COURSE SYLLABUS:  
ACTS AND  
ROMANS

Instructor  
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Ph.D. Candidate: Department of New Testament  
Wheaton College, Wheaton, IL

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Course Description  
This course is a study of Acts and Paul’s Letter to the Romans in English translation,  
emphasizing close reading and interpretation and ministry application.

Course Objectives  
Upon successful completion of the course, students will be able to:

• summarize the structure and outline of Acts and Romans  
• discuss the historical, redemptive-historical, and canonical contexts of each book and their  
  relevance to interpretation  
• employ responsible interpretive approaches to each book  
• describe, evaluate, and engage with major current issues in the interpretation of Acts and  
  Romans  
• synthesize the theological teaching of each book  
• preach effectively from each book  
• apply the teaching of each book, as God’s word, to themselves and others

Required Texts  
The following texts will be read in their entirety during the course:

The Acts of the Apostles and Paul’s Letter to the Romans in two translations of the student’s  
choice.¹

¹ Ideally, students will read from the version from which they preach or teach and choose a second  
translation that adopts a different translation philosophy. E.g., if a student teaches from the NASB, the  
NIV or NLT would be a good additional translation to read.
Course Requirements

Attendance: Attendance is required at all class meetings. Please contact the instructor in advance if you know you will be unable to attend. Excessive absence will not only have an negative impact on final grades, but also, especially in such a condensed course, on students’ accomplishment of the course objectives in general.

Reading and Class Preparation: For each session as indicated in the course schedule below, students should complete the assigned reading before attending class.

Before each class meeting, the biblical book under discussion must be read in its entirety and in one sitting. The segment of the book under specific discussion that week should then be read in both of the student’s chosen translations. Read biblical material prayerfully and rigorously.

Secondary sources should be read 1) carefully (i.e. concentrating on understanding the author’s arguments as well as internalizing the information, 2) critically (i.e. weighing the evidence yourself and evaluating arguments and conclusions), and 3) fairly (i.e. laboring to read as you would wish to be read and to be charitable in criticism).

Finally, be prepared to discuss the readings and to articulate thoughtful analysis, agreement, or disagreement with secondary sources during class discussions. Constructive participation in class discussion is required, and students’ preparation in this area will contribute to the “Participation” portion of the course grade. Prepared notes on the reading, while not a course requirement, will be of great benefit during class discussions and may be consulted as needed.

Written Assignments: Four written assignments are required: an exegetical paper, a sermon manuscript, and two issue summaries.

- Exegetical Paper: Students will prepare an exegetical paper of 2800–3200 words examining a passage (at least 7 verses) of their choice from either Acts or Romans. This paper should analyze the argument of the passage with due attention to its contexts (i.e. in the book itself, the New Testament, and the canon of Scripture) and employ appropriate interpretive practices as discussed in class. While the exegetical paper should address major interpretive and theological issues raised by the passage and interact with key views, the primary goal of the paper is to elucidate the main idea and trace the points of argument in the selected passage. Additional research beyond assigned readings should therefore be conducted, and

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2 Students who have had Greek are required to address important grammatical and text-critical issues as they arise in the passage. Please contact the instructor for additional direction toward appropriate tools and sources for interaction with the Greek text.
sources should be appropriately cited in footnotes and a bibliography. Footnotes and bibliography text do not count toward the word count for this paper. **Due: April 3, 2015** (for papers on Acts) or **May 12, 2015** (for papers on Romans) at **5:00 pm ET, via email.**

- **Sermon Manuscript:** Students will prepare a sermon manuscript covering a passage from the biblical book not addressed in the Exegetical Paper. Sermons should demonstrate rigorous, faithful interaction with the text as God’s word, using appropriate interpretive practices as discussed in class, as well as homiletical acumen and pastoral application. **Due: April 3, 2015** (for sermons on Acts) or **May 12, 2015** (for sermons on Romans) at **5:00 pm ET, via email.**

- **Issue Summaries (2):** For this assignment, consider the following scenario: An interested church member approaches you with a question about a popular or controversial issue from Acts or Romans and wants your guidance. You must give an answer in less than 500 words, seeking both to encourage or reassure and also faithfully to educate and inform. As part of your answer, include 3–5 resources appropriate for consultation by an interested layperson (not included in word count). You may either choose one issue from each book or focus on two issues in the same book. Topics must be cleared with the instructor ahead of time. **Due: April 3, 2015, 5:00 pm ET, via email.**

**Grading, Submission, and Extensions**

*Grading:* The final course grade is comprised of the following components:

- Participation 15%
- Exegetical Paper 45%
- Sermon Manuscript 20%
- Issue Summaries 20%

*Submission:* Written work should be submitted to the instructor via email in .pdf or .doc/x format. PDF documents are preferable for all assignments and required for assignments containing non-English characters. Submissions must be made by **5:00 pm ET** on the following due dates listed above.

*Extensions:* All assignments and exams are to be completed by the deadlines announced in this syllabus or in class.

Extensions for assignments and exams due within the normal duration of the course must be approved beforehand by the Professor. Extensions of two weeks or less beyond the date of the last deadline for the course must be approved beforehand by the Professor. A grade penalty may be assessed.

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3 Papers should be formatted according to the *SBL Handbook of Style* and should be typeset in 12 pt. Times New Roman font, with lines double-spaced.

4 Sermons should be designed to be delivered in 25–30 minutes.
Extensions of greater than two weeks but not more than six weeks beyond the last deadline for the course may be granted in extenuating circumstances (i.e. illness, family emergency). For an extension of more than two weeks the student must request an Extension Request Form from the Student Services Office. The request must be approved by the Professor and the Academic Dean. A grade penalty may be assessed. (RTS Catalog p. 42 and RTS Atlanta Student Handbook p. 14)

Any incompletes not cleared six weeks after the last published due date for course work will be converted to a failing grade. Professors may have the failing grade changed to a passing grade by request. (RTS Catalog p. 42)

### Course Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Biblical Reading Due</th>
<th>Secondary Reading Due</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>February 5, 2015</td>
<td>Acts (all), Acts 1–8:3</td>
<td>Johnson 1–143</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 19, 2015</td>
<td>Acts (all), Acts 8–15:35</td>
<td>Johnson 144–280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 2, 2015</td>
<td>Romans (all), Romans 1–4</td>
<td>Kruse 1–223</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 16, 2015</td>
<td>Romans (all), Romans 5–8</td>
<td>Kruse 224–366</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 30, 2015</td>
<td>Romans (all), Romans 9–11</td>
<td>Kruse 367–460</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 7, 2015</td>
<td>Romans (all), Romans 12–16</td>
<td>Kruse 461–590</td>
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**Office Hours:** The instructor is available on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons by appointment (see above contact information).

### Course Objectives Related to MDiv Student Learning Outcomes

**MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes**

In order to measure the success of the MDiv curriculum, RTS has defined the following as the intended outcomes of the student learning process. Each course contributes to these overall outcomes. This rubric shows the contribution of this course to the MDiv outcomes. *As the MDiv is the core degree at RTS, the MDiv rubric will be used in this syllabus.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Articulation (oral &amp; written)</th>
<th>Rubric</th>
<th>Mini-Justification</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Broadly understands and articulates knowledge, both oral and written, of essential biblical, theological, historical, and cultural/global information, including details, concepts, and frameworks.</td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>Students will both write and discuss arguments as required components of the course. (See course requirements above.)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Scripture</strong></td>
<td>Significant knowledge of the original meaning of Scripture. Also, the concepts for and skill to research further into the original meaning of Scripture and to apply Scripture to a variety of modern circumstances. (Includes appropriate use of original languages and hermeneutics; and integrates theological, historical, and cultural/global perspectives.)</td>
<td>Strong</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Reformed Theology</strong></td>
<td>Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards.</td>
<td>Moderate-Strong</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Sanctification</strong></td>
<td>Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student’s sanctification.</td>
<td>Strong</td>
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<td><strong>Desire for Worldview</strong></td>
<td>Burning desire to conform all of life to the Word of God.</td>
<td>Strong</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Winsomely Reformed</strong></td>
<td>Embraces a winsomely Reformed ethos. (Includes an appropriate ecumenical spirit with other Christians, especially Evangelicals; a concern to present the Gospel in a God-honoring manner to non-Christians; and a truth-in-love attitude in disagreements.)</td>
<td>Strong</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Preach</strong></td>
<td>Ability to preach and teach the meaning of Scripture to both heart and mind with clarity and enthusiasm.</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
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<td><strong>Worship</strong></td>
<td>Knowledgeable of historic and modern Christian-worship forms; and ability to construct and skill to lead a worship service.</td>
<td>Minimal</td>
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<td><strong>Shepherd</strong></td>
<td>Ability to shepherd the local congregation: aiding in spiritual maturity; promoting use of gifts and callings; and encouraging a concern for non-Christians, both in America and worldwide.</td>
<td>Moderate-Strong</td>
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<td><strong>Church/World</strong></td>
<td>Ability to interact within a denominational context, within the broader worldwide church, and with significant public issues.</td>
<td>Minimal</td>
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