**Reformed Theological Seminary**

**Houston Summer 2017**

**ST 601 Covenant Theology 2 Hrs.**

**June 9-10, July 14-15, Aug 4-5, 2017 6:30-9:30 P.M. / 8:00 A.M. – 3:00 P.M.**

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**Description (as per RTS *Catalogue*)**

“An examination of covenant theology from exegetical and historical perspectives. Consideration is given to such issues as the relation of the Old and New Testaments, the significance of the covenants for sacramental theology, and the hermeneutics of Dispensationalism and Theonomy. Emphasis is placed on the role of the biblical doctrine of the covenants in preaching and pastoral ministry” (p.85)

**Prerequisites**

There are no prerequisites for ST 601. Students who desire a theological refresher should consult J. I. Packer, *Concise Theology: A Guide to Historic Christian Beliefs* (Tyndale, 1988) and Louis Berkhof, *Manual of Christian Doctrine* (Eerdmans 2002 [1933]).

**Course Objectives**

**(1)** To survey the Scripture’s teaching about covenant, particularly in relation to both creation and to the unfolding history of redemption.

**(2)** To enable the student better to understand covenant theology’s exegetical and biblical-theological foundations, to acquaint students with both historical and contemporary discussions concerning the covenants of Scripture, to assist students in communicating covenant theology in preaching, teaching, and counseling.

**(3)** To help the student better to grasp and appreciate the confessional and catechetical expressions of covenant in the Westminster Standards.

**(4)** To help prepare students for licensure and ordination trials in the church.

**Theological Standpoint**

This course will be taught from a full and *ex animo* commitment to the Westminster Standards as containing the system of doctrine contained in the Scripture; as adopted by the PCA. The instructor regards the following theologians as among the ablest exponents of biblical doctrine in the church since the Reformation, and as most influential upon his own theological formation and perspective – the sixteenth century Reformer, **John Calvin**; the late seventeenth century Genevan, **Francis Turretin**; the English Puritans generally, but especially **John Owen** and **Jonathan Edwards**; the Free Church of Scotland theologians, especially **William Cunningham, James Bannerman, and George Smeaton;** the American Presbyterians, especially **A.A. Hodge** and **B.B. Warfield** in the North; and **Robert L. Dabney** and **Thomas E. Peck** in the South.

**Required Texts (Primary) (see below for page assts.; note the abbreviations)**

**(1)** The Holy Bible, preferably in a recent translation such as the New American Standard or the English Standard Version. Students who are competent in Hellenistic Greek are strongly encouraged to bring their Greek New Testaments to each class session.

**(2)** Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (pp. 211-8, 262-301)**[B]**

**(3)** O. Palmer Robertson, *The Christ of the Covenants* **[R]**

**(4)** Vern S. Poythress, *Understanding Dispensationalists* (2d ed.)**[P]**

**(5)** Geerhardus Vos, *Biblical Theology* (pp. 3-342)**[V]**

**[6]** Rowland Ward, *God and Adam: Reformed Theology and the Creation Covenant* **[W]**[Available for pdf download at [www.rowlandward.net](http://www.rowlandward.net)]

**(7)** *Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms* (WCF 7; WSC 12, 16, 20; WLC 20-22, 30-36)*.* Recommended but not required is a harmony of the Standards (e.g. M. Smith, B. Green). **[WCF]**

**Assignments & Requirements**

**(1)** A final exam will be taken after the completion of the course lectures and will be cumulative. The final exam is worth **40%** of your final grade. **Due August 12, 5 P.M.**

**(2)** Reading Digests. **60%** of your final grade. On each reading digest, you must indicate the extent (as a percentage) of the material that you have read. **Submit all reading digests electronically by 5 P.M. of the date listed** **to Canvas.** See attached guidelines in preparing your digests. Late work will subject your work to reduction of one full letter grade per day late (or fraction thereof).

Digest 1 WCF, B. (**5%** of final grade) **[50 pp.]** **Due June 09**

Digest 2 R. (**15%** of final grade) **[300 pp.]** **Due June 30**

Digest 3 W. (**10%** of final grade) **[202 pp.] Due July 14**

Digest 4 P. (**10%** of final grade) **[135 pp.]** **Due July 14**

Digest 5 V. (**20%** of final grade) **[336 pp.]** **Due Aug 4**

 **TOTAL PAGES OF REQUIRED READING (APPROX) = 1,020**

**Course Format**

The primary format of this course will be lecture. Because of the breadth of material the Seminary has asked us to survey in this course, the lectures will be necessarily selective. They will not necessarily cover all course-related topics nor will the covered topics be addressed in uniform depth. The readings, however, do survey the topics thoroughly, so the students are especially encouraged to be faithful in and attentive to the assigned readings.

**Attendance**

Class attendance is required for ST 601. If a student anticipates an unavoidable absence, he should notify the instructor in advance. Each hour of unexcused absence subjects the student to a reduction of his final grade by one-half of a letter grade. Two tardies (arriving after the beginning of the hour) constitute an hour of unexcused absence. Students missing more than one morning or afternoon session (for any reason) may **either** submit an additional, compensatory assignment [determined by the instructor] **or** choose to receive a full letter grade reduction in their final grade.

**Guidelines – Digests** (adapted from Dr. Richard B. Gaffin, Jr.’s guidelines)

Please prepare a digest of each assigned reading, double-spaced or 1.5 spaced. A written digest is not simply a repetition but a summary or overview organized to highlight the author’s main ideas and distinctive emphases. It may have one of several formats – an outline, a running commentary, a series of brief paragraphs. It should be concise without being superficial. A digest is not a response paper. I want to see that you have understood what you have read.

Your digests should be not longer than 10 pages each. Please include parenthetical page references.

**Grading Scale**

The grading scale for this course is the seminary’s grading scale. You may find it listed at the *RTS Catalog,* p.44.

**Plagiarism**

Please review the seminary’s policy on plagiarism. Plagiarized work will subject the student to failure in the course and possible disciplinary action.

**In-Class Computer Use**

Computers and tablets are permitted in this course for course-related purposes only. Cell phones must be set to silent and stowed. If for some extraordinary reason you need to take a call, you may either wait until the break or leave the classroom. Violations of these terms may lead to suspension of in-class computer use.

**Select Recommended Readings**

**Select Bibliography – Leading or Representative Systematic Theologies**

***Reformed***

Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics* (4 vols.)

Herman Bavinck, *Our Reasonable Faith*

Wilhelmus à Brakel, *The Christian’s Reasonable Service* (4 vols.)

James P. Boyce, *Abstract of Systematic Theology*

John Brown, *Natural and Revealed Theology*

John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (2 vols.)

Robert L. Dabney, *Lectures on Systematic Theology*

John Dick, *Lectures on Theology* (2 vols.)

Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology* (3 vols.)

A. A. Hodge, *Outlines of Theology*

Michael S. Horton, *Christian Faith*

John Murray, *Collected Writings,* Volume 2 [=Classroom Lectures on Theology]

Robert L. Reymond, *A New Systematic Theology*

W. G. T. Shedd, *Dogmatic Theology* (3 vols.; repr. in 1 vol.)

Augustus H. Strong, *Outlines of Systematic Theology* (3 vols.)

Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology* (3 vols.)

***Lutheran***

Francis Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics* (4 vols.)

John Theodore Mueller, *Christian Dogmatics*

***Arminian***

Richard Watson, *Theological Institutes* (2 vols.)

Norman Geisler, *Systematic Theology* (4 vols.)

***Dispensational***

Charles Ryrie, *Basic Theology*

Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Systematic Theology* (8 vols.; repr. in 4 vols.)

***Roman Catholic***

Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* (5 vols.)

Ludwig Ott, *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma*

*The Catechism of the Catholic Church* (2d ed.)

Denzinger and Hunermann, *Enchiridion Symbolorum: A Compendium of Creeds, Confessions, and Declarations of the Catholic Church*

**Select Bibliography – Covenant Theology**

***Surveys***

*Klinean*

Michael G. Brown and Zach Keele, *Sacred Bond: Covenant Theology Explored* (Reformed

 Fellowship, Inc., 2012).

Chris Caughey, *The Tale of Two Adams* (2d ed.; MGK Press, 2011).

Michael Horton, *God Of Promise: Introducing Covenant Theology* (Baker, 2006).

*Non-Klinean*

Jonty Rhodes, *Covenants Made Simple: Understanding God’s Unfolding Promises to His People*

(P&R, 2013).

O. Palmer Robertson, *Covenants: God’s Way With His People* (GCP, 1990).

***Classical Resources***

Carl W. Bogue, *Jonathan Edwards and the Covenant of Grace* (1975; repr. Wipf & Stock,

 2009).

Heinrich Heppe, *Reformed Dogmatics* (repr. Baker, 1978),pp. 281-319, 371-409.

Meredith G. Kline, *Kingdom Prologue: Genesis Foundations for a Covenantal Worldview* (repr.,

 Wipf & Stock, 2006).

John Murray, “The Covenant of Grace: A Biblico-Theological Study” (repr., P&R, 1987).

O. Palmer Robertson, *The Christ of the Covenants* (P&R, 1980).

Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology* (3 vols., 1679, 1682, 1685; trans. James T.

 Dennison, Jr. ; P&R, 1992-7) *,* Vol. 1., pp. 574-8; Vol. 2, pp.169-269.

Geerhardus Vos, *The Teaching of the Epistle to the Hebrews* (repr., P&R, 1977).

Geerhardus Vos (ed. Richard B. Gaffin, Jr.), *Redemptive History and Biblical Interpretation:*

 *The Shorter Writings of Geerhardus Vos* (P&R, 1980).

The Westminster Standards – consult standard expositions of the Confession (Shaw, Hodge,

 Williamson), the Shorter Catechism (Vincent, Fisher, Willard, Williamson), and the

 Larger Catechism (Ridgeley, J. Vos).

Herman Witsius, *An Economy of the Covenants Between God and Man: Comprehending a*

 *Complete Body of Divinity* (2 vols.; repr., P&R, 1990).

***Recent Issues and Controversies***

William S. Barker, ed., *Theonomy: A Reformed Critique* (Baker, 1990).

R. Scott Clark, ed. *Covenant, Justification, and Pastoral Ministry: Essays By the Faculty of*

 *Westminster Seminary California* (P&R, 2007).

Pascal Denault (trans. Mac and Elizabeth Wigfield). *The Distinctiveness of Baptist Covenant*

 *Theology* (Solid Ground Christian Books, 2013).

Andrew M. Elam, Robert C. Van Kooten, and Randall A. Bergquist, eds., *Merit and Moses: A*

 *Critique of the Klinean Doctrine of Republication* (Wipf & Stock, 2014).

Bryan Estelle, J. V. Fesko, and David VanDrunen, *The Law Is Not of Faith: Essays on Works*

 *and Grace in the Mosaic Covenant* (P&R, 2009).

Peter J. Gentry and Stephen J. Wellum, *Kingdom Through Covenant: A Biblical-Theological*

 *Understanding of the Covenants* (Crossway, 2012).

Jeong K. Jeon, *Covenant Theology: John Murray and Meredith G. Kline’s Response To The*

 *Development of Federal Theology in Reformed Thought* (Wipf & Stock, 2004).

The Orthodox Presbyterian Church, “Report of the Committee To Study Republication”

 (2016; available at [www.opc.org](http://www.opc.org)).

Vern S. Poythress, *Understanding Dispensationalists* (2d. ed.; P&R, 1993).

Cornelis P. Venema, *Christ and Covenant Theology: Essays on Election, Republication, and the*

 *Covenants* (P&R, 2017).

Tom Wells and Fred Zaspel, *New Covenant Theology: Description, Definition, Defense* (New

 Covenant Media, 2002).

Stephen J. Wellum and Brent E. Parker, eds. *Progressive Covenantalism: Charting a Course*

 *Between Dispensational and Covenantal Theologies* (B&H, 2016).

Guy Prentiss Waters, *The Federal Vision and Covenant Theology: A Comparative Analysis*

(P&R, 2006).



**Course Objectives Related to MDiv\* Student Learning Outcomes**

Course: Covenant Theology

Professor: Waters

Campus: Houston

Date: Summer 2017

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| **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.* | **Rubric*** Strong
* Moderate
* Minimal
* None
 | **Mini-Justification** |
| **Articulation**  **(oral & written)** | Broadly understands and articulates knowledge, both oral and written, of essential biblical, theological, historical, and cultural/global information, including details, concepts, and frameworks.  | Strong | The student will have a firm grasp of the fundamentals of Covenant Theology as it spans and integrates the Scripture; the student will articulate his knowledge on the cumulative, comprehensive final exam as well as on the written assignments.  |
| **Scripture** | 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.) | Strong | The student will be able to understand how God has dealt with man in terms of covenants throughout all of history; the lectures will consist of extensive exegetical and biblical-theological reflection on particular passages of Scripture, and will address the NT writers’ use of the OT.  |
| **Reformed Theology** | Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards.  | Strong | Covenant Theology is important to Reformed Theology, and is necessary to grasp the form and content of the Westminster Standards.  |
| **Sanctification** | Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student’s sanctification. | Moderate | The student will glorify the God who freely bound Himself to save dead sinners by means of the Covenant of Grace.  |
| **Desire for Worldview** | Burning desire to conform all of life to the Word of God. | Moderate | The student will be able to articulate a world and life view in which the Covenant of Grace is freely offered to all people as the one means of salvation from the wrath to come. |
| **Winsomely Reformed** | 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.) | Strong | The student will understand the distinctiveness and necessity of Covenant Theology as well as a respectful engagement of alternatives, such as dispensationalism.  |
| **Preach** | Ability to preach and teach the meaning of Scripture to both heart and mind with clarity and enthusiasm. | Strong | The student will find that a Scripture united by covenants provides fertile ground for harvesting preaching texts, topics, and applications.  |
| **Worship** | Knowledgeable of historic and modern Christian-worship forms; and ability to construct and skill to lead a worship service. | Moderate | This course will aid the worshiper better toknow the God who commands us to worshipHim according to His word. |
| **Shepherd** | 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. | Moderate | By studying the theology taught in God’sWord, the man of God is equipped to betteruse his “gifts and callings,” to encourage,reprove, rebuke, and exhort with completepatience and teaching. |
| **Church / World** | Ability to interact within a denominational context, within the broader worldwide church, and with significant public issues. | Moderate | While ecclesiology is covered in a differentcourse, proper theology is essential for goodand right doxology, both to understand how to love one’s neighbor as well as love one’sbrethren. |