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REFORMED  THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY  
DISTANCE EDUCATION

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THE ORIGIN AND AUTHORITY OF THE  
NEW TESTAMENT CANON  
DR. MICHAEL J. KRUGER

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# Course Overview

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## *Course Description:*

0NT6500 The Origin and Authority of the New Testament Canon, 2 hours

Lecturing Professor and Professor of Record:

Dr. Michael J. Kruger

This course will survey the historical development of the New Testament Canon within the context of the early Church, with special attention given to citations in the Church Fathers, manuscript collections, and canonical lists. In addition, the course will evaluate the various theological approaches to the issue of canon and the implications it has on one's view of Scriptural authority.

## *Course Objectives:*

- To gain familiarity with the history of the NT Canon
- To become acquainted with the main theological approaches to the authority of the canon
- To understand the patristic and textual evidence for the development of the canon
- To understand and articulate the Reformed autopic approach to canon and biblical authority

## *Required Textbooks:*

Barton, John. *Holy Writings, Sacred Text*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1997.

Kruger, Michael J. *Canon Revisited: Establishing the Origins and Authority of the New Testament Books*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Manuscripts, Scribes, and Book Production within Early Christianity," in *Christian Origins and Classical Culture: Social and Literary Contexts for the New Testament*. ed. S.E. Porter and A. W. Pitts; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2013.

[A copy of this will be made available on the course homepage.]

Metzger, Bruce M. *The Canon of the New Testament: Its Origin, Development, and Significance*. Oxford, ENG: Clarendon, 1987.

[These books may also be available in ebook format through various retailers]

### *Online Student Handbook:*

The Online Student Handbook (can be [downloaded here](#)) has been designed to assist you in successfully navigating the Distance Education experience, whether you are taking a single course or pursuing a certificate or degree program. In it you will find valuable information, step-by-step instructions, study helps, and essential forms to guide you through every aspect of your distance education opportunity from registration to graduation. Please use this resource as your first-stop reference manual.

### *Summary of Requirements:*

1. Listen to all recorded [Lectures](#)
2. Complete all [Readings](#)
3. Participate in [Forum Discussions](#) (with other students and the professor)
4. Take the [Greek Manuscripts Quiz](#)
5. Take the [Midterm Exam](#)
6. Take the [Final Exam](#)
7. Submit [Canon Paper](#)
8. Submit [Mentor Report or Course Application Paper](#)

# Meet the Professor

## *Lecturing Professor and Professor of Record:*



**Dr. Michael J. Kruger** (Ph.D., University of Edinburgh) is President and the Samuel C. Patterson Professor of New Testament and Early Christianity at Reformed Theological Seminary in Charlotte, NC. He is one of the leading scholars today in the study of the origins of the New Testament, particularly the development of the New Testament canon and the transmission of the New Testament text. He is the author of numerous books including *The Gospel of the Savior* (Brill, 2005), *The Heresy of Orthodoxy* (Crossway, 2010, with Andreas Köstenberger), *Canon Revisited* (Crossway, 2012), and *The Question of Canon* (IVP, 2013). He is also the co-editor of *Gospel Fragments* (Oxford, 2009). Dr. Kruger is ordained in the Presbyterian Church in America and also serves (part-time) as Pastor of Teaching at

Uptown PCA in downtown Charlotte. You can follow his blog at [michaeljkruger.com](http://michaeljkruger.com) or on Twitter [@michaeljkruger](https://twitter.com/michaeljkruger).

## *Selected Publications by Dr. Kruger*

*The Question of Canon: Challenging the Status Quo in the New Testament Debate*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2013.

*The Early Text of the New Testament*. Co-authored. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2012.

*The Heresy of Orthodoxy: How Contemporary Culture's Fascination with Diversity has Reshaped Our Understanding of Early Christianity*. Co-authored. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010.

*Gospel Fragments*. Co-authored. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2009.

*The Gospel of the Savior*. Leiden, NL: E.J. Brill, 2005.

Various articles published in...

*The Journal of Theological Studies*

*The Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*

*The Expository Times*

*The Master's Seminary Journal*

# Grades

## *Forum Discussions (15%):*

The student is required to interact in two (2) forums:

1. Student-Professor Posts (15 total posts)
  - A. Personal Introduction Forum: The student is required to post a brief personal introduction to the professor/class. Suggested details include your vocation, where you live, your church background, why you chose RTS, and what you hope to gain through the course (1 required post).
  - B. 5 Topical Discussion Q&A Forums: The student is required to answer each topical discussion question with one (1) response. The professor will acknowledge the student's answer and will follow up with a subsequent question to which the student must also answer with one (1) response. Each topical discussion question, therefore, requires two (2) total posts/responses from the student (Total of 5 forums x 2 posts = 10 total posts).
  - C. Student-Professor Forum: The student is required to post four (4) times in this forum. Posts in this forum should focus on course-related content such as research paper topics, lectures and reading assignments, or other academic issues related to the course.
2. Student-Student Forum (5 total posts)

A post may be either a new topic or a response to an already existing topic.

## *Examinations (Midterm 15%, Final 15%):*

There are two examinations for this course. The midterm examination will cover the lectures from Lesson One (1) through Lesson Four (4). The final examination will cover the lectures from Lesson Five (5) through Lesson Ten (10), not including Lesson Seven (7). The student should use the Lesson Questions at the end of each lesson in preparation and study for the exam. The format for the each exam is multiple choice, short essay, and long essay.

The exams for this course are to be taken online in the Learning Management System (LMS). Please note that you will need to have a proctor for your exams. Your proctor can be anyone except a relative or current RTS Student. After clicking on the exam link you will be given detailed instructions about the exam. Please read these instructions carefully before entering the exam.

## *Canon Paper (35%):*

The student is required to write a fictional dialogue, approximately 10 typed pages in length with page numbers. The paper must follow the guidelines in the current edition of *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, by Kate L. Turabian. See section titled "[Canon Paper Instructions](#)" in this syllabus for more instructions.

### *Reading Report (10%):*

The student must complete all of the required reading. Reading assignments are broken down week by week within the LMS. The Reading Report will indicate the amount of required reading that has been completed during the semester and must be filled out and submitted at the end of the course.

### *Greek Manuscripts Quiz (5%):*

Lesson Seven (7) is a 4-part video of students reading from the Greek manuscript of p66 with professor comments on the content and characteristics of the manuscripts. The quiz will focus on the general content and characteristics discussed in the videos. Knowledge of Greek is not necessary to successfully complete the quiz. This material will not appear on the final exam.

### *Mentor Report OR Course Application Paper (5%):*

If you are enrolled in an **RTS Global** degree program, you are required to submit a mentor report at the end of the course. Every portion of the form (goals, summaries, assessments, and signatures) should be filled out completely by both the student and the mentor to receive full credit. You can download the Mentor Report form in your Canvas classroom.

If you are receiving your degree through another **RTS campus** (Orlando, Jackson, Charlotte, et. al.), or are a certificate student, or special student (e.g. from another seminary), you are asked to write a 200-word summary of how you perceive what you have learned in this course will fit into the objectives you have for your ministry, your educational goals, or other objectives you wish to achieve in life. Course Application Papers (CAP) that fall well-short of 200 words will receive a grade deduction.

### *Assignments:*

Best practice for your time management is for you to submit all assignments at the end of the week in which they fall, using the upload links provided in the LMS. All work must be submitted by midnight of the course end date, per your course start letter. You are responsible for turning in all assignments on time; no late submissions are permitted. Any student who needs an extension must get approval from the Registrar prior to that time.

### *Contact Information:*

Reformed Theological Seminary, Distance Education  
2101 Carmel Road  
Charlotte, NC 28226  
(704) 900-1257  
1-855-854-6920  
FAX: (704) 366-9295  
E-mail: [dess@rts.edu](mailto:dess@rts.edu)  
Web site: [www.rts.edu/global](http://www.rts.edu/global)



# Lessons

## Lesson One

Introduction to Canon

## Lesson Two

Canon as Community-Determined

## Lesson Three

Canon as Historically Determined

## Lesson Four

Canon as Self-Authenticating

## Lesson Five

Exploring and Defending the Divine  
Qualities of the Canon

## Lesson Six

Exploring and Defending the Apostolic  
Origins of the Canon

## Lesson Seven

Excursus-A Look at Greek Manuscripts

## Lesson Eight

The Emergence of a Canonical Core

## Lesson Nine

Manuscripts and Christian Book  
Production

## Lesson Ten

Problem Books and Canonical  
Boundaries



# Canon Paper Instructions

Write a fictional dialogue between two individuals contrasting different theological approaches to canon (e.g., Reformed vs. Catholic, Reformed vs. Neo-Orthodox, etc.). Dialogue should demonstrate knowledge of a Reformed approach to defending the canon. The student should also represent the opponent's best arguments. Although not a research paper, per se, you should incorporate the required readings (and other research you may do) into the paper. Creativity, originality, and profundity are rewarded. The paper should have footnotes (not endnotes) and resemble the articles found in the standard journals; e.g., JBL, JTS, JETS, NTS, etc.

The paper must follow the guidelines in the current edition of *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, by Kate L. Turabian . It should be 1.5 spaced with 12 point font and also include a bibliography.



**Course Objectives Related to Student Learning Outcomes**

Course: The Origin and Authority of the New Testament Canon

Professor: Dr. Michael J. Kruger

<b>Student Learning Outcomes</b> <i>In order to measure the success of the 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 outcomes.</i>		<b>Rubric</b> ➤ Strong ➤ Moderate ➤ Minimal ➤ None	<b>Mini-Justification</b>
<b>Articulation (oral &amp; written)</b>	Broadly understands and articulates knowledge, both oral and written, of essential biblical, theological, historical, and cultural/global information, including details, concepts, and frameworks.	Strong	- Theology of NT canonical development - Historical development of NT canon - Students will write a fictional dialogue interacting two models of canon
<b>Scripture</b>	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.)	Moderate	- History of NT book acceptance - Some Scriptural support for early canon - Some of the content of Scripture is studied in terms of the manuscripts which represent it
<b>Reformed Theology</b>	Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards.	Moderate	- Reformed/Westminster view of canonical development
<b>Sanctification</b>	Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student's sanctification.	Minimal	- Deeper love for God and His Word by strengthening confidence that we have the right books
<b>Desire for Worldview</b>	Burning desire to conform all of life to the Word of God.	Minimal	- Understanding the formation of the NT canon is foundational to an informed Christian worldview
<b>Winsomely Reformed</b>	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.)	Moderate	- Survey of critical scholarship on canonical process; students are taught good aspects and bad aspects of critical thinking - Other canonical approaches are surveyed and critiqued in a respectful manner
<b>Teach</b>	Ability to teach the meaning of Scripture to both heart and mind with clarity and enthusiasm.	Moderate	- Students can interact with canonical claims from critical scholars - Students are equipped to communicate the development of the NT canon via the mode of teaching
<b>Church/World</b>	Ability to interact within a denominational context, within the broader worldwide church, and with significant public issues.	Strong	- Students are equipped to face one of the most popular challenges to the Bible as God's Word - Students can counter the claims of such critics as Bart Ehrman - Students can interact with canonical claims of Roman Catholic Church
<b>MAR Specific SLO</b>	An ability to integrate such knowledge and understanding into one's own calling in society	Moderate	- Students are equipped to face one of the most popular challenges to the Bible as God's Word