NT 516 – Introduction to Acts and Romans

2 Credit Hours

Rev. Patrick G. Stefan
Ph.D. Candidate, University of Denver

Location: Reformed Theological Seminary / DC Campus
Time: October 8 – 10, 2014; 8:30 AM – 5:30 PM
Contact: Patrick.stefan@du.edu; Cell: 303-667-9417

Introduction: “Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy scriptures, the gospel concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh and was declared to be Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness by resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles for the sake of his name, including yourselves who are called to belong to Jesus Christ” (Rom. 1:1-6). This passage accurately sums up this course – theology should lead us to Jesus. It’s about Jesus in his flesh, his power, and his resurrection. It’s about spreading the message of the Gospel and participating in the growth of Christ’s Kingdom. This class will serve as an introduction to Luke’s account of the History of Redemption (Acts) and Paul’s magnum opus (Romans), both of which inform us about the nature of the Kingdom, and the realities of being part of that Kingdom.

Leaning Objectives:

• Strengthen your faith in Jesus. One of my primary objectives is that you leave with a passion for the biblical Jesus that can inform your ministry.
• Provide tools to see the Acts and Romans not as dry history and theology but as engaging historical/theological-literature so that this engagement will find itself in the pulpit and the hearts of God’s people.
• Understand the literary and theological dynamics of Acts.
• Understand the history of interpretation in Romans and how past thoughts influence present conclusions.
• Demonstrate engagement with these two texts in a constructive way that deals seriously with God’s Word but always has an eye on the present.
• Understand Acts and Romans in their Jewish and Roman contexts. These two socio-historical worlds inform Luke and Paul, therefore, we must see them couched within those contexts in order to experience the world-changing impact they had on the 1st Century.
• Be able to articulate modern scholarly controversies in Romans in a fair, clear, and concise fashion.
**Approach:**

- This class will function as a lecture with some hybrid elements of seminar format. Each day will have about one hour of discussion on the pre-course reading. For this reason, it is absolutely vital that you complete ALL of the ‘pre-course’ readings prior to the start of class. The success of the class depends upon this! . . . and so does your grade 😊. When you do the pre-course readings, think about the two texts for the day in conversation with one another. In other words, if these two authors were in a room together, what would they say to one another?
- More ink has been spilled on the interpretation of Romans than perhaps any other book in the Bible. Put another way – Romans has a history, and if we want to understand the role that this book has played in God’s church we have to make an effort at understanding that history. To do this, we will look at the history of interpretation. We will begin with questions from antiquity (e.g. how to read an ancient letter), and then move toward issues in the present (e.g. New Perspectives, Post-Liberal readings of Paul, and Paul among Modern Philosophy).
- Our ultimate goal will be to build a Reformed, coherent, and scripturally faithful theology of Romans and Acts. In the process we will become careful and intentional readers of ancient letters and histories.

**Grade Breakdown:**

- Final Exam (Take Home, Proctored): 30%
- Two Short Papers (3-5 Pages) or Sermon Series (2 Sermons): 30%
- Individual Online Presentations and Responses: 30%
- In Class Participation: 10%

**Required Reading:**

*(Selections highlighted and marked with an asterisk * must be read before meeting in class)*

I expect that all students will have read the required pre-course material before seminar discussion begins. This is VERY important to your grade. I will provide a reading checklist for you when you register for class that will indicate what texts must be read before class and what texts can be saved for after class.

**Purchase These Books:**

- Students must read through the Acts and the Romans in any Translation two times. Once before class begins, and once following the lectures, readings, and assignments. I ask that you read each book in one sitting.
  - *Prophetic Jesus, Prophetic Church*, Luke Timothy Johnson, Eerdmans, 2001 (Pages 1-186) – Chapters 2, 6-8 are pre-course readings***
  - *Perspectives on Pentecost*, Richard Gaffin, P & R Publishing, 1993 (Read All) ***
  - *Romans in Full Circle: A History of Interpretation*, Mark Reasoner. WJK, 2005 (Pages xix-149)
The Following Required Readings do not need to be purchased; I will provide scanned copies through Self-Service:

- *Introducing Romans: Critical Issues in Paul’s Most Famous Letter*. Richard N. Longnecker. Eerdmans, 2011 (Selections TBD) – this book is not required to purchase, but I highly recommend doing so. It is a fantastic resource to have on your shelf.

Recommended Resources, but not required:

- Pretty much anything by Stephen Westerholm
- *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*. Gerald F. Hawthorne, Ralph P. Martin and Daniel G. Reid, eds. IVP Academic: 1993 – If you don’t have this, I strongly suggest you purchase it

Course Outline:

Wednesday, October 8th, 2014

8:30 – 10:00 – Acts Introductory Matters / Dating / Authorship
10:00 – 10:20 - Break
10:20 – 12:00 – How to Read the Acts Narrative / Conversation on Important Themes
12:00 – 1:00 - Lunch
1:00 – 2:40 – How to Read the Acts Theology / Conversation on Modern Controversy
2:40 – 3:00 - Break
3:00 – 4:20 – Lab – Reading Acts Closely
4:20 – 4:30 – Break
4:30 – 5:30 – Seminar discussion on the meaning of Acts for Ministry

[Required Readings: Prophetic Jesus, Prophetic Church and Perspectives on Pentecost]
Tuesday, October 9th, 2014
 8:30 – 10:00 – Introduction to Romans / Ancient and Modern Controversies
10:00 – 10:20 - Break
10:20 – 12:00 – Reading a really old letter: How to do it
12:00 – 1:00 - Lunch
1:00 – 2:40 – What’s the deal with all of the perspectives?
2:40 – 3:00 - Break
3:00 – 4:20 – Lab – How to read pistis Christou and dikaiosune Theou
4:20 – 4:30 – Break
4:30 – 5:30 – Seminar discussion on Romans and Justification

[Required Readings: Stendahl, Donfried (ch. 20), Westerholm: Justification Reconsidered, Gathercole (ch. 7)]

Friday, January 8th, 2014
 8:30 – 10:00 – The Rhetorical Structure of Romans
10:00 – 10:20 - Break
10:20 – 12:00 – Lab – Reading Romans Closely (Looking at the Rhetorical Breaks)
12:00 – 1:00 - Lunch
1:00 – 2:40 – Why the reader matters – or, who’s getting the letter?
2:40 – 3:00 - Break
3:00 – 4:00– Putting it all together: The Theology of Romans in Covenantal Context
4:00 – 4:10– Break
4:10 – 4:30 – Lab – How the reader changes the reading

Assignment Requirements:

Final Exam: The final exam will be a proctored exam. You must send me your proctor’s name and e-mail address no later than October 17th. I will send the proctor your exam and you can arrange a time and date to take the exam with him or her. The exam will have a two-hour time limit. It will consist of two sections – section one will have 10 terms/concepts from which you must pick 7 and provide a short answer/definition to; section two will have 5 essay questions from which you will pick 2. Your answer for each essay question should be no less than one paragraph, but no greater than one page. You will be allowed to have a half-sheet of paper of notes, front and back, during the exam.

Two Short Papers or Two-Part Sermon Series: You have an option for your final paper. You may either write two short papers (3-5 pages) that cover either a pericope or topic of your choice or you may prepare and preach a two part sermon series in Acts or Romans.

Papers: If you choose to write the papers they must follow these guidelines:
• The first paper should be explanatory or exegetical and should deal with a pericope or topic of your choice. It should include a fair summary of the important issues at hand in your pericope or topic, your analysis of those issues, and the implications of your conclusion on theology. For example, if you talk about tongues of fire in Acts 2 and you conclude that God gave them for a particular moment in the history of redemption, then you must spend time explaining how that conclusion fits into your larger theological framework. Follow the paper guide below for this paper.

• The second paper should be a personal reflection. It should deal with something you learned either in class or in the readings. It should include a summary of the topic you are reflecting on and an explanation of how that topic has taken root in your life and ministry. You do not need to follow the paper guide below for this paper; however, if you reference something you must cite it properly.

**Sermons:** If you choose to write the sermons they must follow these guidelines:

• The two-part series should work together – in other words, the second sermon should flow from the first. To do this, I suggest you pick two passages that reside next to one another (i.e. Romans 12:1-8 and 12:9-21)

• You must submit to me a copy of your manuscripts and an audio recording of the sermons.

**Individual Presentations:** In my experience, presenting on a topic is the best way to learn the ‘ins and outs’ of that particular topic. Because we are limited in our time together, we are going to do electronic-presentations and responses. You will be required to pick one topic below and prepare a 15 minute presentation on that topic, accompanied by a handout. Your presentation should include an analysis of the topic/problem, a fair summary of scholarship that has been done on that topic, and your resolution of the topic/problem with a defense of that resolution.

**As Presenter:** Your presentation must be done on Prezi. Create your slides with relevant information, then record lecture material using the device’s sound record function. You will provide a link to the Prezi on the course Canvas page. The presentation should be no less than 7 minutes and no more than 12 minutes. I will provide instructions for this in class.

**As Observer:** View 1 presentation and provide a one-paragraph write-up that tells what you learned from the presentation and how it helps you understand the gospels more clearly. This paragraph should be posted to the Canvas page.

**Individual Presentation Options:**

• I will provide a list of presentation options on the first day of class.

**In Class Participation:** I expect that all students will have read the required pre-course material before the commensurate seminar discussion. This is VERY important to your grade. Unfortunately, due to the structure of the course we cannot discuss each individual reading the week after it is assigned; however, I still need you to be conversant with the material so that our discussions can be fruitful. Therefore, I recommend you keep a reading log to jot down notes, thoughts, or important quotes that you may want
to bring up in class. This will also provide you with a reference to look back on as well as a means of interacting with the text in a more thorough manner.

**Final Paper Guide**

- Paper must be 3-5 pages excluding bibliography.
- The paper must be submitted electronically to patrick.stefan@du.edu by the deadline we decide on in class. The document must be sent as either a word (.doc or .docx) document or PDF (word is preferable).
- Greek, Hebrew, and Aramaic words must be typed out, not transliterated.
- Paper should include an introduction with a clearly-stated thesis statement.
- Paper should be clearly argued and articulated.
- Paper should deal fairly with secondary literature.
- Paper should have at least four references of the following kind:
  - Academic monographs
  - Articles in scholarly journals
  - Academic commentaries
  - Reformed literature
  - Literature from any century is fine (i.e. early Christian, reformation, medieval, enlightenment, or modern literature); however, at least 3 sources must be newer than 1960.
- Paper should employ footnotes that are single spaced and 10 point font.
- Each page should be numbered according to SBL style guide.
- Paper must employ 12 point font, 1 inch margins on each side, and ½ inch indentation. **DO NOT** include a space after each paragraph; be aware that MS Word does this automatically.
- All documentation must be done according to the standards in the *SBL Handbook of Style*, both the footnotes and the bibliography.
- Proofread your paper. Ensure all typographical, spelling, and grammatical errors have been corrected.

**Final Test Guide**

- The final test will consist of a series of (5) questions from which you will pick (2). These questions will gauge your ability to critically interact with the material that has been both read and discussed in class.
- Using 12 point font and 1 inch margins, each essay question should be answered in no less than one paragraph and no more than one page. The purpose of these restrictions is to get you to cogently define and argue your position.
- I will provide a sample set of questions on the first day of class.
- Following the essay questions I will ask you to define (7) out of (10) terms/concepts.
- These definitions should take up no more than three sentences. **I will not** give you the answer I am looking for. I want to hear your understanding of the subject.
- On the first day of class I will give you 25 terms that may be included on the test.
- A sample question might be: “Define the Radical New Perspectives on Paul”
In Class Participation Guide

• For in class participation I expect you to be engaged in the lectures and discussions.
• During the lectures, I will mark you down if you are checking e-mail, facebook, or any other website during the class.
• Computers/electronic devices are allowed, but I expect your wi-fi connection to be turned off.
• During the seminar discussion, I expect everyone to contribute to the conversation. You must make at least one productive comment.
• I expect all students to have read the pre-course material and interact with that material during the seminar discussion.

Late Policy

• We will establish the deadlines for each assignment together as a class on October 10th. Once the deadlines are established, they will not be changed.
• I expect all assignments to be turned in no later than 11:59 PM EST on the day the assignment is due.
• Assignments turned in after the deadline, for any reason, will be marked down 10% per day.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Objectives Related to MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Course: Acts and Romans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professor: Patrick Stefan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus: Washington DC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date: Oct. 8-10, 2014</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes</th>
<th>Rubric</th>
<th>Mini-Justification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Articulation (oral &amp; written)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>-Students will engage with different positions toward theological issues in Romans and Acts and be graded by articulating differences in conversation and written exam.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Scripture</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>-In depth reading, lectures, and labs on identifying key exegetical issues present in Scripture and working through the history of interpretation to know the original meaning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reformed Theology</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>-We will give serious consideration to the present and historical challenges presented to a reformed understanding of Justification and Sanctification as expressed in the Westminster Standards.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sanctification</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>-Lectures emphasize the glory of the resurrected Christ and his role in life and theology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Desire for Worldview</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>-Readings and discussions focus on the way Scripture challenges our life and practice. Students assigned a short personal application paper.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Winsomely Reformed</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>-Readings contain scholars from several traditions. Lectures emphasize the need to properly represent positions and learn from others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Preach</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>-Lectures and lab work focuses on application of the Word to God’s people. Students given opportunity to turn in a two part sermon series for grade.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Worship</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>-The Bible is our subject of study,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Shepherd</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>-The Bible is our subject of study,</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*As the MDiv is the core degree at RTS, the MDiv rubric will be used in this syllabus.
spiritual maturity; promoting use of gifts and callings; and encouraging a concern for non-Christians, both in America and worldwide.

| Church/World          | Ability to interact within a denominational context, within the broader worldwide church, and with significant public issues. | Minimal | -In on particular assigned text, students will be challenged to consider the application of Acts to the Church’s role in public issues. | which naturally lends itself to Shepherding, though it is not the emphasis. |