



BLUE RIDGE INSTITUTE
FOR THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

ST 522: The English Reformation from Wycliffe to the Westminster Assembly
Spring Semester 2026

Instructor: Dr N. Scott Amos

Meeting: Thursday Evenings, 6:00-7:30
Rivermont Evangelical Presbyterian Church
Discipleship Wing 205

Catalog Description: This course examines the life and thought of major figures of the English Protestant Reformation in context. Additionally, various trends, movements, and publications that were products of the Reformation are considered. The course is a two-credit elective.

Course Objectives

By the end of the course, the student should be able to:

1. Analyze texts, ideas, and debates within their historical contexts.
2. Appreciate the interplay between culture and ministry in various times and places.
3. Gain familiarity with major theologians from the Reformation and Modern eras.
4. Understand and assess the development of Christian doctrine through the centuries.
5. Read primary sources from a variety of centuries, genres, and styles.

Required Reading

If taking this course for academic credit, the textbooks will be:

Alec Ryrie, *The Age of Reformation: The Tudor and Stewart Realms 1485-1603*, 2nd Edition. Routledge, 2017.

Michael P. Winship, *Hot Protestants: A History of Puritanism in England and America*. Yale, 2018.

If taking this course as an auditor, the following very brief book may be helpful to you, though it is organized differently from my lectures in this course, and I do not assign reading from it in coordination with the lectures:

Alec Ryrie, *The English Reformation: A Very Brief History*. SPCK, 2020.

Additional reading

For most sessions, there will be primary sources supplied either as web links or PDFs sent to your preferred e-mail address.

Conduct of class sessions

With reference to the mechanics of this course, there will be two elements in each session. My lectures will examine the development of the Church and its theology within its broader historical context; class discussion will focus on readings taken from leading theologians and teachers of the Church through the ages, as well as addressing any questions arising from the lectures. Questions and discussion are welcome at any point, though I will allow time at set points for any general comments and questions. It will be very useful if you read Ryrie (either book as appropriate to your enrollment status) and Winship (for credit students) and the excerpts in the primary sources that I have designated for class discussion, as discussion of them and interaction with the primary sources is a significant component of the course. The readings are all relatively brief, and come with short notes that set their immediate context.

Use of laptops for note-taking is permitted, though if laptops are used in class for other purposes, this permission will be revoked. Cell-phones should be put away during the lectures and discussion.

For-Credit Course Requirements

1. Attendance: Class attendance is required for ST 522. 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** chose to receive a full letter grade reduction in their final grade.

2. Participation and Questions: You should plan to be actively involved. This means, in addition to attending class, that you will be attentive and take notes (which are a part of active learning), you will participate in class discussions, and you will ask questions. Everyone should make an effort to contribute to classroom discussion, especially of the assigned reading, and show that you have actually read the material and are thinking about the subject. At the end of the semester, if your grades are on the borderline of a higher mark, active participation will weigh in your favor in any decision I may need to make.

3. Reading Assignments: Readings assigned for class should be completed **before** the class session in which they will be covered (with the exception of Week 1). You cannot expect to keep up with course development or usefully contribute to class discussion if you are not prepared. On the final exam, you will be asked to state what percentage of the reading you completed over the semester. As noted below, completion of reading constitutes 20% of the overall course grade.

4. Writing Assignment: There is one required review essay of 10-12 pages. It must be typed, double-spaced, and use 12 point Times New Roman font, with standard 1-inch margins. Please look at the BRITE Academic Resources site for examples of the standard of writing that is expected. Also review

the Institute's policy on plagiarism in the Academic Catalog. Plagiarized work will result in course failure and possible disciplinary action. The paper takes the place of a mid-term examination.

The basis for the paper will be the two assigned books (Ryrie, Winship). In your essay, I will look for the following: 1.) a brief summary or *precis* of each book; 2.), the significance of each book for an understanding of the English Reformation, and how what is addressed in each book has relevance to the course topics.

The essay will be due **Thursday, 23 April**. It may be submitted in hard copy in class, or electronically.

5. Final Examination: Students will sit for a two-hour examination that covers questions drawn from lectures and assigned readings. This will be given as a take-home exam, to be submitted electronically and due on **Thursday, 23 April**. It will be open book/open note, though you will be asked to confirm that you took the exam in a single, two-hour sitting.

6. Grading: The final grade will be determined from the marks earned on each of the activities listed below.

Attendance and Class participation – 20 % (or points). This includes consideration both of physical presence in class and vocal participation in class.

Paper – 30 % or points.

Final examination – 30% (or points).

Course reading completed – 20% (or points).

Total: 100% (or points).

BRITE uses the following grading system:

<i>Letter Value</i>	<i>Numeric Value</i>	<i>Quality Points</i>
A	97-100	4.00
A-	94-96	3.66
B+	91-93	3.33
B	88-90	3.00
B-	86-87	2.66
C+	83-85	2.33
C	80-82	2.00
C-	78-79	1.66
D+	75-77	1.33
D	72-74	1.00
D-	70-71	0.66
F	Fail	0.00
I	Incomplete	0.00
WP	Withdraw Pass	0.00
WF	Withdraw Fail	0.00
S	Satisfactory	0.00
(P)	(Pass)	0.00

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 your studies, research, and writing during your time at BRITE. While not every class may demand the same level of research and writing rigor, you are likely to find something on that webpage each semester that will benefit you. Check back often to that webpage. The items 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, Open Access (i.e., free) journal article databases to aid you in your academic writing and research, and even a growing catalogue of instructional YouTube videos which will be of assistance to you.

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

Course: ST522
Professor: Amos
Campus: Lynchburg
Date: Spring 2026

*Upon graduation from the BRITE Master of Divinity (MDiv)*¹ 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.*
- 2. Accept positions of shepherding, authority, and administration in Christ's Church.*
- 3. Attain ordination in several Reformed, Presbyterian, or Evangelical denominations .*
- 4. Analyze, Apprehend, and Apply the meaning of Biblical passages from the original languages.*
- 5. Articulate the meaning of Biblical passages to a variety of audiences through expository preaching, teaching, and Christian education.*
- 6. Assimilate systematic, historical, and Biblical theology into a Reformed theological perspective of faith, ethics, piety, and church practice.*
- 7. Affirm and winsomely assert the Christian faith and a Reformed perspective.*

SLO Rationale for this course:

- 1. Regarding Outcome 1:** A study of church history and the historical development of doctrine will help the student to evaluate his internal sense of call, as a working knowledge of major events of church history is essential for any major Protestant denomination.
- 2. Regarding Outcome 2:** As noted above, ability to pass a ordination exam will almost certainly involve successful passage of an exam in church history. Moreover, a working knowledge of church history will help the student/ordinand to better understand and detect error (historical as well as modern iterations thereof) and thus to better shepherd the church.
- 3. Regarding Outcome 3:** See answers 1 and 2.

¹As the MDiv is the core degree at BRITE, the MDiv Rubric will be used in this syllabus.

4. Regarding Outcome 4: Non-applicable.

5. Regarding Outcome 5: Understanding the development of doctrine throughout the history of the church helps the student to better apprehend and articulate it to a contemporary audience, as well as to help the student and the church to safe-guard against committed old errors afresh in our day.

6. Regarding Outcome 6: a working knowledge of church history and historical theology will help the student better ascertain the “faith once for all delivered to the saints” as it has been embraced and expressed in the church down through the ages and even now comes to a modern iteration and expression. Church history helps to provide a demonstrative and traceable unity and catholicity (including systematic, historical, and Biblical theology) to the Christian faith (lived out in her ethics, piety, and church practice).

7. Regarding Outcome 7: a working knowledge of church history and historical theology will help the student to commend the “faith once for all delivered to the saints” to a modern audience with her particular needs and challenges.

SCHEDULE OF LECTURES AND READINGS (subject to change)

Session 1 (January 8): John Wycliffe, the Lollards, and the Late Medieval English Church

Text: Alec Ryrie, *Age of Reformation*, 1-28.

Documents: Roger Martyn, *The State of Melford Church*; John Wycliffe, *On the Pastoral Office*; John Colet, *Convocation Sermon*.

Session 2 (January 15): The White Horse Tavern; William Tyndale and an English Bible

Text: Ryrie, *Age of Reformation*, 83-93.

Documents: *Confession of John Pykas*; William Tyndale, *The V. Chapter* [of the Gospel of Matthew]; Tyndale, *The Exposition of the Fyrste Epistle of Seynt Jhon* (Prologue).

Session 3 (January 22): The King's Great Matter and the Break with Rome

Text: Ryrie, *Age of Reformation*, 76-83, 101-118.

Documents: Act in Restraint of Appeals (1533); Act of Supremacy (1534); Royal Injunctions (1536, 1538).

Session 4 (January 29): Reformation Restrained

Text: Ryrie, *Age of Reformation*, 118-133.

Documents: Act of the Six Articles (1539); Thomas Cranmer, "The Preface to the Bible"; "The Examination of Anne Askew".

Session 5 (February 5): Reformation Unleashed

Text: Ryrie, *Age of Reformation*, 135-159; Michael Winship, *Hot Protestants*, 9-16

Documents: Act of Uniformity (1549, 1552); Cranmer, "Preface to the Book of Common Prayer (1549 and 1552)."

Session 6 (February 12): Reformation in Exile

Text: Ryrie, *Age of Reformation*, 163-177; Winship, *Hot Protestants*, 10-25.

Documents: John Foxe, *Acts and Monuments*; "Report on Marian Persecution".

Session 7 (February 19): The Elizabethan Settlement and a *Via Media*

Text: Ryrie, *Age of Reformation*, 180-188; Winship, *Hot Protestants*, 26-36.

Documents: Act of Uniformity (1559); Parker, *Advertisements*; Jewel, *An Apology of the Church of England*.

Break – no class on February 26

Session 8 (March 5): The Elizabethan Puritan Movement and the Demand for a Full Reformation

Text: Ryrie, *Age of Reformation*, 244-251; Winship, *Hot Protestants*, 37-49

Documents: John Field and Thomas Wilcox, *First Admonition to the Parliament*; John Whitgift, *Defense of the Aunswere*; Thomas Cartwright, *A Reply to an Answer...*; Edmund

Grindal, “Letter to Elizabeth on Propheysings”; *Act Against Puritans* (1593).

Session 9 (March 12): Physicians of the Soul

Text: Ryrie, *Age of Reformation*, 254-266; Winship, *Hot Protestants*, 50-58.

Documents: William Perkins, *Cases of Conscience*; Richard Sibbes, *The Bruised Reed and the Smoking Flax*.

Session 10 (March 19): The *Via Media* Strikes Back

Text: Ryrie, *Age of Reformation*, 251-254; Winship, *Hot Protestants*, 59-70.

Documents: Richard Hooker, *The Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* (57-60); *The Millenary Petition*; James I, *The Book of Sports*; Lancelot Andrewes on the Eucharist; John Cosin on Confession.

Session 11 (March 26): Politics, Religion, and Civil War

Text: Winship, *Hot Protestants*, 91-113.

Documents: Robert Harley, *Character of a Puritan*; Henry Burton, *A Divine Tragedy Lately Acted*; *The Solemn League and Covenant*.

Session 12 (April 2): The Westminster Assembly

Text: Winship, *Hot Protestants*, 114-144.

Documents: *Ordinance Calling the Westminster Assembly*; *Members of the Westminster Assembly*; Robert Baillie, *Description of the Westminster Assembly*; The Westminster Confession of Faith; The Westminster Shorter Catechism.

Session 13 (April 9): Religious Radicalism

Text: Winship, *Hot Protestants*, 145-164.

Documents: Gerard Winstanley, *The Law of Freedom in a Platform* (62-63); George Fox, *Journal* (64-65); The Savoy Declaration of Faith and Order; Abiezer Coppe, *A Firey, Flying Roll*.

Session 14 (April 16): The Restoration, and the end of the English Reformation

Text: Winship, *Hot Protestants*, 203-232

Documents: John Bunyan, *Pilgrim's Progress*; Richard Baxter, *The Saints' Everlasting Rest*.