



PURITAN
REFORMED
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Doctoral Program at Puritan Reformed
Theological Seminary

HANDBOOK 2021-22

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DISCLAIMERS

This handbook includes policies and procedures pertinent to the doctoral program at Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary. Prospective and registered students should consult the handbook throughout the admission process and their study. Please visit <https://prts.edu/academics-aid/doctoral-program/> for the most recent edition of the handbook.

This handbook is not an agreement or an offer of admission to the program, and Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary reserves the right to change or correct any material in this handbook



Welcome from the President

A seminary is a center where called students are trained for faithful ministry in Christ's church (2 Tim. 2:2). It is to be an arm of the church of Jesus Christ, outfitting its students for ministry throughout the world (Matt. 28:18-20). The gospel alone is the hope of our perishing world. We believe that God, by His Spirit, will use the theological education of qualified spiritual leaders to enliven His people, save the lost, and glorify His name with faith that overcomes the world.

Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary strives to be a catalyst for defining, inspiring, promoting, and defending the Christian faith around the globe through its graduates and faculty. The world needs faith that is based on Scripture, self-denying and serving, and openly dependent on God's sovereign grace. By such faith, Jesus Christ is imaged and God's glory is transcribed in the world.

The need for faithful ministry in the academy and church is great, as are the opportunities. Moreover, no vocation on this side of heaven is as privileged or rewarding as Christian ministry. God has granted PRTS many blessings, including God-fearing instructors and students who have much love for God and each other. We are grateful for a student body of diverse backgrounds and denominations, seeking to glorify God by promoting His kingdom. The biblical, doctrinal, experiential, and relevant Reformed faith we strive to promote in every classroom builds a solid foundation for ministry today.

We are delighted that you have chosen to undertake the doctoral program with us, and hope that your time of study is intellectually challenging and stimulating, as well as spiritually enriching.

If you feel called by God to pursue a doctoral study and are looking for training that combines solid Reformed and classical theology with robust, biblical piety, our program may be exactly what you are looking for! We hope you will seriously consider Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary as the place to prepare you, with the Spirit's blessing, for a life of Christ-centered service.

May God guide you and us in His way and, if it is His will, cause our paths to cross in several years of fruitful fellowship.

Warmly,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joel R. Beeke". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dr. Joel R. Beeke, President

Welcome from the Doctoral Program Director

Welcome to the doctoral program of Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary. Foundational to our doctoral program is the academic *and* spiritual formation of the student. Our fully-funded doctoral program is designed to meet the widespread demand for a comprehensive doctoral program that captures academic rigor and integrity, combining this with biblical piety (*de pietate cum scientia conjungenda*)—in other words, a doctoral program designed to serve the ministry of both the academy and the church (teaching and preaching). The doctoral program of Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary is served by a faculty specifically appointed for the program, and internationally supported by leading scholars who are academically recognized and gifted in serving the church of Christ worldwide.

Your supervisors will work closely with you in your *academic formation*—advising you in your course work, dissertation research topic, teaching, and publications—as well as in your *spiritual formation*—guiding you in your preaching and in the reading of classic works on spirituality and piety.

Our program is internationally oriented in terms of research, education, and publication, but it also pays attention to the local and regional needs identified by you (the student) and the faculty in order to do meaningful and relevant doctoral work.

You are able to choose one of three emphases offered in the doctoral program: (1) Biblical Studies, (2) Historical Theology (Reformation and Post-reformation), and (3) Systematic Theology. These areas of research, education, and publication, due to the combined academic and spiritual emphasis distinctive, are distinctive of Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary, through which we aim to serve the global church and academy.

Our hope and prayer is that you are stimulated academically and enriched spiritually to serve Christ and His church in this world.

Warmly,



Adriaan C. Neele, PhD, Director of Doctoral Program

General Description

In preparing students to serve Christ and His church through biblical, experiential, and practical ministry, Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary (hereafter PRTS) offers an accredited and internationally recognized doctoral program. This handbook considers the rationale, requirements, and envisioned results for the Doctor of Philosophy (hereafter PhD) program.

Foundational for the doctoral program is the rationale behind the emphasis on both the academic *and* spiritual formation of the student. A worldwide demand is growing for a comprehensive doctoral program that captures academic rigor and integrity, and combines this with biblical piety (*de pietate cum scientia conjungenda*). In other words, it is necessary that a doctoral program serve the ministry of both the academy and church (teaching and preaching). This growing demand is not only identified in North America, but also throughout the world by those who appreciate the biblical and Reformed doctrines, and desire experiential preaching and teaching.

PRTS seeks to adhere to the Reformed and Puritan tradition of learning together with piety, exemplified by John Calvin, William Perkins, William Ames, Gisbertus Voetius, Archibald Alexander, and many others. We aim to do so by offering a fully-funded doctoral program that is distinctive in its academics and biblical piety; this will be evident in the admissions requirements, as well as the program's academic rigor and spiritual formation components.

The doctoral program will be academically rigorous as we offer a comprehensive program with high, measurable, and internationally peer-reviewed and accredited academic standards. The academics of the program are further enhanced by: 1) PRTS-approved and qualified Adjunct Faculty for the doctoral program serving as subject experts and co-advisors for the doctoral student; 2) external courses taken outside of PRTS by the doctoral student; 3) a world-class web-based platform of primary and secondary sources offered through the Puritan Research Center and its worldwide affiliated centers; and 4) publication of the doctoral dissertation with an academic and internationally-recognized publishing house.

The spiritual components of the doctoral program consist of assigned readings and experiential preaching (in theory and practice) or practical teaching ministry. Resonating with the Reformed and Puritan tradition of international learning, PRTS's doctoral program desires a vibrant international dimension that couples academic excellence and spiritual richness.

Key to PRTS's doctoral program is its well-built technology component that offers digitalized primary and secondary sources for research, smart-room(s) designed for distance education, and the deployment of digital writing tools for publication. Indeed, technology is integral to the doctoral program as it takes the classroom to the (non)-residential student with the aim of a more effective transfer and exchange of knowledge. Thus, the doctoral program involves a hybrid or blended-learning environment that includes in-class contact sessions (on campus or online) and online-only sessions.

Through this doctoral program, PRTS envisions the formation of pastor-scholars and scholar-pastors. The pastor-scholar is enabled to serve the church with academic integrity striving to accurately and effectively communicate the transformative truth of Scripture, as well as addressing the challenges of the modern world. The scholar-pastor is enabled to serve the academy with pastoral integrity to accurately and effectively communicate historical theology, systematic theology, or biblical studies, as well as addressing the demands of high standards of scholarship. Both the pastor-scholar and scholar-pastor are reflective practitioners.

PRTS seeks to address, without compromising its academic standards and spiritual focus, the financial challenges that often accompany a graduate degree. PRTS addresses this challenge in a sustainable way by: 1) delivering educational content, as much as possible, through technology; 2) reducing residential requirements; and 3) offering a fully-funded degree program.

Program Objectives

In preparing students to serve Christ and His church through biblical, experiential, and practical ministry, the doctoral program of PRTS prepares students to serve in the academy and church through:

- **Piety, Preaching, and Publications:** Throughout the program students are challenged to grow in their spirituality, and seek a healthy balance between academics and spiritual life; students called to a preaching ministry participate in a homiletics practicum to foster biblical and experiential preaching; and students are encouraged to engage in writing ministry during and upon completion of their studies. This writing ministry unfolds in three ways: publications in scholarly peer-reviewed journals, publications for the edification of the church, and publications designed to instruct the unsaved in a skeptical world. Moreover, the writing of a doctoral thesis keeps in mind a potential monograph for publication.

- **R**esearch and **R**eformed: Students demonstrate an advanced competency in theology—in particular Reformed theology—and mastery of relevant primary and secondary sources in one of the following disciplines: Historical Theology, Systematic Theology, or Biblical Studies. Students must demonstrate a comprehensive knowledge of Reformed intellectual trajectories and traditions.
- **T**echnology and **T**eaching: Students demonstrate an advanced level use of digital sources, deployment of writing tools, and a God-honoring use of technology, internet, and social media for the dissemination of biblical, experiential, and practical thoughts. Students called to a teaching ministry participate in a teaching practicum.
- **S**cholarship (academics) and **S**cholarships (financial): Students are able to engage in international scholarly discourse that demonstrates independent inquiry, primary source research, critical reflection, analysis, and articulation of academic research. Students are also financially supported as the program is fully-funded.

Program Goal

The over-arching goal of the doctoral program is the academic and spiritual formation of each doctoral student so as to enable him or her to serve the academy and the church with academic integrity and biblical piety. This is expressed in the three subsidiary goals of: 1) Academic and Spiritual Formation; 2) Formation in Research; and 3) Formation in Ministry.

Assessment of Program Goals

Program goals / outcome 1: Academic and Spiritual formation

Assessment of PhD student goal / outcome 1:

- Coursework assessment, and teaching and preaching evaluation.
- Comprehensive examination assessing depth, breadth, and integration of knowledge.
- Review by members of faculty, supervisor, and advisor of the academic work and spiritual well-being of student.
- A cap-stone project on spiritual formation.

Role of PRTS and Doctoral Program in assisting students to achieve goal / outcome 1:

- Provide research, education, and administrative resources.
- Provide resources for spiritual formation.
- Periodic assessment of teaching effectiveness of faculty, and other appointed instructors.
- Periodic review of curriculum and course offerings by:
 - Doctoral program management, faculty (internal), and academic advisors (external).
 - Doctoral students.

Program goals / outcome 2: Formation in Research

Assessment of PhD student goal / outcome 1:

- Coursework assessment depth, breadth, and integration of knowledge.
- Research Methodology and Dissertation Proposal course.
- Advanced research and education with digital resources.
- International engagement of scholarly work through participation of conferences, lectures, and publication of peer-reviewed articles.
- Preparation, examination, and defense of PhD dissertation.
- Publication of dissertation or peer-reviewed articles based on dissertation with international academic publishers within two years of completion of study.

Role of PRTS and Doctoral Program in assisting students to achieve goal / outcome 2:

- Offer early introduction to advanced research methodologies.
- Offer participation in PRTS research projects and PRTS conferences.
- Offer regular opportunities to present readings, research, and provide feedback.
- Regular scheduled meetings with program director, supervisor, and advisor.
- Assist student in obtaining research and travel grants.

Program goals / outcome 3: Formation in Ministry

Assessment of PhD student goal / outcome 3:

- Teaching or Preaching practicum and effectiveness.
- General presentation and communication skills.
- Effective communication of academic and research knowledge to scholarly audience.

- Effective communication of academic and research knowledge to laypeople audience.

Role of PRTS and Doctoral Program in assisting students to achieve goal / outcome 3:

- Offer opportunity to teach and / or preach.
- Offer participation in PRTS speaking engagements.
- Regular scheduled meetings with program director, supervisor, and advisor.
- Assist students in obtaining teaching and / or preaching opportunities in churches.

Admission Requirements

A second graduate degree in theology, such as an accredited ThM, MTh, or STM, is *preferred* for admission to the program. Exceptionally gifted students may be accepted into the program having an accredited MDiv, or first graduate degree in theology, such as an MA or MTS. Comparable degrees from institutions within or outside North America may be accepted provided schools can demonstrate that they meet the standards of the ATS Board-approved degrees for admission. Students with a first graduate degree in theology may also apply for the ThM (Master of Theology) program, and then apply for the PhD program after successful completion of three (3) ThM-level courses with a minimum GPA of 3.50.

To be eligible for admission to the doctoral program, the applicant must:

- be called to the ministry of teaching and/or preaching.
- demonstrate high potential for local and regional influence through (future) ministry of teaching and preaching after completion of studies.
- preferably possess a second master's degree in theology from an accredited institute of higher learning, or in exceptional cases, a first master's degree in theology from an accredited institute of higher learning.
- For applicants to the Biblical Studies emphasis only, have a minimum of six (6) credits of Hebrew, and a minimum of six (6) credits of Greek. An entrance proficiency test for Greek and Hebrew language is part of the admission process for doctoral students in the Biblical Studies emphasis, and includes a translation of a minimum of 500 words in two (2) hours with a minimum of eighty (80) percent accuracy. For additional language requirements during the PhD program, please see the relevant section below.

- have teaching and / or preaching experience.
- adhere to the Three Forms of Unity and/or Westminster Standards (apart from a position on paedobaptism).
- demonstrate biblical piety and character.

It is recommended that applications for admission to the doctoral program be submitted no later than **April 30** (for a fall-semester start) or **October 30** (for a spring-semester start). The applicant will be informed about the decision of the Admissions Committee by the Director of Admissions shortly after a decision has been made. The Admissions Committee meets on a rolling basis approximately every two months. Applications are considered at the next available meeting *only when* all application components have been received.

The applicant must:

- have had an interview with the President, Program Director, or Director of Admissions.
- submit official and certified transcripts of all post-secondary education (demonstrating the possession of an undergraduate degree and at least a first master's degree in theology).
- have an academic record with a Grade Point Average (GPA) of 3.50 or higher (or its equivalent).
- submit a Graduate Record Examination (GRE) score of 158 or higher in the Verbal and Quantitative sections, and 5.0 or higher in the Analytical Writing component.
- submit a recent CV (*curriculum vitae*).
- submit a copy of a completed master's degree thesis or major research paper.
- submit a three-page preliminary dissertation proposal (see Appendix A), or choose one of the suggested topics by the doctoral faculty.
- submit two academic references and one ecclesiastical references (see online application for details).

Tuition and Fees

Non-refundable application for admission	\$ 50
Late registration fee per course	\$ 50
Graduation fee	\$ 250

The doctoral program is fully-funded. All doctoral-level classes and projects taught at PRTS are fully covered if admitted to the program; **the required two external PhD courses, however, are at the expense of the student.** Courses taken for credit or audit that are not doctoral-level classes, will be assessed the regular tuition rate.

Doctoral Student Agreement

Applicants admitted to the PRTS fully-funded doctoral program are required to sign a Doctoral Studies Agreement (see Appendix I).

Program Resources

- Since its inception, the William Perkins Library at PRTS has grown to its present state in support of the doctoral program. The library particularly specializes on Puritan and Reformed primary and secondary resources.
- The Puritan Research Center (PRC), which houses one of the world's most extensive collection of Puritan resources, is the culmination of a dream that is decades old and offers exciting possibilities for promoting the appreciation of Reformed and Puritan literature around the world. The PRC's aim is to assemble the largest possible collection of (digital) resources on the Puritans, including antiquarian books (mostly from the seventeenth century) and modern reprints of Puritan writings, as well as secondary source materials on the Puritans such as books, dissertations, and articles. The PRC also hosts a Torah scroll, an unvocalized Ashkenazi text from a synagogue in Romania dating to the late 19th century and measuring over 125 feet long.
- Puritan Studies Index (PSI): The PSI allows students to search through the Puritan studies collection of articles, reviews, and other documents. These printed materials are located in the Puritan Research Center (PRC) and organized by author's last name. Articles may be photocopied.
- Students are encouraged to contact the librarian regarding other print and digital resources (such as ATLA, EEBO, EBSCO, EAI, and others).
- For doctoral students on campus a research carrel will be assigned for each academic year; visiting doctoral students may notify the library four weeks in advance to reserve a research carrel.
- Doctoral students (on or off campus) have library privileges accessible through a user login. Library resources (digital and non-digital resources such as books, e-books, primary and secondary sources

via commercial and Open Access databases, journals, e-journals, and articles) can be attained in this way. All available resources, electronically and otherwise, are catalogued and accessible at <https://prts.edu/library/>. PRTS is committed to continue an aggressive acquisition of digital resources.

- The library IT infrastructure provides online chat and call functionality to make inquiries to the library staff. Upon request, and if required, the library staff will prepare digital scans of book pages and articles, in accordance with Creative Common License regulations, and upload these into the library system, making it available to registered users, or email the requested information to the doctoral students.
- A doctoral advisor is assigned in the first year of study.

Community of Learners

Students are encouraged to participate in the doctoral student learning community. The aim of this learning community is to avoid the isolation of the individual doctoral student, and to encourage a vibrant community of learners. This community will gather once a year on campus (see “Residency Requirement” section for details), will meet online through social media platforms, and will be connected by other means of communication. In addition, students will have regular phone, Skype, or FaceTime discussions with their advisor and / or director of the doctoral program for academic and spiritual formation.

Affiliated Institutions for Research and Education

The doctoral program is designed to offer high quality scholarship supported by affiliated research institutions who offer specific collections for research in Historical Theology (Reformation, Post-reformation), Systematic Theology, and Biblical Studies. Affiliated educational institutions offer external courses for the doctoral program in these fields. PhD students are required to take at least two courses with these institutions or another approved external institution.

Affiliated Research Institutions

Affiliated Research Institutions may include:

- The Congregational Library and Archives, Boston—for studies in New England Puritanism
- Jonathan Edwards Center at Yale University—for studies in New England Puritanism
- H. Meeter Center at Calvin College—for Reformation studies

- Andrew Fuller Center at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary—for studies in confessional Baptists
- The Johannes à Lasco Library, Emden (Germany)—for Reformation studies
- The Institut für schweizerische Reformationsgeschichte der Universität Zürich (Switzerland)—for Reformation studies
- Home for Bible Translators and Scholars (Israel)—for language studies.
- Tyndale House, Cambridge (UK)—for Biblical Studies students, and upon request for Historical Theology.

Affiliated Institutions Where External Courses May Be Taken

This may include:

- **Asia:** Hapdong Theological Seminary, South Korea; China Reformed Theological Seminary, Taiwan
- **Europe:** Evangelical Theological Faculty, Leuven, Belgium; Pastors’ Academy, London, UK; Theological University Apeldoorn, the Netherlands; Free University Amsterdam, the Netherlands
- **Middle East:** Home for Bible Translators and Scholars, Jerusalem, Israel
- **North America:** Calvin Theological Seminary, Grand Rapids, MI; Greystone Theological Institute, PA; Jonathan Edwards Center at Yale University; Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville; Westminster Theological Seminary, Philadelphia, PA.
- **South America:** Andrew Jumper Graduate School at Mackenzie University, Saõ Paolo; Martin Bucer Seminary Brazil, Sao Jose dos Campos

Program Planning

In order to facilitate your timely progress through the program, the Handbook of the Doctoral Program Appendix D “Suggested Outline for Completing the Doctoral Program in Six Years” articulates the program sequencing, residency, and other requirements, enabling the prospective student to see the pace and requirements necessary for timely program completion within the six-year cycle. The Director of the Doctoral Program and / or Doctoral Advisor plans with each doctoral student a schedule of study that includes the courses taken on and off campus, and those courses taken with a PRTS-approved partner institution. Each academic year the Director of the Doctoral Program reviews with the doctoral student

the schedule of study, assesses the student's progress, and recommends adjustments to the schedule of study if required.

This program planning will also assist in the assessment of the student's critical thinking, analytical, and research skills needed for the doctoral dissertation. The regular assessment aims to foster the unity of course work, research, and writing of the doctoral dissertation. Finally, the overall program planning goals serve to strengthen the student's academic and spiritual formation, and are intended to help the student demonstrate the following: a comprehensive understanding of their respective field of study; faithful exercise of critical and necessary skills; academic inquiry with integrity; creative and original contribution to scholarship; contextual relevance; the ability to communicate effectively; and a positive missional impact. Students are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the *Best Practice Guidelines for Doctoral Program* as set out by the International Council for Evangelical Theological Education.¹

Course Requirements and Residency Requirement

Courses focus on the field of Historical Theology (Reformation, Post-reformation), Systematic Theology, and Biblical Studies, incorporating the interests and research of Faculty and Adjunct Faculty for the doctoral program. Students are required to be in residence for one-half of the coursework; other required coursework, research, and dissertation writing may be completed off campus. Thus, given that the PhD concentrations each require twelve (12) courses, at least six (6) courses must be taken on campus. This does not mean, however, that the accepted PhD student must relocate to Grand Rapids for these six (6) classes; rather, the majority of the PhD courses will be offered in modular or intensive (i.e., week-long) format, thus allowing the student to travel back and forth to Grand Rapids, and still fulfill the residency requirement.

Of the six (6) courses to be completed on campus, the following two courses (applicable to all three PhD emphases), are *only offered as on-campus courses*:

- The respective Research Methodology course for each emphasis (BS 900, CH900, or ST900) – 3 credits

¹ The aims are in accordance with the Beirut Benchmarks for professional doctorates. Cf. Ian J. Shaw, ed., *Best Practice Guidelines for Doctoral Programs* (Carlisle, Cumbria, UK: Langham Partnership, 2015).

- BS/CH/ST902 Introduction to Reformed Spirituality and Piety – 3 credits (combined course required of all emphases)

For the Historical Theology emphasis, CH901 Introduction to Reformation and Post-Reformation Studies – 3 credits must also be taken on campus. The remaining required on-campus courses (3 or 4 depending on emphasis) should be selected in consultation with the Registrar or Doctoral Advisor.

The above-named on-campus courses (Research Methodology, Introduction to Ref. Spirituality and Piety, and Introduction to Reformation and Post-Reformation Studies) are **only offered** during the **month of August** on an annual basis.

Because PRTS endeavors to create a community of learners within the doctoral program, each doctoral student is **required** to be on campus during the month of August at least once per year for the first three years of the student's program, or until the student has completed the comprehensive examination. Apart from the modular courses that will occur during the month of August, special PhD seminars and dinners may be arranged. Furthermore, the PhD student is encouraged to attend the annual PRTS conference held near the end of August.

Courses that may be taken from a distance

As a minimum of six (6) courses are to be completed as on-campus courses, this means that up to six (6) courses shall/can be taken through a combination of the following:

- at least two (2) PhD courses related to the student's concentration must be taken from an external higher-education institution (cost covered by the student);
- the teaching / preaching course (conducted as an off-campus course, BS/CH/ST992 – see section related to this below);
- the dissertation proposal course (conducted as an off-campus course, BS/CH/ST991)
- a maximum of two (2) Directed Research and/or Independent Study courses;
- live-streamed PRTS doctoral courses, which vary by semester; see the seminary website for current information.

PhD in Biblical Studies

The Biblical Studies doctoral program offers focused areas of research, including but not limited to:

- Old Testament studies
- New Testament studies

PhD students in the Biblical Studies program must take the following courses:

- BS900 Research Methodology – 3 credits
- BS/CH902 Introduction to Reformed Spirituality and Piety – 3 credits
- BS941 Introduction to the Septuagint – 3 credits (required for NT emphasis)
- BS942 Biblical Aramaic – 3 credits (required for OT emphasis)
- BS/CH991 Dissertation Proposal – 3 credits
- BS/CH992 Teaching/Preaching Practicum – 3 credits²

Students must take an additional seven courses for credit of which at least four courses must be from the area of concentration (designated by the prefix BS), one course from another doctoral concentration (Historical or Systematic Theology), and two courses related to the student's concentration must be taken from an external higher-education institution (an approved course partner of PRTS). Please consult the seminary website and course schedule for doctoral courses in the Biblical Studies emphasis. Aside from these listed courses, students may, upon approval, enroll in BS999 – Directed Research, the course content and syllabus to be arranged between the student and the advisor.

PhD in Historical Theology

The Historical Theology doctoral program offers focused areas of research, including but not limited to:

- Historical Figures and Thought
- Documents, Doctrines, and Eras
- Exegesis, Practice, and Preaching

PhD students in the Historical Theology (Reformation, Post-Reformation) program must take the following courses:

- CH900 Research Methodology – 3 credits

² See Teaching and Preaching Requirements section.

- CH901 Introduction to Reformation and Post-Reformation Studies – 3 credits
- BS/CH902 Introduction to Reformed Spirituality and Piety – 3 credits
- BS/CH991 Dissertation Proposal – 3 credits
- BS/CH992 Teaching/Preaching Practicum – 3 credits³

Students must take an additional seven courses for credit of which at least four courses must be from the area of concentration (designated by the prefix CH), one course from another doctoral concentration (Biblical Studies or Systematic Theology), and two courses related to the student's concentration must be taken from an external higher-education institution (an approved course partner of PRTS). Please consult the seminary website and course schedule for doctoral courses related to the Historical Theology emphasis. Aside from these listed courses, students may upon approval enroll in CH999 – Directed Research, the course content and syllabus to be arranged between the student and the advisor.

PhD in Systematic Theology

PhD students in the Systematic Theology program must take the following courses:

- ST900 Research Methodology – 3 credits
- BS/CH/ST902 Introduction to Reformed Spirituality and Piety – 3 credits
- BS/CH/ST991 Dissertation Proposal – 3 credits
- BS/CH/ST992 Teaching/Preaching Practicum – 3 credits

Apart from the two required external courses, six additional courses are required. These six can be selected from the systematic theology curriculum which will center upon core courses that address each of the seven systematic loci at an advanced level. These core courses will be offered on a regular three-year cycle, making it possible for each student to take each loci during the three years of course work. This emphasis on core, loci-focused courses is different than other doctoral programs in systematics where coursework is heavily weighted toward very narrow, specialized topics. By featuring a more loci-focused curriculum, we aim to equip students to return to their home countries able to teach broadly and effectively in systematic theology. In summary, the systematic theology program will consist of 4

³ See Teaching and Preaching Requirements section.

mandatory courses, two external courses in systematic theology at the PhD level, and any 6 courses from the loci-focused offerings or other shared ST/HT courses in the PhD program at PRTS.

Teaching and Preaching Requirements

A general syllabus governing the requirements of this course will be made available to the enrolled student. This syllabus will include various reading on teaching or preaching. A total of 20 hours of teaching or preaching time is required; students can combine the hours of teaching and preaching as desired (e.g., 15 hours teaching + 5 hours preaching, or vice versa). Female doctoral students will fulfill this requirement in its entirety through teaching.

Teaching

Students are required to teach an adult Bible class, catechism class, or course at the diploma, BA, or BTh level that is related to the area of specialization. The student must submit to the advisor and registrar a syllabus and relevant course information six weeks prior to the teaching occasion. The student must also submit to the advisor, director of the doctoral program, and registrar two selected complete audio or video recordings within four weeks of completing the teaching occasion.

Preaching

Students are required to preach and lead worship services. The student must inform the advisor of the relevant information as to the preaching occasion. The student must submit to the advisor, director of the doctoral program, and registrar two selected sermon outlines and complete audio or video recordings within four weeks of completing the second preaching occasion.

Examinations and Progress in Program

Course work

Each academic year during the registration period students must submit an annual plan to the advisor and registrar that includes course work and teaching / preaching occasions. Students need to maintain a minimum cumulative grade-point average of 3.50 to continue in the doctoral program.

Evaluation of Teaching

Each course taught by the student will be assessed by a PRTS course evaluation form to be completed by course participants and submitted to the registrar. Students will meet with the advisor no later than four weeks after completion of the course for a final evaluation of this teaching occasion.

Evaluation of Preaching

Each sermon preached by the student will be assessed by a PRTS sermon evaluation form to be completed by the elders or church council and submitted to the registrar. The student will meet with the advisor no later than four weeks after completion of the final sermon for a final evaluation of his preaching.

Research Language Requirements/Exams

During their course of studies and dissertation research, students are required to use competently the language(s) in which relevant primary texts are written, as well as those in which there is important secondary material.

- A. *Requirements:* All doctoral students must fulfill the additional language requirements by the time of the comprehensive examination: Two (2) foreign languages, such as Latin, German, French, Spanish, Portuguese, or Dutch (the research languages to be determined by the advisor in consultation with the student). Doctoral students in the Historical Theology program who have taken a Paleography course may substitute one (1) foreign language course with a proficiency test in paleography.
- B. *Acquisition:* Doctoral students may acquire proficiency in the required languages through self-study or by following courses at PRTS (Course 101 – Latin I, and Course 102 – Latin II), courses offered by other schools such as Calvin College, Davenant Institute (Latin), or other schools approved by the Academic Dean and / or Director of the Doctoral Program. A proficiency test is required irrespective of how the language is acquired.
- C. *Proficiency test:* Before attempting the comprehensive examination, doctoral students are required to take a proficiency test demonstrating their proficiency in the approved research languages. The proficiency test is assessed in terms of the amount and time of text translated. The proficiency test includes a translation of a minimum of 500 words in two (2) hours with a minimum of eighty (80)

percent accuracy. The paleography proficiency test consists of the transcription and editing of a 500-word manuscript text in two (2) hours with a minimum of eighty (80) percent accuracy.

- D. *Competent Use*: Upon passing of the proficiency tests, doctoral students are required and encouraged to work with foreign languages in their research papers and doctoral dissertation work. The doctoral advisor will from time to time review submitted work and assess the appropriate use of foreign languages.

Comprehensive examination

See Appendices F and G for the comprehensive examination guidelines (for both Biblical Studies and Historical / Systematic Theology).

Time Limit for Degree Completion (Statute of Limitations)

The PhD program must be completed within six (6) years of matriculation. A written petition for an extension must be submitted to the academic dean and director of the doctoral program.

Degree Candidacy and Dissertation Proposal

Students will be assigned a supervisor and co-advisor by the program director. Students who meet the following requirements are admitted to the degree candidacy:

- Completion of spiritual formation cap-stone project (see Appendix H).
- Completion of coursework with a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.50.
- Completion of research language requirements.
- Completion of written and oral comprehensive examination.
- Completion of at least 50% of the teaching/preaching requirement.
- Submission of a final dissertation proposal approved by the advisor and co-advisor
 - a. Students are to complete a final dissertation proposal following the successful completion of the Dissertation Proposal course, but prior to taking the comprehensive examinations.
 - b. Students are to complete a final dissertation proposal in consultation with their advisor.
 - c. Students are to complete a final dissertation proposal according to the format provided in Appendix B or C (depending on emphasis).

Dissertation Requirements

The following guidelines pertain to the PhD dissertation:

- Students must have an approved dissertation proposal.
- Students must offer in the dissertation an original research contribution that serves the academy and the church.
- The doctoral dissertation must be academic work based on original research with limited dependence on prior doctoral work (such as prior course papers), subject to the direction of the advisor.
- The dissertation must be approved by the supervisor and co-advisor
- It is strongly recommended that the dissertation be edited by a professional editor.
- Upon acceptance of the dissertation by at least a three-fourths majority of the two internal (exclusive of advisor and co-advisor) and two external examiners, a public defense will be scheduled.
- A completed, passed dissertation shall be submitted in electronic format (both Word and PDF), as well as two bound print copies. The electronic and hard copies must be submitted to the registrar for distribution to the supervisor, co-advisor, and examiners.

Dissertation Defense

The following guidelines pertain to the dissertation defense:

- The public defense will take place at the main campus of PRTS. The defense will be chaired by the President, who will open with prayer.
- The President will invite the student to summarize the importance, findings, and contribution of the study (approximately 10 minutes). The President will then invite members of the faculty (with the exception of the supervisor) and other members of the panel to question the candidate on the dissertation.
- Special permission may be granted by the President and program director for elders or ministers of churches to ask the candidate a question concerning the doctoral studies.
- Upon completion of the defense, the President and members of the panel will leave the room to deliberate and subsequently render an assessment of the defense.
- The student is informed of the results of the deliberation by the President. The supervisor will then offer an *oratio laudatio* that incorporates the results of the external examiners. The ceremony will be closed with prayer.

- During the commencement exercises, the President or designated person will confer the degree on the candidate.

Graduation Requirements

Commencement and Academic Regalia

A student will be allowed to graduate only after all the program requirements have been met and a graduation application has been completed and submitted to the registrar. Each student who is eligible to receive a degree is expected to participate in the commencement, unless he has compelling reasons for being absent. In such cases, a student will receive the degree *in absentia*. The date for commencement exercises will typically be the first Friday evening after the last final exam of the spring semester. Seminary regalia will be made available for graduating students; graduating students may purchase their academic gowns (this cost is in addition to the graduation fee of \$250).

Dissertation Final

A final edited copy of the dissertation that incorporates suggestions of the supervisor, co-advisor, and examiners will be submitted no later than two months after acceptance of the doctoral work to the library of PRTS in electronic and paper format.

Dissertation Publication

Students are expected to:

- publish the dissertation with an internationally recognized academic publisher within two years after the public defense. The student will choose a publisher in consultation with the supervisor or,
- publish three articles as a result of the doctoral work in internationally recognized and peer-reviewed journals. The student will choose journals in consultation with the supervisor, or
- publish the dissertation in such a form as to be of service to the church at large.

APPENDIX A

PRELIMINARY DISSERTATION PROPOSAL

- I. Name of applicant:
- II. A Provisional title (and subtitle) of the dissertation (research):
- III. Abstract (A brief description of the issue that the research project will investigate (max. 200 words):
- IV. *Status quaestionis* (The main research question, only one and to be formulated in max. 50 words):
- V. The significance of the research project for the chosen (sub)discipline and for theology in general (max. 500 words):
- VI. Research Methodology (max. 200 words):
- VII. Tentative outline of the proposed dissertation
 1. A provisional table of contents (max. 250 words):
 2. A brief description of the content of the planned chapters (max. 500 words):
- VIII. A provisional bibliography (max. 1,000 words)
 1. Primary Sources:
 2. Secondary Sources:

APPENDIX B

FINAL DISSERTATION PROPOSAL – Biblical Studies

TITLE

APPLICANT'S NAME

DATE

ABSTRACT / PROJECT SUMMARY (1 page – 5%)

Summary of the research and proposed contribution of the dissertation, as well as a statement of the primary argument or thesis.

REQUIRED SECTIONS, LENGTH, AND FORMAT

The proposal shall conform to SBL style, shall be not less than 15 and not more than 25 pages in length, and shall include the following sections in approximately the following proportions:

- statement and justification of the research problem (~10 pages = 45%),
- description and justification of the methods to be used (~4 pages = 20%),
- outline of dissertation (chapters and 2 levels of subheadings; ~2 *single-spaced* pages = 10%),
- bibliography (3-4 *single-spaced* pages = 15%)

PLANNING (1 page – 5%)

Provide an overview plan and timetable that outlines the research, writing, completion of chapters, and targeted completion of dissertation.

Format of the Final Dissertation Proposal

Font type: Times Roman

Font size: 12 point

APPENDIX C

FINAL DISSERTATION PROPOSAL – Historical / Systematic Theology

TITLE

APPLICANT'S NAME

DATE

ABSTRACT (1/2 page)

Summary of the research and proposed contribution of the dissertation, as well as a statement of the primary argument or thesis.

STATUS QUAESTIONIS (2 pages)

Provide an overview of the arguments found in secondary literature, and show how this differs with your reading of the primary sources. Identify what gap in scholarly literature will be addressed and the contribution the proposed dissertation will make.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY (1 page)

Describe the research methodology that will be used in the dissertation research and identify pros and cons, if any, of the chosen method.

SOURCES (5 pages)

Provide a description of the primary and secondary sources that are most relevant for the dissertation.

TENTATIVE OUTLINE OF PROPOSED DISSERTATION (3 pages)

Provide an overview of chapters together with a brief summary of each chapter contributing to the dissertation research and primary argument or thesis. Show the development of the argument as it moves from the introduction to the conclusion.

PLANNING (1 page)

Provide an overview plan and timetable that outlines the research, writing, completion of chapters, and targeted completion of dissertation.

BIBLIOGRAPHY (max. 10 pages)

Format of the Final Dissertation Proposal

Font type: Times Roman

Font size: 12 point

Spacing: double

Style: Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations* (most recent edition)

APPENDIX D

SUGGESTED OUTLINE FOR COMPLETING THE PROGRAM IN SIX YEARS

Year 1

- 3 Credits - Introduction to Reformed Spirituality and Piety*
- 3 Credits - Research Methodology*
- 3 Credits - Introduction to Reformation and Post-Ref. Studies (if in the Historical Theology emphasis)*; another course if in Biblical Studies emphasis
- 9 Credits - Courses 4, 5, and 6* or **
- First research language *, **, or ***

Year 2

- 12 Credits - Courses 7 – 10* or **
- 3 Credits - Dissertation proposal course** - only offered as distance course
- 3 Credits - Teaching and Preaching course** - only offered as distance course
- Second research language *, **, or ***

Year 3

- Spiritual formation cap-stone project**
- Comprehensive examination*
- Initial dissertation research/work**

Year 4

- Dissertation research/work**
- Dissertation research/work**

Years 5 - 6

- Dissertation completion**
- Dissertation Defense & Graduation*

- * Residential: In-class on campus
- ** Non-residential (distance education): Live-streamed, online, or directed study
- *** Non-residential: Taken via another institution (an approved course partner with PRTS)

APPENDIX E

CHECKLIST FOR DOCTORAL STUDENTS

- Completed **10 PhD-level courses** from PRTS including:
 - Teaching / Preaching Practicum course
 - Final Dissertation Proposal course
- Completed **2 external PhD-level courses** (sent transcripts with final grades of these courses to registrar)
- Passed **2 language proficiency exams** (languages to be approved by supervisor and language proficiency exams scheduled with registrar)
- With supervisor, scheduled the date of **comprehensive exam**
 - For Historical / Systematic Theology, submitted essay on selected primary source – **one month prior** to exam
 - Completed reading of secondary source list – **by date of** exam
 - Completed reading of Comprehensive Exam and Dissertation-specific Reading Lists – **by date of** exam
 - Submitted bibliographic essay – **one month prior** to exam
 - Submitted final dissertation proposal – **one month prior** to exam
 - Submitted Spiritual Formation Capstone Project – **one month prior** to exam
- Passed **all parts of comprehensive exam**
- Completed and passed **PhD dissertation**
- Attended and passed **public defense** of dissertation
- Received PhD diploma

CHECKLIST FOR DOCTORAL SUPERVISORS

- Advised student on appropriate courses to take
- Advised student on appropriate research languages
- Ensured that student is working on bibliographic-essay reading list, and knows of and is reading the comprehensive exam reading list
- Scheduled date of comprehensive exam, and notified doctoral faculty, academic dean, and registrar
- Arranged for a total of four examiners during comprehensive exam (consisting of at least two members of the seminary's doctoral faculty; there is flexibility in the other two)
- Received components for comprehensive exam **one month prior** to exam date:
 - Primary source essay (Historical / Systematic Theology only)
 - Bibliographic essay
 - Final dissertation proposal
 - Spiritual Formation Capstone Project
- Sent above material to all four examiners
- Chaired the comprehensive examination (chair has no vote in result)

- Informed registrar of comprehensive examination result
- Worked with student (chapter by chapter) on dissertation
- Arranged for two internal and two external examiners of dissertation; informed examiners of criteria for examining dissertation – see Appendix J
- Informed Director of the Doctoral Program with the names of the four dissertation examiners
- Within one week of receipt, submitted the four examination reports to the Academic Dean, Registrar, and Director of the Doctoral Program.
- With registrar, scheduled date of public defense. The date of the defense may be scheduled in the week of graduation, though this is not required. The public defense is to be in person on campus, unless circumstances prevent this, and the defense will take place virtually (Zoom or similar platform).

APPENDIX F

GUIDELINES FOR COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATIONS: BIBLICAL STUDIES

The comprehensive examination for doctoral students in Biblical Studies consists of three written exams and an oral examination based on the second and third written exams, the bibliographic essay, and the dissertation proposal.

Overview

Three written examinations, of four hours each, test the student's competence in his or her chosen field (usually OT or NT), specifically in unaided translation and exegesis of biblical texts, competence in the area of study, and understanding of the relation of Biblical Studies to the rest of the theological task.

The oral examination involves an assessment of the student's second and third written exams, Bibliographic Essay, Dissertation Proposal and competencies directly related to it, and ability to articulate, explain, and defend his or her integration of faith and scholarship. The student is examined by a committee consisting of at least two members of the seminary's doctoral faculty and one or two other examiners, for a total of four. The other examiner(s) may be full-time or adjunct members of the PRTS faculty, or may be without formal ties to the seminary. The oral examination may be attended *ex officio* by the President, the Academic Dean, the Director of the Doctoral Program, and any member of the Board of Trustees in the role of observer. The oral examination will last approximately two and one-half hours (excluding a 10-minute break).

Preparation

Meeting with the student's supervisor

It is the responsibility of the doctoral student to meet with the dissertation supervisor to discuss, plan for, and schedule the various components of the comprehensive examination.

Original-language exegesis passages and reading list

- 1) For the first written exam, the student should be able to translate and interpret a variety of biblical texts in the original language(s). These texts will include selections from across the OT or NT (from both if the student's focus is robustly biblical-theological) as well as a small number of texts selected by the dissertation supervisor that are directly relevant to the dissertation. The precise texts to be mastered will be communicated to the student not later than the time at which the dates of the comprehensive examination are determined.
- 2) The reading list for the second and third written examinations is set by the Biblical Studies doctoral faculty and consists of secondary sources related to the student's general field of research (Biblical Studies, with a specialization in one Testament where appropriate; see the "Comprehensive Exam Reading List" for OT and NT). The student should be able to summarize in their broad lines the contents, argument, and conclusions of these secondary sources as well as related trends and issues in the discipline.
- 3) It is strongly recommended that the student begin reading the required materials other than the dissertation-specific reading list (see below) as early as possible after matriculation in order to facilitate sustained reflection on the readings and to promote their integration in his or her coursework. The readings required by the dissertation-specific list should also be begun in advance,

and must be well underway before the student registers for BS991 Dissertation Proposal.

Analytical Bibliographic Essay and Dissertation-Specific Reading List

- 4) The dissertation supervisor and doctoral student will establish a dissertation-specific reading list for the Analytical Bibliographic Essay, which may overlap slightly with the bibliography of the dissertation proposal. The Analytical Bibliographic Essay shall be approximately 50 pages in length (including footnotes/endnotes but excluding bibliography, double spaced, 12-point font) and shall cover the secondary sources directly relevant to the dissertation. The aggregate reading requirements for the written exams and Analytical Bibliographic Essay shall total not less than 10,000 pages and not more than 15,000 pages.
- 5) In this essay, the student shall articulate concisely and precisely the main argument of all immediately relevant secondary literature. Additionally, the examinee shall analyze the following areas and situate his proposed project with respect to important trends, methods, arguments, and conclusions in them: current discussion of the proposed dissertation topic and immediately related issues; the specific goals and anticipated contributions of the dissertation; and the methods that will be employed to attain these goals. The essay must evidence careful analysis, attention to each author's methodology, and a clear understanding of each work's relevance to the project, and should conclude with a short evaluative synthesis with respect to the dissertation's anticipated contribution (2 pages).
- 6) The Analytical Bibliographic Essay shall be submitted to the dissertation supervisor 4 (four) weeks before the date of the oral component of the comprehensive examination. The supervisor will distribute the bibliographical essay to the other examiners within a week of receipt.

Dissertation proposal

- 7) The dissertation proposal, composed in accordance with the criteria spelled out in the syllabus for BS 991 Dissertation Proposal, must be approved by the dissertation supervisor, co-advisor, Academic Dean, and Director of the Doctoral Program at least 4 (four) weeks prior to the date of the comprehensive examination.
- 8) The supervisor will distribute the proposal to the other examiners within 1 (one) week of receipt.

Scheduling

- 9) It is the responsibility of the student in consultation with the supervisor to schedule the comprehensive examination.
- 10) The dates of all components of the comprehensive examination may be set at least three (3) months but not more than six (6) months in advance, and may be set before the doctoral student has finished his or her course work and sustained the foreign language proficiency tests.
- 11) The comprehensive exam, including written and oral components, is to be taken not later than three months after the completion of all doctoral course work and foreign language proficiency tests.
- 12) The four exams (three written, followed by one oral) shall be taken at PRTS within a period not exceeding one month. **The three written exams shall be written within the first 10 days of this one-month period. Upon passing the written exams, the oral exam shall be undertaken within the final week of this one-month period.**

- 13) The dissertation supervisor will announce the date of the oral comprehensive examination to the registrar and to the seminary faculty at a regular faculty meeting.
- 14) No change in the scheduled date of any component of the comprehensive examination will be permitted apart from extraordinary circumstances as determined by the supervisor, registrar, academic dean, and director of the doctoral program.

Description, Written Component

- 1) **Part 1: Translation and exegesis of biblical texts.** This portion of the examination tests the student's ability to translate and exegete texts of different genres without the use of any resources. One or more passages from the following sections will appear in the examination: for OT, Genesis 1-12; Judges 6-12; II Kings 17-22; Isaiah 1-12; Psalms 90-106; Proverbs 1-9; Daniel 4-6; Ezra 5:1-6:8; for NT, Matthew 3-11; John 13-21; Acts 10-15; Romans 12-15; 1 Corinthians 1-6; Ephesians; Hebrews 1-6; 1 Peter; Revelation 1-7 (not to exceed approximately 70 chapters total). In addition, the supervisor may assign to the student one or two other short sections of biblical text of direct relevance to the dissertation. The student is expected to translate accurately and to provide exegetical commentary on the text by dealing as appropriate with important text-critical problems, showing a robust understanding of grammatical and syntactical features, and demonstrating competence in linguistic and semantic matters. **NB:** No dictionary or other resources are permitted for Part 1 of the examination. The student will be furnished with an unmarked copy of *Biblica Hebraica Stuttgartensia* and/or a Greek New Testament with critical apparatus.
- 2) **Part 2: Old/New Testament Introduction.** This portion of the examination tests the student's familiarity with and understanding of the entire field of Old or New Testament Studies (or both if the student's focus is solidly biblical-theological). The examinee will be expected to answer questions of any depth in the following areas:
 - Critical issues and methods;
 - Hebrew and Aramaic linguistics (OT) or Greek linguistics (NT);
 - textual criticism, transmission, and canon;
 - ancient Near Eastern history and culture (OT) or Greco-Roman history and culture, early Christianity (NT);
 - Pentateuch (OT) or Gospels (NT);
 - historiography;
 - prophecy (OT) or apocalyptic (NT);
 - wisdom and poetry (OT) or Paul and general epistles (NT);
 - biblical theology and hermeneutics.**NB:** no print or electronic resources are allowed for Part 2.
- 3) **Part 3: Synthesis.** The final portion of the examination tests the student's ability to articulate and defend on biblical and other grounds an approach to biblical studies that **(1)** ably incorporates relevant extra-biblical material (archaeology, history, etc.); **(2)** critically, insightfully, and fairly evaluates dominant interpretative methods and approaches, and wisely practices methods well-suited to and consistent with Scripture, with special attention to epistemological, philosophical, and

anthropological issues; **(3)** demonstrates a robust understanding of the theory and practice of redemptive-historical biblical theology, especially the issues of diversity and chronological development; and **(4)** explains the importance of the interpreter's relationship with God for his or her theological work and examines the varied ways that this work relates to and serves the church and the academy. **NB:** unmarked, non-study editions of English, Greek, Hebrew, and/or native-language Bibles may be used for Part 3.

- 4) General guidelines: Students should arrive well before the scheduled time of their examination. Students who arrive late will not be permitted to sit for the examination, and no extensions beyond the four-hour limit for each examination will be granted. Interruptions during the examination are not permitted. No cell phones or personal electronic devices are permitted in the exam room. The Seminary will furnish an electronic tablet and keyboard, personal computer, or equivalent for the composition of the exam. During the exam, no access to any electronic or unauthorized resource is permitted.

Evaluation, Written Component

- 1) The written component shall be evaluated separately by the supervisor and co-advisor. Part 1 will be evaluated for accuracy of translation and adequacy of exegetical notes, and a grade of 75% is required for a Pass. The other two parts of the examination shall be graded Pass/Fail (a percentage grade shall also be attributed). At least four (4) passing grades (of the six grades assigned by the two examiners for each of the three sections) are required for the student to sustain the three written parts of the examination. In attributing a passing grade for any of the three sections, the supervisor may, in consultation with the co-advisor, give specific advice for further work or may add conditions that must be met before a Pass is granted for the examination as a whole. In the case of a fail, it is assumed that the student will retake the examination (in part or in whole, as appropriate) after further preparation unless the examiners agree that the student should not proceed further in the program. No part of the written component may be attempted more than twice. The supervisor and co-advisor shall communicate their decision to the student, registrar, dean, and director of the doctoral program with two (2) weeks of the supervisor's receipt of the exam.

Description, Oral Component

Upon successful completion of the written component, the student proceeds to the oral component of the examination. The oral examination involves an assessment of the student's second and third written exams, Bibliographic Essay, Dissertation Proposal and competencies directly related to it, and ability to articulate, explain, and defend his or her integration of faith and scholarship. The following competencies and dispositions are particularly important:

- Whether the student is approaching the material and interaction from the vantage point of faith governing intellect.
- Whether the student is able to interact fairly and fruitfully with the other scholars and their output particularly relating to the dissertation.
- Whether the student has a sufficient grasp of the potential, challenge, and value of their dissertation topic and the method(s) they have selected.
- Whether the student can meaningfully present to, interact with, and engage other scholars, even

from other disciplines. Does this interaction bring about fruitful learning on all parts?

The oral comprehensive examination proceeds as follows:

- 1) The oral comprehensive examination is chaired by the dissertation supervisor, who is not one of the four examiners.
- 2) The oral comprehensive examination is opened with prayer by the dissertation supervisor or designee.
- 3) The dissertation supervisor asks the student follow-up questions on his or her **second and third written exams** (10 minutes), followed by the other examiners (5 minutes each). The questions may seek clarification or elaboration, or may correct or critique weak or flawed answers. Finally, the student is asked to reflect (10 minutes) on what he or she has learned from the second and third written exams concerning **i)** where fault-lines of scholarship currently lie and how to address these; **ii)** what areas they need further exposure to; and **iii)** which areas bear most directly on their research (35 minutes in total).
- 4) The student offers a 15-minute oral summary of the Analytical Bibliographic Essay
- 5) Each of the four examiners then leads a 5-7 minute discussion with the student about the **Analytical Bibliographic Essay**, with the dissertation supervisor doing so last.
- 6) *A pause of 10 minutes is given to the examiners and student.*
- 7) The student then offers a 15-minute oral summary of the **Dissertation Proposal**.
- 8) Each of the four examiners then leads a 5-7 minute discussion with the student about the Dissertation Proposal, with the dissertation supervisor doing so last.
- 9) The student gives a presentation on specific ways in which their **faith influences their scholarship** (10 minutes).
- 10) Each of the four examiners then leads a 5-7 minute discussion with the student about the faith-scholarship intersection, with the dissertation supervisor doing so last.
- 11) The comprehensive examination is closed with prayer by the supervisor or designee.

Evaluation, Oral Component

The oral component shall be evaluated separately by four examiners of which at least two examiners will be from the doctoral faculty.

Upon the completion of the oral comprehensive examination:

- 1) The student leaves the room.
- 2) The examiners meet in private for at most one hour to discuss the comprehensive examination. The dissertation supervisor will chair the meeting.
- 3) Each examiner offers a separate verbal assessment of (i) the follow-up on the second and third written exams, (ii) the Analytical Bibliographic Essay, (iii) the dissertation proposal, and (iv) the presentation on the student's integration of faith and scholarship.

- 4) Each examiner will vote Pass/Fail for each part of the oral examination (4 parts).
- 5) The student sustains the oral examination by receiving at least twelve (12) “Pass” votes out of a total of sixteen (16) votes (four examiners voting for the written exam follow-up, bibliographical essay, dissertation proposal, and faith-scholarship integration question separately). In attributing a Pass for any section of the oral component, a majority (51% or more) of the examiners may advise further work, or may add conditions that must be met before a Pass is granted for the examination as a whole.
- 6) Once the examiners have concluded their discussion, the doctoral student will be called back and the supervisor will communicate the result to the student.
- 7) In the case of a fail, it is assumed that the student will retake the oral examination after further preparation unless the examiners agree that the student should not proceed further in the program. No component of the oral examination may be attempted more than twice.
- 8) The dissertation supervisor will inform the registrar, academic dean, and director of the doctoral program of the result of the comprehensive examination within one week of the date of the oral exam.

APPENDIX G

GUIDELINES FOR COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATIONS: HISTORICAL / SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

The comprehensive examination for doctoral students in Historical / Systematic Theology consists of a three-part written component and a two-part oral examination.

Overview

Three written examinations test the student's competence in his or her chosen field, specifically in unaided translation and interpretation of primary source text, competence in the general area of study, and robust understanding of the relation of Historical / Systematic Theology to the rest of the theological task.

The oral examination is an assessment of the student's mastery of the area of specialization and focuses on the dissertation proposal and competencies directly relating to it. The student is examined by a committee consisting of at least two members of the seminary's doctoral faculty and two other examiners. The oral examination will last two and one-half hours (excluding a 10-minute break).

The comprehensive exams are to be taken not later than three months after the completion of all doctoral course work and foreign language proficiency tests. The oral examination is attended by the doctoral student and four examiners, of which two are members of the seminary's doctoral program faculty in the student's area of specialization. The two other examiners may be full-time or adjunct members of the PRTS faculty, or may be without formal ties to the seminary. The oral examination may be attended *ex officio* by the President, the Academic Dean, and any member of the Board of Trustees in the role of observer.

Preparation

Meeting with the student's advisor

It is the responsibility of the doctoral student to meet with the advisor to discuss, plan for, and schedule the comprehensive examination.

Part 1: Primary source reading and analysis

- 1) The student should be able to translate and interpret a variety of primary source text in the original languages. These texts will include selections from across the Early Modern era (ca. 1450 – 1750), or in the case of ST emphasis from the modern era, and may include the text used for the foreign language proficiency exam, as well as a small number of texts directly relevant to the dissertation selected by the dissertation supervisor. The precise texts to be mastered will be communicated to the student not later than the time at which the date of the comprehensive examination is determined.

Part 2: Secondary source reading list and analysis

- 2) The reading list for the oral examination is set by the Historical / Systematic Theology doctoral faculty and consists of secondary sources related to the student's general field of research (see relevant Comprehensive Examination Reading List). The student should be able to summarize in broad lines the contents, argument, and conclusions of these secondary sources.

- 3) It is strongly recommended that the student begin reading the required materials other than dissertation-specific reading list as early as possible after matriculation in order to facilitate sustained reflection on the readings and to promote their integration in other coursework. The dissertation-specific reading should also be started in advance, and must be well underway before the student registers for CH 991 Dissertation Proposal.

Part 3: Historiography: Bibliographic essay

- 4) The dissertation supervisor and doctoral student will establish a dissertation-specific reading list for the bibliographic essay, which list may include the bibliography of the dissertation proposal. The student should be able to articulate concisely and precisely the main argument of all immediately relevant secondary literature. The aggregate reading requirements for the written and oral components of the comprehensive exams will total not less than 10,000 pages and not more than 15,000 pages.
- 5) The doctoral student shall compose a descriptive-analytical bibliographic essay of 50 pages (including footnotes/endnotes but excluding bibliography, double space, 12-point font) that covers the secondary sources directly relevant to the dissertation. The essay must evidence careful analysis, attention to each author's methodology, and a clear understanding of each work's relevance to the project, and should conclude with a short evaluative synthesis with an eye to the dissertation's anticipated contribution.
- 6) The bibliographical essay shall be submitted to the student's advisor 4 (four) weeks before the date of the comprehensive examination. The advisor will distribute the bibliographical essay to the other examiners within a week of receipt.

Part 4: Dissertation proposal

- 7) The dissertation proposal must be approved by the dissertation supervisor, co-advisor, academic dean and director of the doctoral program at least 4 (four) weeks prior to the date of the comprehensive examination.
- 8) The advisor will distribute the dissertation proposal to the other examiners within 1 (one) week of receipt.

Scheduling

- 1) It is the responsibility of the student in consultation with the advisor to schedule the comprehensive examination.
- 2) The date of the comprehensive examination can be set at least 3 (three) months but not more than 6 (six) months in advance, and may be set before the doctoral student has finished his or her course work and sustained the foreign language proficiency tests.
- 3) The dissertation supervisor will announce the date of the comprehensive examination to the registrar and to the seminary faculty at a regular faculty meeting. The registrar will in turn extend an invitation to all members of the Board.
- 4) No change in the scheduled date of the comprehensive examination will be permitted apart from extraordinary circumstances as determined the advisor, registrar, academic dean, and director of the

doctoral program.

Description, Written Component

- 1) Part 1: Translation and interpretation of primary source texts. This portion of the examination tests the student's ability to translate (if applicable) and interpret primary source texts of different genres without the use of any resources. In addition, the advisor may assign to the student one or two other short sections of primary source text of direct relevance to the dissertation. The student is expected to translate accurately and to provide historical and theological commentary on the text by dealing as appropriate with important issues of continuity and discontinuity, historical context, theological trajectories and context, where applicable. The student will be furnished with a copy of the primary source text (s).
- 2) Part 3: Historiography: Bibliographic essay. This portion of the examination tests the student's familiarity with and understanding of the entire field of Historical Theology, limited to the Early Modern era (ca. 1450 – 1750), or the entire field of Systematic Theology, including the modern era. The examinee should be able to analyze and articulate the following areas and to situate his project with respect to prominent trends, method, arguments, and conclusions: current discussion of the proposed dissertation topic and immediately related issues; the specific goals and anticipated contributions of the dissertation; and the methods that will be employed to attain these goals.
- 3) Part 4: Dissertation proposal. The final portion of the examination tests the student's ability to synthesize, articulate and defend on sufficient scholarly grounds an approach to theological studies that (1) ably incorporates relevant interdisciplinary material (history, politics, philosophy, economy, etc.); (2) critically evaluates dominant interpretative methods and approaches, and wisely practices methods well-suited to and consistent with the field of theology, with special attention especially in historical theology to issues of continuity and discontinuity of intellectual history, and theological trajectories; (3) demonstrates a robust understanding of the theory and practice of interdisciplinary research; and (4) explains the importance of the interpreter's relationship with God for his or her theological work and examines the varied ways that this work relates to and serves the church and the academy.
- 4) General guidelines: Students should submit the written components of the comprehensive exam (Part 1, Part 3, and Part 4) to the supervisor per an agreed-upon schedule, but no later than one month prior to the scheduled date of the comprehensive examination.

Examination Evaluation, Written Component

The written component shall be evaluated by the supervisor and co-advisor. Part 1 will be evaluated for accuracy of translation and adequacy of interpretative notes, and a grade of 75% is required for a Pass. The other two parts of the examination shall be graded Pass/Fail. For Parts 3 and 4, at least 6 passing grades (of the 8 grades assigned by the two examiners for each of the three sections) is required for the student to sustain those parts of the examination. In attributing a Pass for any of the three sections, the supervisor may, in consultation with the co-advisor, give specific advice for further work or may add conditions that must be met before a Pass is granted for the examination as a whole. In the case of a fail, it is assumed that the student will retake the examination (in part or in whole) after further preparation unless the examiners agree that the student should not proceed further in the program. No part of the

written component may not be attempted more than twice. The supervisor and co-advisor shall communicate their decision to the student, registrar, dean, and director of the doctoral program with 2 (two) weeks of the supervisor's receipt of the exam (or of verification of the transcribed exam, if handwritten).

Description, Oral Component

Upon successful completion of the written component, the student proceeds to the oral component of the examination.

- 1) The oral comprehensive examination is chaired by the dissertation supervisor, who is not one of the four examiners.
- 2) The oral comprehensive examination is opened with prayer by the dissertation supervisor or designee.
- 3) The doctoral student first offers a 15-minute oral summary of Part 2, followed by a 15-minute oral summary of Part 3.
- 4) Each of the examiners then leads a 15-minute discussion with the student about the Part 2 and 3, with the dissertation supervisor doing so last.
- 5) A pause of 10 minutes is given to the examiners and student.
- 6) The student shall then offer a 15-minute oral summary of Part 4.
- 7) Each of the examiners shall lead a 15-minute discussion with the doctoral student about the dissertation proposal, with the dissertation supervisor doing so last.
- 8) The comprehensive examination is closed with prayer by the advisor or designee.

Examination Evaluation, Oral Component

The oral component shall be evaluated separately by four examiners of which at least two examiners will be from the doctoral faculty. Upon the completion of the comprehensive examination:

- 1) The student leaves the room.
- 2) The examiners meet in private for at most one hour to discuss the comprehensive examination. The dissertation supervisor will chair the meeting.
- 3) Each examiner offers an oral assessment of the overall comprehensive examination, and of the individual parts (bibliographic essay and dissertation proposal).
- 4) Each examiner will vote Pass / Fail for each individual part of the comprehensive examination.
- 5) The student sustains the comprehensive examination by receiving 6 (six) "Pass" votes out of a total of 8 (eight) votes (four examiners voting for Part 2 and 3 [Secondary source reading list and Bibliographic essay] and for Part 4 [dissertation proposal] separately). In attributing a Pass for either of the sections of the oral component, a majority (51% or more) of the examiners may give specific advice for further work, or may add conditions that must be met before a Pass is granted for the

examination as a whole.

- 6) Once the examiners have concluded their discussion, the doctoral student will be called back and the advisor will communicate the result of the examiners to the student.
- 7) In the case of a fail, it is assumed that the student will retake the oral examination after further preparation unless the examiners agree that the student should not proceed further in the program. No component of the oral examination may be attempted more than twice.
- 8) The dissertation supervisor will inform the registrar, academic dean, and director of the doctoral program of the result of the comprehensive examination within one week of the date of the oral examination.

APPENDIX H

CAPSTONE PROJECT SPIRITUAL FORMATION

The capstone paper aims to capture the student's spiritual formation at the time of the comprehensive examination. The capstone paper is written by the student upon completion of the course work, during the preparation time of the comprehensive examination, and should be submitted to the advisor four (4) weeks prior to the date of the comprehensive examination. The paper includes a critical reflection of ca. 6,000 words on the following:

1. Define piety and spirituality from a Scriptural perspective (ca. 1,500 words)
2. Define piety and spirituality from a Reformed theological perspective (ca. 1,500 words)
3. Describe your spiritual formation during your doctoral studies (ca. 3,000 words).

APPENDIX I

DOCTORAL STUDIES AGREEMENT

By signing this agreement, I, [...] accept or decline the offer of admission into the Doctoral Program at Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary. I understand that this Doctoral Program is a fully-funded tuition study.

By signing and accepting the admission into the Doctoral Program, I agree to abide by the following:

1. I will: (1) attend all courses required of me, whether taken on campus or via live-stream, (2) attend all seminars and colloquia related to the Doctoral Program (whether on campus or via live-stream), and (3) attend all chapel services when on campus. Exceptions to this attendance is allowed only in case of verifiable hardships presented in writing to the Director of the Doctoral Program.
2. While in my coursework phase, I will continue to be enrolled in a minimum of 6 credits for each six-month period.
3. I will meet the residency and academic requirements of the Doctoral Program as stated in the most recent PhD Handbook.
4. I understand that I must complete each semester with the required minimum GPA of 3.50; I understand failure to maintain the minimum GPA will result in academic probation and possible withdrawal as outlined in the academic catalog.
5. I understand that full payment in the amount of US \$10,000 is required for withdrawal or dismissal from PRTS, whether administratively, ecclesiastically, or voluntarily.
6. After completion of my studies, I pledge to serve my country of origin (or a country of similar economic standing and development). If I fail to do so, I will reimburse the seminary in the amount of US \$10,000.
7. I remain personally responsible for any costs encountered during my doctoral studies above and beyond the fully-funded tuition study.
8. I will refrain from personal fund-raising outside of my personal family context of any kind within the PRTS supporting community.
9. I understand that failure to sign and accept this agreement within one (1) month from the date of receipt of this agreement annuls the admission into the doctoral program.
10. By signing this agreement, I agree to indemnify and hold harmless PRTS and its Board of Trustees from any claims above the agreed-upon terms of this letter.

Please circle one: Accept Decline
Date: _____
Student Signature: _____
Student Name: _____

APPENDIX J

ASSESSMENT GRID FOR EXAMINERS OF PRTS DOCTORAL DISSERTATIONS

The following foci are to be used in assessing the degree to which the dissertation meets the stated learning outcomes of the Doctoral Program. Each of them should be discussed in appropriate depth in the examiner's written report.

Foci of Assessment

1. Canvasses adequately and assesses critically the present state of knowledge relevant to the dissertation.
2. Includes extensive, relevant interaction with primary source(s) and secondary literature in English and other relevant languages.
3. Evidences independent, critical analysis of secondary literature.
4. Argues for its claims clearly, fairly, and conclusively.
5. The project as a whole constitutes original research that makes a substantial contribution to the field of study.
6. Fulfills the stated research aims, articulates and employs appropriate method(s).
7. Demonstrates its relevance for the church.
8. Presentation is suitably structured, conforms to the Seminary's style guide, and is free of errors in grammar, syntax, and form.

Recommendations (choose one)

The examiner shall state in his or her report which of the following applies as an overall assessment of the dissertation:

- Pass
- Conditional Pass, requiring that *minor* corrections and/or modifications as specified in the examiner's report be implemented to the satisfaction of the supervisor and co-advisor.
- Conditional Pass, requiring that *major* corrections and/or modifications as specified in the examiner's report be implemented to the satisfaction of the supervisor and co-advisor.
- Fail: Recommend that the student rewrite and resubmit the thesis in light of the critiques and observations in the examiner's report.
- Fail: Recommend that the student not receive the doctoral degree.