates an unavoidable absence, he should notify the instructor in advance. Each hour of unexcused absence subjects the student reduction of his final grade by one-half of a letter grade. Students missing more than two sessions (for any reason) may **either** submit an additional, compensatory assignment [determined by the instructor] **or** choose to receive a full letter grade reduction in their final grade.

Grading Scale

The grading scale for this course is the Institute's grading scale. You may find it listed in the BRITE Academic Catalog (<https://www.brite-va.org/brite-catalog/>).

Plagiarism

Please review the Institute's policy on plagiarism in the Academic Catalog. Plagiarized work will subject the student to failure in the course and possible disciplinary action.¹

In-Class Computer Use

Computers and tablets **are** permitted in this course, provided the internet browser is not being abused for non-class purposes. Cell phones must be set to silent and stowed. If for some extraordinary reason you need to take a call, you may either wait until the break or leave the classroom.

Class Calendar

Approximate Course Schedule

Please note that this schedule is approximate and subject to change at any time. The instructor's announced changes in class will be the final word on the nature and date of assignments. They are the student's sole responsibility to note and to implement.

First Meeting: God's Eternal Plan in Christ for His Church and Her Leaders

Prerequisite: Listen to/read sermon on Ephesians 1:3-14.

at: <https://www.sermonaudio.com/sermoninfo.asp?SID=64191754186212>

1. Cruse, *The Christian's True Identity*. Chapters 1- 2, pp. 1-30 (31 pages)
2. Gaffin, *By Faith, Not by Sight*. Ch. 1. pp. 1-15. (16 pages)
3. Miller, Paul E. *J-Curve*. Part 1: "Discovering the J-Curve." pp. 17-86 (70 pages)
4. Murray, *Redemption Accomplished and Applied*, Part II, Chapters 1,9. (24 pages)

Second Meeting: The Grace of The Son, Leader Identity, & Marriage Leader Growth: Christ's Resurrection and our Justification and Glorification as His Bride.

Prerequisite: Listen to read sermon on Ephesians 2:1-21; 5:22-33; (I Tim. 3:2)

at: <https://www.sermonaudio.com/sermoninfo.asp?m=t&s=121019216565880>

1. Cruse, *The Christian's True Identity*. Ch. 3-4, p. 31-60. (30 pages)
2. Gaffin. *By Faith, Not by Sight*. Ch. 2. pp. 18-44. (27 pages)
3. Miller, Paul E. *J-Curve*. Part 2: "The Descent of Love." pp. 87-118 (32 pages)
4. Murray. *Redemption Accomplished* – Part I, Ch. 1-5 (pp. 51-76) Part II, Ch. 5. (40 pp.)

¹ As an example (and an easy way to avoid plagiarism), one may note that the wording for this Miscellaneous section of the syllabus is borrowed from a similar syllabus section by Dr. Guy Waters of Reformed Theological Seminary in Jackson, MS. This language appears in many of his course syllabi.

**Third Meeting: The Love of the Father, Leader Identity, & Family Leader Growth:
God's Grace in Our Calling, Rebirth, and Adoption as Christ's Brothers**

Prerequisites: Listen to sermon on Eph. 1:5, 3:14-21, 5:1-2; 6:1-4 (I Tim. 3:4-5)
at: <https://www.sermonaudio.com/sermoninfo.asp?m=t&s=1210192104653>

Prepare Practical Exercise 2: "Will I Trust Your Strengths?" (Handout) (3 pages)

1. Cruse, *The Christian's True Identity*. Chapters 5, pp. 61-75. (15 pages)
2. Gaffin. *By Faith, Not by Sight*. Ch. 3. pp. 53-75. (23 pages)
3. Miller, Paul E. *J-Curve. Part 3: "Dying with Jesus."* pp. 119-166 (48 pages)
4. Murray. *Redemption Accomplished and Applied*. Part II, Chapters, 2, 4-6. (29 pages)
5. Lynch, McNicol, and Thrall. Practical Exercise 2: "Will I Trust Your Strengths?" (3 pp.)

**Fourth Meeting: The Spirit's Communion, Our Identity, & Church Leader Growth:
Our Re-creation, Reconciliation, and Sanctification as Christ's Body**

Prerequisite: Listen to/read sermon on Eph. 1:2, 13-14a; 4:1-5:21; (cf. I Tim. 3:2)
at: <https://www.sermonaudio.com/sermoninfo.asp?m=t&s=1210192114337352>

Prepare Practical Exercise 3: "'Ask Me Anything'" (Handout)

1. Cruse, *The Christian's True Identity*. Chapters 5- 7 (pp.75-142) (68 pages)
2. Gaffin. *By Faith, Not by Sight*. Ch. 4. pp. 79-108. (30 pages)
3. Miller, Paul E. *J-Curve*. Part 4: "Rising with Jesus." pp. 167-244 (78 pages)
4. Murray. *Redemption Accomplished and Applied* – Part II, Chapters 3, 7. (23 pages)
5. Lynch, McNicol, and Thrall. "Ask Me Anything" Practical Exercise 3. (3 pages)

**Fifth Meeting: The Warfare of the Church, Leader Identity, and our hope in Christ.
Our Preservation, Perseverance, and Reward as we wrestle in hope**

Before meeting:

Listen to/read sermon on Ephesians 6:10-20.

at: <https://www.sermonaudio.com/sermoninfo.asp?m=t&s=1210192128106815>

Prepare Practical Exercise 4: "Experiencing Affirmation"

1. Cruse, *The Christian's True Identity*. "Secure in Him" (pp. 109-126)(18 pages)
2. Gaffin. *By Faith, Not by Sight*. Epilogue. pp. 109-111. (3 pages)
3. Miller, Paul E. *J-Curve*. Part 5: "Creating a J-Curve Community." pp. 245-307 (63 pp.)
4. Murray. *Redemption Applied* – Part II, Chapters 8-10. (31 pages)
6. Lynch, McNicol, and Thrall. "Experiencing Affirmation" (Practical Exercise 4) (3 pp.)

Academic Resources on BRITE Website

On the BRITE website (www.brite-va.org) you will find the **Academic Resources Webpage** (<https://www.brite-va.org/academic-resources/>). There you will find an ever-expanding treasure trove of resources to aid you in our studies, research, and writing during your time at BRITE.

While not every class may demand the same level of research and writing rigor, you're likely to find something on that webpage each semester that will benefit you. Check back often to that webpage. The items there are curated by the BRITE faculty in order to be of assistance to you: guidelines as to how you should format your formal academic papers, examples of well-written course papers to guide your own work.

<https://s3.amazonaws.com/5mt.brite-va.org/2019/01/BRITE-Style-Sheet1.pdf>

Open Access (free) journal article databases will aid you in your academic writing and research, and even a growing catalogue of instructional YouTube videos which will be of assistance to you. **We also have access to a variety of theological journals online via Galaxie Journals which may be of interest to you in your writing and research. Please ask the professor for information on how to log on to this e-journal portal.**

Grading Rubric

A (100-94)

Follows assignment rules re. format, length, and sources; engages primary sources; provides analysis, not simply rehearses information.

B (93-86)

Follows assignment rules re. format, length, and sources; engages minimal primary sources and is more reliant upon secondary sources; has more repetition of information than analysis

C (85-78)

Fails to meet assignment rules re. format, length, and sources; does not engage primary sources; relies upon secondary sources exclusively; has minimal analysis.

D (77-70)

Fails to meet assignment rules re. format, length, and sources; relies upon secondary sources exclusively, and has no analysis.

F (69-0)

Fails to submit paper or significantly fails to meet assignment rules

Guided Research List

- Bavinck, Herman. *Our Reasonable Faith*, trans. Henry Zylstra. 1956; reprint. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1977. pp. 386-568.
- Beeke, Joel R. *Doctrine for Life*. Reformation Heritage Publishing House, 2013.
- Berkhof, Louis. *The Assurance Of Faith*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1928.
- Bridges, Jerry. *Who Am I? Identity in Christ*. Adelphi, Maryland: Cruciform Press, 2012.
- Calvin, John. *The Institutes Of The Christian Religion*. John T. McNeill (Editor), Ford Lewis Battles (Translator). Two Volumes. The Library of Christian Classics. Louisville: Westminster Press, 1960.
- Campbell, Constantine R. *Paul And Union With Christ*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012.
- Candlish, Rob. S. *The Fatherhood Of God*. 5th ed.; Edinburgh: Adam and Charles Black, 1870.
- Ferguson, Sinclair B. *Some Pastors And Teachers*. Hardcover. Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2017.
- _____. *The Holy Spirit (Contours Of Christian Theology)*. Downer's Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996.
- _____. *The Whole Christ*. Hardcover. Wheaton: Crossway Publications, 2016.
- Frame, John M. *A Primer On Perspectivalism*. 2008.
<https://frame-poythress.org/a-primer-on-perspectivalism-revised-2008/>
- Gaffin, Richard B. Jr., *Resurrection And Redemption- A Study In Paul's Soteriology*. 2nd ed. 1987. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing Co. ISBN: 9780875522715. (160 pages).
- Garner, David B. *Sons In The Son- The Riches And Reach Of Adoption In Christ*. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2016.
- Hodge, Charles. *Systematic Theology*, 3 vols. 1871-1872; reprint. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1960. Part 111, Chapters 14-18, 20, and Part IV; Vol. 11, pp. 639-732, Vol. 111, pp. 3-258, 466-880.
- Hoekema, Anthony A. *The Bible And The Future*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979.

Guided Research List (Continued)

_____. *The Christian Looks At Himself*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1975.

Holland, Tom. *Contours In Pauline Theology*. Ross-shire, Scotland, UK: Mentor Imprint Of Christian Focus Publications. 2010.

Kruger, Melissa. *Identity Theft: Reclaiming the Truth of Who We Are in Christ*. Deerfield, Illinois: The Gospel Coalition, 2018.

Letham, Robert. *Union With Christ: In Scripture, History, And Theology*. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2011.

Lillback, Peter A. *Saint Peter's Principles*. Hardcover. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2019.

Lynch, John, with Bruce McNicol and Bill Thrall. *Behind the Mask: Reversing the Process of Unresolved Life Issues*. Phoenix: Leadership Catalyst, Inc., 2009

Lynch, John, with Bruce McNicol and Bill Thrall. *The Cure- What if God is Not Who You Think He is- And Neither Are You*. Phoenix: TrueFace, Inc., 2011

Marshall, Walter. *The Gospel Mystery Of Sanctification*. Reprint. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1954.

Martin, Albert N. *Pastoral Theology (Volume 1)*. Hardcover. Montville, NJ: Trinity Pulpit Press, 2018.

McNicol, Bruce and Bill Thrall. *The Ascent of A Leader Experience Guide*. Phoenix: Leadership Catalyst, Inc., 2009

Minear, Paul S. *Images Of The Church In The New Testament*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004.

Murray, John. *Collected Writings (4 Volumes)*. Carlisle: Banner of Truth, 1976

Murray, J. and N. B. Stonehouse. *The Free Offer Of The Gospel*. Philadelphia: Presbyterian Reformed Publishing, n.d.

Owen, John. *Communion With God*. London: Christian Focus Publications, 2012.

_____. *The Doctrine Of Justification By Faith*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1955.

Ridderbos, Herman N. *Paul: An Outline Of His Theology*. Translated by John R. deWitt. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975.

Tell, Bill. *Lay It Down*. Colorado Springs: Navpress, 2015

Guided Research List (Continued)

- Thrall, Bill, with Bruce McNicol and Ken McElrath. *The Ascent Of A Leader: How Ordinary Relationships Develop Extraordinary Character And Influence* (Hardback or Kindle Edition). Jossey-Bass Publishing Company.
- Vos, Geerhardus. *The Pauline Eschatology*. Reprint. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic Press, 1979.
- Vos, Geerhardus. *Soteriology. Reformed Dogmatics*. Edited and translated by Richard B. Gaffin, Jr. Hardback, Faithlife, 2015.
- Warfield, Benjamin Breckenridge. *Calvin And Augustine*. Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed., 1956. See Section I11 ("The Testimony of the Spirit") of "Calvin's Doctrine of the Knowledge of God," pp. 70-116.
- Warfield, Benjamin Breckinridge. *Biblical And Theological Studies*. Philadelphia: P&R, 1952. Chapters XIII-XV; pp. 351-444.
- Webb, Robert Alexander. *The Reformed Doctrine Of Adoption*. reprint. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1947.
- Wisdom, Christopher H. *Training that Leads to Trust and Transformation*.
https://www.academia.edu/5227035/Training_That_Leads_to_Trust_and_Transformation_CH_Wisdom_Doctor_of_Ministry_Dissertation

Course Objectives (COs) Related to MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)

Course: Growing Together as Church Leaders in Christ
Professor: Wisdom
Campus: Roanoke
Date: Fall 2020

SLOs: in accordance with Course Objectives (CO#), upon graduation from BRITE Master of Divinity (MDiv) ² program, students should be equipped to:

1. *Assess the presence of an internal call to ministry as pastors, teachers, evangelists, church officers, and study leaders (CO 1, 2).*
2. *Accept positions of shepherding, authority, and administration in Christ's Church (CO 3)*
3. *Attain ordination in several Reformed, Presbyterian, or Evangelical denominations (CO 4)*
4. *Analyze, Apprehend, and Apply meaning of Biblical passages from original languages (CO 2).*
5. *Articulate the meaning of Biblical passages to a variety of audiences through expository preaching, teaching, and Christian education. (CO 3)*
6. *Assimilate systematic, historical, and Biblical theology into a Reformed theological perspective of faith, ethics, piety, and church practice. (CO 2)*
7. *Affirm and winsomely assert the Christian faith and a Reformed perspective (CO 1)*

Student Learning Outcome Rationale for this course:

1. **Regarding Outcome 1:** A study of growing together in union with Christ as church leaders will help the student to evaluate his internal sense of call. A working knowledge of how church leaders grow in grace together is essential for a call to a Protestant Christian Church.
2. **Regarding Outcome 2:** As noted above, ability to pass an ordination exam will almost certainly involve successful passage of an exam in theology, including the doctrine of union with Christ. Moreover, a working knowledge of union with Christ and how church leaders grow will help the student/ordinand to understand better the positions of shepherding, authority, and administration in Christ's Church. Thus, they will better shepherd the church.
3. **Regarding Outcome 3:** See answers 1 and 2.
4. **Regarding Outcome 4:** Reading Ephesians in the Greek text will help original language skills.
5. **Regarding Outcome 5:** Understanding from Ephesians how God develops church leaders through union with Christ, by the Spirit, according to Scripture, helps the student to better apprehend and articulate the doctrine of the church to a variety of audiences. This will also help the church to safeguard against unqualified church leaders.
6. **Regarding Outcome 6:** The discussion of union with Christ by students from different denominations helps foster biblical/theological unity among Protestant Christian churches.
7. **Regarding Outcome 7:** a working knowledge and experience of growth as a church leader in Christ will help the student to fulfill the apostle Peter's exhortation: "But in your hearts, regard Christ as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you the reason for the hope that is in you, yet do it with gentleness and respect" (1 Peter 3:15-16).

² As the MDiv is the core degree at BRITE, the MDiv rubric will be used in this syllabus.