The Baptist Institute of Pittsburgh

####  “Strengthening Pittsburgh Baptists in faith, doctrine, and unity.”

**Program Guide
2014-2015**

# From the Executive Director

Welcome! The Baptist Institute of Pittsburgh (BIP) began with recognition of a big need for Baptist seminary training in Pittsburgh. Before BIP, students looking for Baptist seminary training had to travel to other cities. The Reformed Presbyterian Theological Seminary (RPTS) provides an outstanding seminary education, but even so, there is a growing need to train Baptist men and women in the Reformed Baptist views of biblical theology, the doctrine of the Church, ministry of worship, and to provide uniquely Baptist internship opportunities.

We are not a seminary, but we provide graduate seminary level instruction in Baptist faith for baptistic students, including those enrolled at RPTS and elsewhere. Through BIP and RPTS, you can benefit from a complete program of study without leaving the Pittsburgh area. In addition to course credit, dual-enrolled students receive BIP certificates designed to aid in credentialing for service in Baptist churches.

We are committed to the Bible as the inerrant, inspired, and sufficient Word of God. We are committed to the proclamation of the Good News of Jesus Christ to all people, everywhere. We are also committed to equipping men and women to disciple others. Our teachers are men of faith and experienced pastors with hearts for reaching the lost and building up the church in the knowledge and instruction of the Lord.

This program guide is designed to help you understand our vision and how the BIP works. We serve all students, not just Baptists. We are here to train pastors, teachers, men and women to strengthen the Pittsburgh community in faith, doctrine, and unity. We look forward to meeting you soon!

Yours in Christ,

Brian K. Hart

# Statement of Faith

The Baptist Institute of Pittsburgh affirms the Holy Bible as the inspired, inerrant, and sufficient Word of God and the 1689 London Baptist Confession of Faith as our guiding confessional statement. All BIP board members, faculty, and administrators agree to accept our standards as they relate to teaching and learning within the Institute.

While we do not require students to subscribe to a confession document, we will receive only students who confess Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Savior and whose stated beliefs and practices adhere to the standards of God’s Word as their rule for faith and life. Students of other Christian church backgrounds, including those that are not Reformed or baptistic, are welcome to participate in our programs so long as they respect our faith and the faculty and teaching of the BIP. [[1]](#footnote-1)

The BIP is an independent body governed by a Board of Directors, which is subject to the rule of Jesus Christ. In a manner consistent with Baptist faith and practice, the BIP actively establishes partnerships with pastors, churches, and associations. Our Board receives advice from an Advisory panel consisting of men and women from churches, seminaries, and other institutes. Local churches are also represented through our Church Partner program.

# RPTS Cooperative Program

The BIP and RPTS have entered into a cooperative agreement for the training of Baptist and baptistic students. This relationship is built on brotherhood in Jesus Christ and mutual respect for each other in areas of both agreement and disagreement regarding interpretation of Scripture. We believe that unity in spite of our differences honors our Lord and brings His blessing. We are Christians first, Reformed second, and Baptists third. The BIP is represented on the RPTS President’s Council and likewise, RPTS liaisons participate in the BIP Advisory Panel.

The BIP and RPTS are entirely separate from one other: each with its own instructors, boards, officers, locations, and operations structures.

# Mission Statement

To build up baptistic churches in western Pennsylvania by offering programs of study, credit and non-credit courses, classes and apprenticeship opportunities for seminarians, church leaders and others involved in Christian ministry that reflect the confessional and Reformed history of Baptist faith and practice.

# General information

## Locations

Our classes are taught at Three Rivers Grace Church, 1028 Chartiers Ave., Pittsburgh, PA 15220 and our administrative offices are located at:

Baptist Institute of Pittsburgh
120 Anborn Drive
West Mifflin, PA 15122

 Phone: 412-461-2107
 Email: baptistinstitutepgh@gmail.com

 www.baptistinstitutepgh.org

## Class Times

Classes are generally taught in the evenings from 6:30-9:10 (three 50-minute credit hours). Class days are coordinated with the RPTS schedule to minimize conflicts for degree students. Certain classes may be taught in an intensive format (eight hours over five days, for example) or at certain times during the day. Please consult the schedule at [www.baptistinstitutepgh.org](http://www.baptistinstitutepgh.org) for up-to-date information.

## Class Attendance

Class sessions provide you with the opportunity to interact with the instructor by asking questions and participating in discussions. Attendance at all classes is expected and demonstrates the student’s Christian maturity and responsibility. Students who are ill or otherwise legitimately must be absent from class should notify the instructor and make arrangements to obtain notes and handouts, or complete exams.

## Library

RPTS graciously extends library privileges to all BIP students, faculty, and staff. BIP students who are not enrolled at RPTS should go to the RPTS main office to receive a library card. The card is valid only while enrolled in BIP classes. The RPTS library is available during the normal operating hours of the seminary. Students are fully responsible for fines and may not register for BIP courses if they have unpaid fines or obligations. Books should be returned on time in the condition in which they were borrowed.

Certain reserve books may also be available for use at the BIP classroom. These holdings are managed through the RPTS online catalog and may be checked out for up to one week using your RPTS library card.

## Textbooks

The BIP does not have a bookstore. Students should plan to purchase textbooks through an online reseller such as Amazon or Christian Book Distributors. We will provide book lists as far in advance as possible to provide time for students to order and receive textbooks. Students who have difficulty finding textbooks should contact their instructor for assistance. Some hard-to-find texts may be available online or be held on reserve by the instructor.

# Academic Calendar

## Fall Quarter 2014-2015

Registration and Orientation September 8

Classes Begin Week of September 8

Final Day to Withdraw Without Penalty September 30

Registration Opens for Winter Quarter October 21

Final Examinations Week of November 18

## Winter Quarter

Classes Begin Week of December 2

Last Day of Class before Christmas Break December 20

Christmas Break December 21-January 5

Classes Resume January 6

Final Day to Withdraw Without Penalty January 6

Final Day to Resolve Fall Quarter Incompletes January 6

Registration Opens for Spring Quarter January 27

Final Examinations February 28

Quarter Break March 1-9

## Spring Quarter

Classes Begin March 10

Final Day to Withdraw Without Penalty March 30

Final Day to Resolve Winter Quarter Incompletes April 14

Registration Opens for Summer and Fall Quarters April 21

Final Examinations May 19-23

## Summer Quarter

Internship Schedules by Arrangement

# Program of Studies

## Course Descriptions

* **Ministry of Worship** - This course will focus on the biblical teaching concerning Christian worship. Attention will be given to personal worship, family worship, and the gathered worship of the local church. Topics of study will include: corporate worship on the Lord’s Day, the ordinances of baptism and the Lord’s Supper, the role of music in corporate worship, the Regulative Principle, and other related matters. (This course is intended to replace the RPTS Ministry of Worship course or, if need be, will count as an elective. It should be taken in the second year of the M.Div. degree or first year of the M.T.S. degree.)
* **Baptist Church History** – Students will trace the development of present-day Baptist faith through its beginnings in pre-Reformation Europe, including the development of Anabaptist thought, English non-conformists, migration of Baptist churches to America, and the development of mainline Baptist associations. Attention will be given to the development of the various Baptist confessional statements beginning with the 1644 London Baptist Confession of Faith. This course meets the RPTS denominational church history requirement. RPTS M.Div. or M.T.S. students should take this course during their second year.
* **Doctrine of the Church -** In this course students will study Scripture to gain a deeper understanding of the nature of the church. There will be a focus on various aspects of Baptist polity including the roles of elders and deacons, congregational church government, church membership, and church discipline. The nature and purpose of baptism will also be a topic of study in this course. (This course is intended to replace the RPTS Doctrine of the Church course or, if need be, will count as an elective. It should be taken in the third year of the M.Div. degree or second year of the M.T.S. degree.)
* **Baptist Confessional Standards** – This course examines the development of Baptist confessional standards from the Schleitheim Confession through the 17th century London standards (1644 and 1689), into the development of the American Philadelphia Confession to the Southern Baptist Convention “Baptist Faith and Message.” The course will show how confessional development guided the movement of the Baptist church and helped her to retain conservative thought regarding the authority of Scripture as the rule for faith and life. (Elective credit at RPTS.)
* **Baptist Theology –** Churches develop theological frameworks in order to understand Scripture more clearly. Covenant theology, Dispensationalism in various forms, and New Covenant Theology are among the frameworks used by Baptist churches. This course, with an emphasis on the Baptist covenant theology underlying the 1644 and 1689 London Baptist Confessions, helps students understand the history and development of these frameworks with an eye to choosing among them and consequently, the churches which hold to the various views.
* **Internship/Apprenticeship** – Students called to pastoral ministry will serve at least one ten-week internship at a local church under the supervision of a local pastor. The experience is designed to provide practical and observational experience within the context of a local church, including if possible, participation in associational connections with other congregations. Internship opportunities may also include work in chaplaincies, missions, or other areas of church life. Pass/fail grading will be based on the observations of the supervising pastor and on the student’s own observations in discussion with BIP faculty. RPTS students may take this course in lieu of the Summer Internship.

The BIP and instructors reserve the right to change course listings, titles, content, and requirements at any time.

## Certificate Programs

The BIP awards the following certificates to aid in the credentialing of Baptist students:

Pastoral Ministry Certificate – this certificate is granted to all students who complete all four BIP courses and earn an approved M.Div. degree.

Ministry Studies Certificate – awarded to all students who complete at least Baptist Church History, Ministry of Worship, and Doctrine of the Church and earn an approved M.T.S. or similar degree.

Baptist Church Servant Certificate – awarded to all students who complete at least Ministry of Worship and receive an RPTS Servant of the Church certificate. A student who completes all four courses but does not complete an RPTS degree program may also be awarded this certificate.

Non-certificate Studies – any RPTS student is welcome to take one or more of our courses for elective credit transfer toward his or her RPTS degree. Students from denominations other than the RPCNA may take Baptist Church History in lieu of Reformed Presbyterian Church History, Black Church History and Polity, or writing a denominational research paper.[[2]](#footnote-2)

General Education - Members of the community may, upon admission, take any or all courses on a for-credit or audit basis. All students must apply and register to take BIP courses.

RPTS students who have declared a concentration in Biblical Counseling should note that any courses taken at the BIP will exceed the number of credits required by RPTS for the M.Div. degree.

# Admissions Information

## General Requirements

### Application

All students must apply to the BIP in order to take courses. An application form is available on our website. In addition to the application form, students must also submit the following.

### Active and Engaged Church Membership

The mission of the BIP is to train men and women to serve in the local church. Whether or not you plan to earn a degree, you must provide evidence of membership in a local church. Ongoing, active, and engaged membership is considered a foundational part of a student’s preparation for ministry. Accordingly, all students will need to submit a completed Pastor’s Certificate of Active and Engaged Church Ministry with their application.

### Statement of Faith

Each student will be required to submit an essay (500-1,000 words) describing his or her coming to accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior along with a specific call to ministry. The essay must describe how the student carries out Christ’s Great Commission (Matt. 20:19-20) in daily practice.

### Academic Achievement

Students are required to provide evidence of academic achievement prior to admission. Transcripts of baccalaureate work are preferred; however, a student may be admitted provisionally to take BIP courses without having earned an undergraduate degree. Students in this situation should speak with the Registrar. The BIP is looking for evidence of preparation and ability to complete graduate level work.

**Note to RPTS and Non-credit Students:**The BIP accepts certification of enrollment from the RPTS Registrar in lieu of a detailed application and transcripts. RPTS students must submit a short application form, the Pastor’s Certificate of Active and Engaged Church Membership and a Statement of Faith. Students auditing BIP classes need only complete the short application form. Please check with the BIP Registrar for details.

## Certificate Program Requirements

### Pastoral Ministry Certificate

In addition to general requirements described above, students must be RTPS M.Div. candidates. (Students admitted to another seminary will be also considered on presentation of a Certificate of Admission to an M. Div. program.) Due to the biblical convictions of the BIP, this certificate program is limited to men.

RPTS M.Div. students declaring the Biblical Counseling concentration should be aware that most BIP credits transfer to RPTS as electives. Biblical Counseling concentration courses leave little room for electives and consequently, enrolling at BIP will result in taking more than the 135 credits required by RPTS for graduation.

### Ministry Studies Certificate

In addition to the general requirements described above, students must also be candidates for the RPTS M.T.S. Degree Program. (Students admitted to another seminary will also be considered on presentation of a Certificate of Admission to a theological studies program other than M.Div.) This program is open to men and women.

### Baptist Church Servant Certificate

RPTS Servant of the Church certificate students or students not enrolled at a seminary may apply for admission to the Servant of the Church program. This allows students to take any or all of the BIP courses. Students will earn full graduate credit for courses taken that can later be considered by RPTS or another seminary should the student choose to enroll later on.

### Non-Credit/Audit Program

Students may enroll in BIP courses on a not-for-credit basis by completing an application for admission and declaring the non-credit option. Please note that the Active and Engaged Church Membership requirement applies even to non-credit and auditing students. A Statement of Faith essay is also required. Non-credit/audit students will not receive program certificates or graduate credit for participation. Auditing students are not required to complete assignments or take examinations.

## Application Fee and Deadlines

Application materials should be accompanied by a check or money order for $20.00 payable to the Baptist Institute of Pittsburgh. The fee is waived for RPTS and non-credit students. Applications may be submitted at any time, but no less than 10 business days before the start of any class.

# Registration

Once admitted, you may register for any BIP course being taught in a given quarter.

To register, students must be admitted, in good standing with the BIP and church, owe no outstanding tuition or fees to the BIP. Students must also not have any outstanding fines or overdue books at the RPTS Library since library access is critical to success in BIP courses. Registration must be complete by the first day of class unless special arrangements have been made with the Registrar.

While enrolled, students must agree in writing to the following statement, “While I am a student at the BIP, I will attend classes regularly and obey all rules and regulations. I promise to pay all tuition and fees on time or according to agreed-upon arrangements. On my honor I will neither give nor accept improper assistance in completing any assignments while enrolled in BIP programs. ”

Students must begin attending within one calendar year of admission or will be required to reapply. Any student who has not taken a class within three years of the first will also need to reapply.

Full-time seminary students should consider overall course loads when registering for BIP courses. We generally will not permit students to register for BIP courses if they are taking more than 12 credits at their home seminary. This limit may be increased to 15 credits for students with exceptional ability. **Students taking 15 or more credits in any given term at the home seminary must show evidence of having dropped one or more classes before registering for BIP courses.** We will confirm course loads before finalizing student registrations.

# Transfer Credit

The BIP is not a degree-granting institution and therefore does not accept transfer credit from other institutions. Accredited degree-granting seminaries and other institutions may accept BIP courses for transfer credit after a review and determination *provided that* *the student has successfully completed the course, usually with a grade of “B” or better*.[[3]](#footnote-3)

# Credit by Examination

The BIP does not offer a credit by examination program. Academic credit is granted only to those who enroll and participate in instructor-led onsite courses.

# Auditing

Students may audit BIP courses after meeting the following requirements:

* Submission of a complete application for admission
* Full payment of one half the regular fees
* Consent of the instructor

# Transcripts

Transcripts of course work will be issued for students in good standing. A transcript fee of $4.00 is charged for each official transcript requested. For RPTS students we automatically issue official transcripts to the RPTS Registrar after each term of enrollment at no cost.

Students and their sponsoring churches receive unofficial grade reports after each academic term showing course grade, term grade point average, and cumulative grade point average (if any).

# Financial Information

Tuition and fees are payable by the first day of each quarter in cash, check, or money order. If the full tuition cannot be paid by that date, arrangements for a payment plan must be made with the Registrar. Students will be required to sign a promissory note and will not be permitted to register again until the terms of the arrangement are satisfied.

Current tuition rates are published on the BIP website at <http://baptistinstitutepgh.org>. We reserve the right to change tuition and fees at any time. Checks must be made payable to **Baptist Institute of Pittsburgh**. If you use an online banking system to send a check, please make sure it will arrive on or before the first day of class.

## Refunds

Tuition refunds for dropped courses will be prorated on the following scale:

 100% to the end of the second week

 80% to the end of the third week

 60% to the end of the fourth week

 40% to the end of the fifth week

No refunds will be made after the end of the fifth week.

## Financial Aid

The BIP does not participate in or accept funds from government financial aid programs. We discourage the use of loans to finance education since it may be difficult to repay them on a ministry salary. Students who must pay all or part of their own tuition are reminded that a flexible payment schedule is available as described under Tuition and Fees above.

### Church Partner Grant Program

Students who are members of one of our supporting partner churches will receive a 50% tuition discount. Under this program, the normal $750 tuition for a three-credit course is reduced to $375. Auditors pay 50% of the current audit rate (or ¼ the full tuition of the course). **This program is different from the RPTS church match grant program so please plan accordingly.**

The BIP encourages sending churches to prayerfully consider supporting all or part of the student’s costs. We are glad to consult with both student and church on financing arrangements to make it possible for students to fully participate in our programs.

# Academic Information and Policies

## Accreditation

The BIP is an unaccredited Institute for Baptist studies. Accredited seminaries may approve and accept BIP courses for transfer credit in lieu of required courses or, more commonly, as electives. The BIP will provide necessary documentation, including course syllabi and official transcripts of student work, to other institutions upon request to aid in securing transfer credit for BIP courses. Through our cooperative agreement, RPTS will accept BIP courses subject to limits on transfer of credit from unaccredited institutions (usually not more than 1/3 of the degree requirements). Students should also note that successful completion of any course, generally with a grade of “B” or better, is required for credit transfers. Please note that the registrar of your seminary has the final say regarding transferability of BIP credits toward the requirements of their degree programs.

## Academic Year

The academic year is divided into three quarters of eleven weeks each. Usually one course is offered in any given quarter. Internships are generally scheduled during the summer months, although special arrangements can be made. The BIP offers graduate level courses with workloads very similar to seminary courses.

## Standards of Evaluation

One quarter hour is generally one 50-minute class period meeting weekly for ten weeks in a quarter, plus one additional week for the final examination. Most BIP courses are assigned three quarter hours. The grading system used is as follows:

 **Letter Grade Means Numeric Grade Quality Points**

 A+ 98-100 4.0

 A Excellent 94-97 4.0

 A- 90-93 3.7

 B+ 87-89 3.3

 B Good 84-86 3.0

 B- 80-83 2.7

 C+ 77-79 2.3

 C Fair 74-76 2.0

 C- 70-73 1.7

 D+ 67-69 1.3

 D Unsatisfactory 64-66 1.0

 D- 60-63 0.7

 F Failure Below 60 0.0

 I Incomplete Not all required work has been completed. [[4]](#footnote-4)

 P or F Pass/Fail Given for Internships

 W Withdrawal Given when a student withdraws from a class
 before the end of withdrawal without penalty period.

## Grade Point Average

Student records, grade reports, and transcripts will carry the computed Grade Point Average (GPA). The GPA is the total quality points earned divided by the total number of credit hours attempted. W and Pass/Fail grades do not contribute to a student’s GPA.

## Grading Appeals

Students should expect that the grade received from their instructor is final unless they can demonstrate to the Registrar by compelling evidence of extraordinary circumstances that a modification should be made. The Registrar and faculty member together will review and determine the final grade.

## Continuing Status

Students must generally earn a grade of B or better in BIP courses in order to continue in a certificate program. Decisions on continuing status will be made by the Registrar in consultation with the Faculty and may take into account the student’s overall graduate program (BIP and seminary) success. Students may repeat BIP courses if doing so may improve the likelihood that a course will be accepted for transfer elsewhere. The transcript will show all attempts to complete a course and the grade received; however, only the most recent grade recorded will be used to compute the student’s BIP grade point average.

Students must also have paid all BIP account balances and have no outstanding fines or charges at the RPTS library in order to continue in BIP programs.

## Incomplete Coursework

Students must complete all coursework for any given quarter no later than six weeks after the end of the quarter. Failure to meet the deadline for submitting incomplete coursework will result in a grade based on the work that was completed, usually an “F.”

## Records

The Registrar maintains permanent records of achievement in coursework and provides a report to each student and sponsoring church officials if desired at the end of each quarter. The Registrar provides one official transcript to RPTS or the student’s home seminary each term at no charge to the student. All student records are confidential.

## Withdrawal from Courses

Written permission of the instructor is required to withdraw from a course. A grade of “W” will be recorded if you withdraw within three weeks of the first class meeting. If you withdraw after three weeks, a grade of “F” will be recorded. Under extraordinary circumstances (such as documented extended illness), you may petition the Registrar to have an “F” withdrawal grade commuted to a “W.”

## Independent Study

Students may be able to take some courses independently with the permission of the faculty member. In addition, students may submit proposals for consideration of independent study courses designed around specific topics of concern to Baptist or baptistic students. An independent study fee of $65 per credit hour is charged due to the additional load imposed on the faculty member. Please remember that independent studies can be difficult or impossible to arrange when courses are taught by visiting instructors.

# Staff

 Brian K. Hart, Executive Director and Registrar

# Instructors

Benjamin M. Reaoch, Ph.D., Lead Instructor

R. Bruce Bickel, D. Min, D.D.

Visiting Faculty by Arrangement

# Board of Directors

Phil D’Amato

Dr. R. Bruce Bickel

Dr. Benjamin Reaoch

1. By “baptistic” we mean individuals or churches whose beliefs are similar to those of the historic Baptist faith, but may not identify themselves as Baptist in faith or practice. This term includes a wide range of churches. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. The Reformed Presbyterian Church in North America (RPCNA) is the denomination to which RPTS belongs. RPCNA students are required to take RP Church History. Students should verify RPTS requirements before planning to transfer credit. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. You should consult with your home seminary *before* enrolling at BIP to be sure credits will transfer. The Registrar can help you determine which courses are approved at RPTS and other seminaries either as electives or in lieu of required courses. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. The grade for a course in which an “I” is given may be reduced by one grade point at the discretion of the instructor. “I” grades must be resolved within six weeks of the end of the term given or will be converted to “F.” [↑](#footnote-ref-4)