Covenant Theology
ST 601
Reformed Theological Seminary – Charlotte
Summer 2013

Professor:
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Office Hours:
By appointment

Required Texts:
The Bible
The Westminster Confession of Faith
Other brief readings may be recommended at various points in the course.

*We will be reading only a portion of Gentry & Wellum, which will be on reserve in the RTS library.

Note that the four covenant theology texts all differ on certain issues. Do not be surprised to find some disagreement and even some differences in terminology! If you begin your reading prior to the course and need any clarification or explanation, please feel free to contact me using the contact information above.

Course Structure and Objectives:
In this course, we will examine the role of Covenant in God’s redemptive purposes, giving attention to both the interrelationship and the development of the various covenants found in Scripture. Attention will be given to issues that have arisen within covenantal thought and to the centrality of covenant theology in some areas of contemporary debate. At each point, we will consider the influence of God’s Covenant and of covenant theology on the life of the Church today, placing particular emphasis on how covenant theology is to be preached for the glory of God and the good of His people.

Course Requirements:
Assigned Reading: All assigned reading (relevant Biblical passages; sections of the Westminster Confession; and assigned texts) must be completed prior to the final exam.
There will be a question on the final exam asking how much of the assigned reading you have completed.

Exam: There will be a final exam covering all material discussed in class. The exam will consist of short answer and essay questions intended to test an overall command of the history, structure, implications, and applications of covenant theology. The exam must be completed by August 2 and will account for 1/3 of the final grade.

Essay: Each student will submit a 10-12 page (double-spaced, excluding bibliography) essay, due by July 26. Each student may determine the topic of his essay, but each essay topic must be approved by the professor no later than July 5. Some suggested/potential essay topics are as follows:

- Discuss the covenant of works. What Biblical support is there for such a covenant? What objections have been brought against the validity of this covenant? Who have been its significant supports and detractors? What are its broader theological implications? What role does its validity play in contemporary theological discussions?
- Discuss the covenant of redemption. Is it distinct from the covenant of grace? What Biblical support is there for the covenant and for its relationship with the covenant of grace? What impact does the covenant of redemption have on broader theological issues?
- Can a coherent case be made for an overarching Covenant of Grace? What are the Biblical foundations for such a concept? Are there problems with the concept? What is the importance of an overarching Covenant of Grace?
- Discuss the relationship between the Mosaic covenant and the covenant of grace. How does the former fit into the development of the latter? What are some of the competing views?
- Discuss the prophetic literature’s development of the New Covenant. How was it related to the prior covenants? What was “new” about it?
- How does the Exile fit into the unity of the covenant of grace? How did the Scriptures anticipate the Exile? How did the Scriptures interpret the Exile both during the Exile and after the Exile?
- Discuss the use and development of the “New Covenant” in chapters 8-10 of the book of Hebrews.
- Both in the history of covenant theology and in contemporary discussion, the interaction of “covenant” and “election” has been very important. Discuss the views that have been forwarded and how they have shaped both the development of covenant theology and the state of contemporary discourse. What is the proper Biblical understanding of the relationship between these two concepts?
- Choose a topic of contemporary theological discussion and explain both the role that covenant theology plays in that discussion and what further light covenant theology could shed on the issues at hand.
- Choose two or more of the authors we have read in this course and offer an analysis of their respective covenant theologies. What are the similarities?
What are the differences? What are the relative strengths and weaknesses of each system? Which system makes the best sense of the Biblical data? Proper footnote citation throughout the essay and a complete bibliography are required. The essay will account for 1/3 of the final grade.

**Sermon Manuscript:** It can be all too easy to leave covenant theology in the classroom – or, at best, in the background of our own minds – and never allow it openly to enter the pulpit and be used for the instruction and edification of God’s people. As an exercise in *preaching* covenant theology, each student will submit the full manuscript of a sermon on a relevant Biblical passage. The manuscript will be 8-10 pages (double-spaced, excluding bibliography) and should attempt both to bring out and to *apply* the covenantal implications of the passage. Each student may choose the Biblical text for his manuscript, but each text must be approved by the professor no later than July 5. The manuscript will be due by July 26. Some suggested/potential texts are:

- Foundational passages for the various covenants (these will become clear in the lectures and reading)
- Isaiah 42.1-9
- Ezekiel 37.1-14
- Romans 5.12-21
- II Corinthians 3.7-18
- Galatians 3.19-29

A bibliography of sources used is required. The manuscript will account for 1/3 of the final grade.

**Policy on Late Assignments:**
All late assignments will be assessed a 10 point deduction per day that the due date is exceeded.

**Policy on Class Absences:**
Attendance at lectures is mandatory. Unexcused absences will be penalized.

**Tentative Lecture Schedule:**
*As the name implies, this schedule is subject to change, allowing for either more or less time to be given to various topics as needed. The assigned readings indicate the portion of the readings most relevant for each topic.*

**Monday, June 17 – Introduction; Terminology and history of covenant theology; Foundational Principles**
- *Westminster Confession* VII.1-2
- Gentry & Wellum, pages 591-611
- Horton, chapters 1-4
- Murray, pages 1-12
- Robertson, chapters 1-4
Tuesday, June 18, Morning – Covenant of Works; Covenant of Redemption / Council of Peace
- Genesis 1-3
- Westminster Confession IV; VI
- Gentry & Wellum, pages 611-628
- Horton, pages 77-104
- Robertson, chapter 5

Tuesday, June 18, Afternoon – Covenant of Grace; Character and first announcement of the covenant
- Westminster Confession VII.3-5; VIII
- Horton, pages 104-110
- Robertson, chapter 6

Wednesday, June 19, Morning – Noahic Covenant
- Genesis 6-9
- Gentry & Wellum, pages 628-629
- Horton, chapter 6
- Murray, pages 12-16
- Robertson, chapter 7

Abrahamic Covenant
- Genesis 12, 15, 17
- Gentry & Wellum, pages 630-635
- Murray, pages 16-20
- Robertson, chapter 8

Wednesday, June 19, Afternoon – Mosaic Covenant
- Exodus 19-20, 24
- Westminster Confession XVI; XIX-XX
- Gentry & Wellum, 635-640
- Murray, pages 20-22
- Robertson, chapter 10

Davidic Covenant
- II Samuel 1-7
- Gentry & Wellum, pages 640-644
- Murray, pages 22-25
- Robertson, chapter 12

Thursday, June 20, Morning – The “New Covenant” in the prophets
- Jeremiah 31.31-40
- Gentry & Wellum, pages 644-652
- Robertson, chapter 13
Covenant in the New Testament
  o Galatians 3.19-4.7; Hebrews 8-10
  o Murray, pages 25-32

Thursday, June 20, Afternoon – Covenant and ecclesiology
  o Westminster Confession VII.6; XXV-XXIX
  o Gentry & Wellum, pages 683-703
  o Horton, chapters 7-8
  o Robertson, chapter 9

Covenant and contemporary theological issues
  o Horton, chapter 9
  o Robertson, chapter 11

Friday, June 21, Morning – Covenant and contemporary theological issues; Review