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: January 7 – 9, 2016; 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM
Contact: Patrick.stefan@du.edu; Cell: 585-200-1777

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 the 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.

Learning 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 on 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, Open Notes/Books): 30% - Due: Feb. 26
• Two Short Papers (3-5 Pages) or Sermon Series (2 Sermons): 30% - Due: Feb. 12
• Individual Online Presentation & Response: 30% - Presentation Due: Jan. 25; Response Jan. 29
• 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)

• *Justification Reconsidered: Rethinking a Pauline Theme*, Stephen Westerholm. Eerdmans, 2013 (Pages 1-99) *

• *Paul: An Outline of His Theology*, Herman Ridderbos, 1997 (Pages 44-197)
The Following Required Readings do not need to be purchased; I will provide scanned copies through Self-Service:

- *The Romans Debate* (Rev. Ed.). Kurt P. Donfried, ed. Baker Academic, 1991 (Chs. 8, 11, 16, 18, 20) – Chapter 20 is pre-course reading*

Recommended Resources, but not required:

- *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.
- Pretty much anything by Stephen Westerholm
- *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*. Gerald F. Hawthrone, 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:

**Thursday, January 7th, 2016**

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*
Friday, January 8th, 2016

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* and why it matters
4:20 – 4:30 – Break
4:30 – 5:30 – Seminar discussion on Romans and Justification

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

Saturday, January 9th, 2016

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 – The reader and the reading

Assignment Requirements:

**Final Exam:** The final exam will be an open notes/open book exam. The exam will be available on Canvas and will have a three-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.

**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.

_Option Three:_ If you desire to work on your exegetical skills, you may write a 12-15 page exegetical paper. However, you must receive permission before beginning this project. I will work with you to craft a compelling thesis and paper.

_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. See the course participation guide on Canvas.
Final Paper Guide

• Each paper must be 3-5 pages excluding bibliography.
• The papers must be uploaded to the Canvas website under the listed assignment. 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:
  o Academic monographs
  o Articles in scholarly journals
  o Academic commentaries
  o Reformed literature
  o 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.

In Class Participation Guide

• For in class participation I expect you to be engaged in the lectures and discussions.
• During the lectures, please do not check your e-mail, facebook, or any other website during the class. This is a matter of respect for the material, the class, and the professor.
• 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.
• Course participation is an important part to your learning process, and so, it is a vital piece to my pedagogy. This class will contain several hours worth of discussion time and group projects. Ten percent of your grade is determined by your level of interaction in the classroom during these times.
• Here’s the grade breakdown
  o 4 points are given for participation in group projects. I expect you to be a key player in the group work.
6 points are given for individual contribution to seminar discussion (of which there will be 2).

- 1 Point – You say one thing in the conversation or, you speak often but your comments are unrelated to the assigned pre-course readings and/or their implications in ministry.
- 2 Points – Your contribution is somewhere in between points one and 3.
- 3 Points – Your contribution advances the conversation and demonstrates substantive interaction with the assigned pre-course readings.

Late Policy

- 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.
**Course Objectives Related to MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes**

**Course:** Acts and Romans  
**Professor:** Patrick Stefan  
**Campus:** Washington DC  
**Date:** Jan. 7-9, 2016

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<tr>
<th>MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes</th>
<th>Rubric</th>
<th>Mini-Justification</th>
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<tr>
<td>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.</td>
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<td>*As the MDiv is the core degree at RTS, the MDiv rubric will be used in this syllabus.</td>
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<th><strong>Articulation (oral &amp; written)</strong></th>
<th>Strong</th>
<th>-Students will engage with different positions toward theological issues in Romans and Acts and be graded by articulating differences in conversation and written exam.</th>
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<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>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Scripture</strong></th>
<th>Strong</th>
<th>-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.</th>
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<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>
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<th><strong>Reformed Theology</strong></th>
<th>Strong</th>
<th>-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.</th>
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<tr>
<td>Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards.</td>
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<th><strong>Sanctification</strong></th>
<th>Moderate</th>
<th>-Lectures emphasize the glory of the resurrected Christ and his role in life and theology</th>
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<td>Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student’s sanctification.</td>
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<th><strong>Desire for Worldview</strong></th>
<th>Strong</th>
<th>-Readings and discussions focus on the way Scripture challenges our life and practice. Students assigned a short personal application paper.</th>
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<td>Burning desire to conform all of life to the Word of God.</td>
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<th><strong>Winsomely Reformed</strong></th>
<th>Moderate</th>
<th>-Readings contain scholars from several traditions. Lectures emphasize the need to properly represent positions and learn from others.</th>
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<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>
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<th><strong>Preach</strong></th>
<th>Strong</th>
<th>-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.</th>
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<td>Ability to preach and teach the meaning of Scripture to both heart and mind with clarity and enthusiasm.</td>
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<th><strong>Worship</strong></th>
<th>None</th>
<th>-The Bible is our subject of study,</th>
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<td>Knowledgeable of historic and modern Christian-worship forms; and ability to construct and skill to lead a worship service.</td>
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<th><strong>Shepherd</strong></th>
<th>Minimal</th>
<th>-The Bible is our subject of study,</th>
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<td>Ability to shepherd the local congregation: aiding in</td>
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<td>Church/World</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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<td>spiritual maturity; promoting use of gifts and callings; and encouraging a concern for non-Christians, both in America and worldwide.</td>
<td>which naturally lends itself to Shepherding, though it is not the emphasis.</td>
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