

REFORMED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY



DALLAS

Acts and Romans (11NT516/01)

Spring 2019

Thursday 2:00 PM - 4:15 PM

Dr. Ben C. Dunson

PROFESSOR CONTACT INFORMATION

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Office hours: Tues 11:00am-12:00pm

(Or by email appointment at another time)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

A study of Acts and Paul's Epistle to the Romans that emphasizes both the original meaning and the modern meaning.

COURSE EXPECTATIONS

1. **Attendance:** Attendance is expected at every class.
2. Bring a bible to each class.
3. Laptops (and iPads, iPhones, etc.) are **NOT** allowed in this course. Multitasking simply doesn't work. It prevents you from learning as well as you can. Cell phones must be set to silent and stored away during class time (same goes for tablets and any other similar device).

Banning laptops, however, is not just about you and your learning, but about your neighbor and his or her learning: if we are honest many (most?) of us simply do not have the self-control to sit for 3 hours without checking email, Facebook, texts, etc. One little check won't hurt, right? But then we actually do this more than we realize, and when we are all together in one room doing this it becomes very distracting for your fellow students and for your professor (the same goes for checking iPhones under the table).

One objection to this is that having detailed, easily searchable, notes will be useful for your future ministry. I completely agree. That is why you should do what educational researchers are suggesting more and more (and which I know from personal experience works very well): when you are listening to a lecture write down that which is most important; focus on the main thoughts being conveyed. Do not attempt to transcribe what is said verbatim like a court stenographer. By focusing on the main ideas, main biblical texts, etc., *you are already engaged in the process of learning*, which is not the case when you simply spend all of your energy copying every word down. Then, either throughout the semester, or

as you prepare for exams, type your notes on a computer. Then condense them in a separate file for use in studying (and then perhaps consider condensing them again!). Each time you take your notes and rewrite them or condense them you are processing the material in a new way, and *this helps you learn it*. And then you will have searchable notes to refer to in the future as well.

If you are interested, these articles give you more of a feel for why I am doing this:

- <https://mobile.nytimes.com/2017/11/22/business/laptops-not-during-lecture-or-meeting.html?mwrsm=Facebook&referrer=https://t.co/JEkweLyf89?amp=1>
- <http://www.npr.org/2016/04/17/474525392/attention-students-put-your-laptops-away>
- <http://news.stanford.edu/news/2009/august24/multitask-research-study-082409.html>

If you are still not convinced, then you can blame Kevin DeYoung:

- <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/kevin-deyoung/why-im-not-allowing-laptops-and-tablets-in-my-seminary-class/>

4. As a courtesy, please do not tweet, or otherwise post, comments made by the professor or other students without asking permission first.

ASSIGNED READING

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS

1. The Bible. Any translation is acceptable, as long as it is a translation and not a paraphrase (such as The Message). I use the ESV and will read from this version in class. You should be aware that the new NIV translation (2011) has some serious issues with regard to how it makes translation decisions based on gender. The old editions of the NIV (prior to these changes) are no longer in print (although you may be able to find a used copy). For more on the gender translation issues in the new NIV see the following analysis: <http://www.cbmw.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/cbmw-final-analysis-of-2011-niv.pdf>
 - a. Students who have taken Greek (or can otherwise read it) are encouraged to bring a critical Greek edition (UBS4/5 or NA27/28).
2. Dennis E. Johnson, *The Message of Acts in the History of Redemption*. Phillipsburg: P & R, 1997.
3. Richard B. Gaffin, Jr., *Perspectives on Pentecost: New Testament Teaching on the Gifts of the Holy Spirit*. Phillipsburg: P&R, 1993.
4. Richard B. Gaffin, Jr., *By Faith, Not By Sight: Paul and the Order of Salvation*. 2nd edition. Phillipsburg: P&R, 2013.
5. Stephen Westerholm, *Justification Reconsidered: Rethinking a Pauline Theme*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2013.
6. Michael Kruger (ed.). *A Biblical-Theological Introduction to the New Testament: The Gospel Realized*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2016 (chs. 5-6).

OTHER REQUIRED READINGS

1. Herman Ridderbos, "The Redemptive-Historical Character of Paul's Preaching," pp. 44-60 in *When the Time Had Fully Come: Studies in New Testament Theology*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982. **[chapter will be posted on Canvas]**
2. Herman Ridderbos, "The Law of God in Paul's Doctrine of Salvation," pp. 61-77 in *When the Time Had Fully Come: Studies in New Testament Theology*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982. **[chapter will be posted on Canvas]**

REQUIREMENTS FOR THE COURSE

Read all of Acts and Romans: You must read all the way through Acts (once) and Romans (twice) prior to the final exam. I do not care which translation you use. You will be required to tell me what percentage of this material you read and this will affect your grade.

Read all of the assigned class readings: You will be required to tell me what percentage of the assigned readings you read and this will affect your grade. Read the textbooks in the order listed above and read the Ridderbos chapters after the Gaffin book *By Faith, Not By Sight*. Make sure you have read *By Faith, Not By Sight* (Gaffin) and the Ridderbos chapters by the beginning of the fifth week of class.

Exegetical Exercise: A handout will be provided at the beginning of the semester explaining the details of this assignment. The basic idea is this: you will choose a passage (from a list of possibilities) and will provide a series of explanatory observations on the text. The goal of this assignment is to aid you in careful exegetical work in preparation for sermons.

Midterm Examination: The midterm exam will cover material found at the end of the syllabus under the heading “Midterm Exam.” This is an objective, content-based exam that will ***not*** cover lecture material. The midterm exam is on Thursday, March 18th, and will take place during the first hour of class (2:00-3:00pm).

Final Examination: The final exam will cover material exclusively from the readings and class lectures. The final exam is on Thursday, May 9th from 2:00-4:15pm.

EVALUATION

Readings (Bible and textbooks/articles): 15%

Exegetical Exercise: 25%

Midterm Exam: 25%

Final Exam: 35%

IMPORTANT DATES

Date	Event
Thursday, January 31 st	NO CLASS: REID CLASS
Thursday, February 7 th	First day of class
Thursday, March 14	NO CLASS: SPRING BREAK
Thursday, March 21 st	Midterm Exam (first hour of class only)
TBA in March	NO CLASS: FERGUSON CLASS
Monday, May 6 th , 11:59pm	Exegetical Assignment due
Thursday, May 9 th , 2:00-4:15pm	Final Exam (all reading must be completed by this time)

Study Guide for Midterm Exam

Note: The questions for the midterm exam will be drawn exclusively from the material below. If I have provided the answer (such as in the outlines) you must memorize it exactly as you find it below. The following questions are taken from *Preparing for Licensure and Ordination Exams* by Bryan Chapell and Jim Meek (Lawrenceville, GA: Christian Education and Publications, 2002).

1. What are the basic elements found in each of the sermons recorded in Acts?
2. Relate the writing of the Pauline epistles to the life of Paul. In other words, although some letters will be debated, tell me at what point in Paul's ministry each of his letters was written.
3. Locate and discuss at least two passages which deal with law and grace.
4. Discuss briefly the significance of the following. Include book(s) and chapter(s) where relevant:
 - a. Cornelius
 - b. Barnabas
 - c. Stephen
 - d. Paul
 - e. Timothy
 - f. James (multiple)
5. Give me the book and chapter for the following:
 - a. The sermons of Acts
 - b. Pentecost
 - c. Conversion of Paul
 - d. Apollos
 - e. Jerusalem Council
 - f. Paul's missionary journeys
 - g. Philippian jailer
 - h. Bereans
6. Identify passages in Romans someone could read about:
 - a. Atonement
 - b. Repentance
 - c. Resurrection (Christ's and ours)
 - d. Spiritual gifts
 - e. Civil Government