

REFORMED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY



HOUSTON

**Introduction to
Biblical Theology
(05ON6200)**

Winter 2020 Intensive

Monday, January 13th: 1:00-6:00pm

Tuesday, January 14th: 8:00am-5:00pm

Wednesday, January 15th: 8:00am-5:00pm

Thursday January 16th: 8:00am-2:30pm

Dr. Ben Dunson

PROFESSOR CONTACT INFORMATION

Email: bdunson@rts.edu

Phone: 214.295.8599

Office hours: Please feel free to email to set up an appointment at another time if that is more convenient.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course investigates the covenantal nature of the Christian Bible from a biblical-theological perspective. The study of biblical theology includes: (1) the history, definition, task, method, and goal of biblical theology; (2) the attempt to identify the “center” of biblical theology as a way of understanding the relationship of the various parts to the whole; and (3) selected themes in biblical theology as those threads that make up the fabric of the biblical canon.

REQUIRED READINGS

Reading Order: read the articles first (before class begins) and in the order listed, and then read the books (also preferably before class; but it is more important that you read the articles before class begins, especially the first three)

Books:

1. T. Desmond Alexander, *The City of God and the Goal of Creation*. Short Studies in Biblical Theology. Wheaton: Crossway, 2018. **ISBN-13: 978-1433555749** (192 pages)
2. Jonty Rhodes, *Covenants Made Simple: Understanding God's Unfolding Promises to His People*. Phillipsburg: P & R, 2013. **ISBN-13: 978-1596389755** (170 pages)

Articles and Book Chapters:

3. Geerhardus Vos, "The Idea of Biblical Theology as a Science and as a Theological Discipline," Pages 3-24 in *Redemptive History and Biblical Interpretation: The Shorter Writings of Geerhardus Vos*. Edited by Richard B. Gaffin, Jr. Phillipsburg: P & R, 1980. **Will be posted on Canvas.** (22 pages)
4. Richard B. Gaffin, Jr., "Systematic Theology and Biblical Theology," **Online:** <http://beginningwithmoses.org/bt-articles/220/systematic-theology-and-biblical-theology>
5. Carl R. Trueman, "Some Thoughts on Systematic Theology as Poor Relation," The Mortification of Spin Blog (4 parts)
 - a. Part 1: <http://www.alliancenet.org/mos/postcards-from-palookaville/some-thoughts-on-systematic-theology-as-poor-relation-part-one>
 - b. Part 2: <http://www.alliancenet.org/mos/postcards-from-palookaville/creeds-confessions-and-the-development-of-doctrine-some-thoughts-on#.XXaCGJNKhbU>
 - c. Part 3: <http://www.alliancenet.org/mos/postcards-from-palookaville/beyond-the-lighted-stage-thoughts-on-systematic-theology-as-poor>
 - d. Part 4: <http://www.alliancenet.org/mos/postcards-from-palookaville/when-humpty-met-alice-some-thoughts-on-systematic-theology-as-poor#.XXaCT5NKhbU>
6. Geerhardus Vos, "The Interaction Between Eschatology and Soteriology," Pages 42-61 in *The Pauline Eschatology*. Phillipsburg: P & R, 1994. **Will be posted on Canvas** (19 pages)
7. G.K. Beale, "The New Testament and New Creation," pp. 159-173 in *Biblical Theology: Retrospect and Prospect*. Edited by Scott J. Hafemann. Grand Rapids: IVP, 2002. **Will be posted on Canvas** (14 pages)

COURSE EXPECTATIONS

1. **Attendance Policy:** Attendance is required. This is especially important in an intensive class. Please note that arriving more than 5 minutes late or leaving more than 5 minutes early may be considered "absent."
2. **Late Work Policy:** All assignments are due as scheduled. *Unexcused late work will not be accepted.* Late work will only be considered in cases of unexpected emergency. In such cases contact me as soon as possible.
3. **Technology:** Laptops (and iPads, etc.) are *not* allowed in this course, neither is use of your phone (apart from emergency situations). From the RTS Student handbook: "Classroom etiquette also includes leaving cell phones turned off, refraining from surfing the Internet, playing computer games, texting, and communicating with your neighbor during lectures."

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

TEXTBOOK READINGS

You must read all of the assigned course textbook readings by the end of the semester and will be required to tell me what percentage of the textbook readings you completed on the final exam. This reading will be worth 20% of your course grade.

BIBLICAL-THEOLOGICAL PAPER

1. You will write a paper on a biblical theological theme. This will involve tracing a specific theme across the whole Bible, although you will have to be selective. Focus on key passages in the OT and NT that illustrate your theme.
2. A focus of the paper will be on how your theme develops over time, especially how it finds its fulfillment in Christ (see Luke 24).
3. Your paper must be at least 11 pages, and must not be longer than 12 pages. You will have to be concise and stick with the main point in your papers.
4. See pages 5-7 of syllabus for more detailed instructions.
5. **Papers must be emailed to me by 12pm, Tuesday, March 31st, 2020. Late papers will be penalized ten points every day they are overdue.**

*Some possible paper topics: tabernacle/temple, creation/new creation, covenant, kingdom, land, people of God, messiah, etc. These topics will be discussed in class. For this assignment I want to see you reflecting on the biblical text (and using secondary literature) rather than simply repeating the big, thematic presentations I give in class.

This assignment will be worth 40% of your course grade.

FINAL EXAM

You will take a final exam that will be worth 40% of your course grade. You are responsible for all of the textbook readings and lecture material from the course. The exam may include any of the following: multiple choice, short answer, or essay questions. I will discuss the exam in more detail later in the class.

*To take the final exam you will need to find a proctor and email me his or her email address (after you've checked with that person!). The proctor will preferably be a pastor or elder at your church. Sometimes church administrators are able to be proctors. Your proctor needs to be able to observe you during the taking of the exam (even if they aren't in the same room).

The exam must be taken by **12pm, Tuesday, March 31st, 2020 (same date as paper due date).

EVALUATION

Completion of Textbook Readings: 20%

Biblical-Theological Paper: 40%

Final Exam: 40%

**Note: The professor reserves the right to alter this syllabus prior to, or during, the class. In the case that major revision should occur they will be pointed out in class and an electronic copy of the syllabus will be emailed to the class.*

Biblical-Theological Thematic Paper Guidelines

Basic Guidelines:

1. Papers should be 11-12 pages (double-spaced), Times New Roman Font, with 1 inch margins.
2. You must cite *at least* 8 scholarly sources (commentaries, books, articles, etc.). Websites and Wikipedia do not count as sources, although they might point you to valid sources. Only include works in your bibliography that you have actually *cited* in your paper and footnotes. Use footnotes when you cite a source in your paper. See formatting information at end of this guide.
3. **The basic idea is simple:** pick a biblical theme (land, temple, judgment, creation, kingdom, covenant, Exodus, etc.) and trace it through the Bible. You will not be able to be exhaustive, but try to touch on the main texts in the Bible that deal with your topic. Do not just list them (and certainly do not fill up space with long quotations of the biblical text). Explain the text. Explain how we learn something new about your theme as redemption and revelation move us forward in the biblical story. Especially note how within the OT itself your theme starts to take on a future focus (especially in the prophets).
4. **Christ-centered focus:** make sure that you end by relating your theme to how it finds its fulfillment in Christ (as we discussed over many lectures in class).
5. Papers will be graded according to content and style (correct grammar and spelling, lack of typos, etc.). Proofread!

A word on using secondary sources: the focus of your paper should not be a mere summary of the views of other scholars and all of the various interpretive options that you find in your secondary reading. The focus should be your own reflections. You are certainly free to employ the arguments of secondary sources (assuming you correctly cite them), but do not allow a discussion of secondary sources to distract you from presenting your own reflections.

Formatting Issues:

1. **General Formatting.** You must format your papers according to Kate L. Turrabian, *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations: Chicago Style for Students and Researchers* (8th ed.; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010). The most important information for formatting your footnotes and bibliographies is in chs. 15-17 (pp. 135-215). You must format your paper according to the Notes-Bibliography style. You may *not* use the Author-Date style (chs. 18-19). I would also highly recommend that you familiarize yourself with all of Part III (Style), but especially chs. 20, 21, and 25. You will receive a lower grade if your paper is not formatted according to Turrabian chs. 15-17, and if your style is incorrect. You will get a zero for your paper if

you plagiarize, and will face disciplinary measures from the college (thus: learn how to quote sources according to ch. 25 if you do not already know how).

2. **Biblical Books.** The following info is the same as the shorter form of biblical book abbreviations found in Turabian, pp. 339-42. The following info is taken from: http://www.sbl-site.org/assets/pdfs/sblhs_ss92804_revised_ed.pdf. You must cite biblical books in this way, and you must write out biblical books, etc., in the way detailed below. You will be penalized for not doing so.

Citations of modern Bible versions do not require publisher's information in either footnotes or bibliography; instead, use standard abbreviations for the Bible version (e.g., NRSV, RSV, NIV, NASB). If citing scripture from a single version, include the abbreviation of the version following the chapter and verse on the first scripture reference only. When citing more than one version in a paper, include the version after each citation.

“Now Ahab had seventy sons in Samaria” (2 Kgs 10:1 NRSV).

When citing specific chapters and verses, use the standard abbreviated titles of biblical books:

Old Testament:

Gen	Genesis	Eccl (or Qoh)	Ecclesiastes (or Qoheleth)
Exod	Exodus	Song	Song of Songs (or Song of Solomon)
Lev	Leviticus		
Num	Numbers	Isa	Isaiah
Deut	Deuteronomy	Jer	Jeremiah
Josh	Joshua	Lam	Lamentations
Judg	Judges	Ezek	Ezekiel
Ruth	Ruth	Dan	Daniel
1–2 Sam	1–2 Samuel	Hos	Hosea
1–2 Kgs	1–2 Kings	Joel	Joel
1–2 Chr	1–2 Chronicles	Amos	Amos
Ezra	Ezra	Obad	Obadiah
Neh	Nehemiah	Jonah	Jonah
Esth	Esther	Mic	Micah
Job	Job	Nah	Nahum
Ps/Pss	Psalms	Hab	Habakkuk
Prov	Proverbs	Zeph	Zephaniah
		Hag	Haggai
		Zech	Zechariah
		Mal	Malachi

New Testament:

Matt	Matthew	1–2 Thess	1–2 Thessalonians
Mark	Mark	1–2 Tim	1–2 Timothy

Luke	Luke	Titus	Titus
John	John	Phlm	Philemon
Acts	Acts	Heb	Hebrews
Rom	Romans	Jas	James
1–2 Cor	1–2 Corinthians	1–2 Pet	1–2 Peter
Gal	Galatians	1–2–3 John	1–2–3 John
Eph	Ephesians	Jude	Jude
Phil	Philippians	Rev	Revelation
Col	Colossians		

If a biblical book is the first word of the sentence, do not abbreviate the title. Also, when referring to the book as a whole or a person with the same name as a biblical book, do *not* abbreviate.

Right: Revelation 3 begins with the letter to the church in Sardis.
We know little about the historical Habakkuk.

Wrong: Rev 3 begins with the letter to the church in Sardis.
We know little about the historical Hab. 2

Cite Bible verses with chapter and verse(s) using arabic numerals separated by a colon. Do not write out the numbers.

Right: John 5:8–9
Wrong: John chapter five verses eight and nine.

When citing multiple passages, list the abbreviated title of each *new* biblical book followed by the chapter number and colon, with all verses in that chapter separated by a comma and space. A semicolon should separate references to subsequent chapters or books. Do not include the conjunction “and” or an ampersand before the last citation. List passages in canonical and numerical order.

Right: Matt 2:3; 3:4–6; 4:3, 7; Luke 3:6, 8; 12:2, 5; Acts 15:1–5; Rom 1:8–12

Wrong: Luke 3:6, 8; Luke 12:2; Matt 2:3, 3:4–6; 4:3; Luke 3:6, 8 and 12:2
Rom 1:8–12; Matt 2:3; 4:3, 7; 3:4–6

Course Objectives Related to MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes

Course: Introduction to Biblical Theology (05ON6200)
 Professor: Ben Dunson
 Campus: Houston
 Date: Winter 2020

MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes		Rubric	Mini-Justification
<i>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.</i>		> Strong > Moderate > Minimal > None	
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. Also includes ability to preach and teach the meaning of Scripture to both heart and mind with clarity and enthusiasm.	Strong	1. Biblical-Theological Paper 2. Written Exam (including lengthy essays)
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	Extensive biblical-theological examination of core biblical themes.
Reformed Theology	Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards.	Moderate	A Reformed approach to Biblical Theology will be presented, although there will not be lengthy discussions of the Westminster Standards.
Sanctification	Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student's sanctification.	Moderate	There will be a focus on how the whole Bible is centered on the manifestation of God's glory and the response of his people in praise and adoration. These things are at the heart of how we grow as believers.
Worldview	Burning desire to conform all of life to the Word of God. Includes ability to interact within a denominational context, within the broader worldwide church, and with significant public issues	Strong	Understanding the overarching biblical story of creation and redemption is foundational for a biblical worldview.
Winsomely Reformed	Embraces a winsomely Reformed ethos. (Includes an appropriate ecumenical spirit	Moderate	Will engage with non-Reformed approaches to Biblical Theology

	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.)		throughout the class.
Pastoral Ministry	Ability to minister the Word of God to hearts and lives of both church and unchurched, to include preaching, teaching, leading in worship, leading and shepherding the local congregation, aiding in spiritual maturity, concern for non-Christians.	Moderate	While perhaps not as direct as in some classes, the focus of the class is still quite relevant to pastoral ministry. We were created to worship God in the splendor of His holiness and this class will attempt to show how this shapes every aspect of our approach to the whole of Scripture.