REFORMED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY (Jackson, Mississippi)
01ST5300 Covenant Theology * *Spring Semester, 2021* * Dr. Ligon Duncan

Course Description

This course is a study of Covenant Theology from exegetical, theological and historical perspectives. Covenant theology is the Bible's way of explaining and deepening our understanding of (1) the atonement; (2) our assurance; (3) the sacraments; (4) the continuity of redemptive history; and (5) Dynamic of God's sovereignty and Christian responsibility/piety. The doctrine of the covenants is thus important for both Reformed systematic and biblical theology (the study of special revelation from the standpoint of redemptive history).

The course will survey the successive biblical covenants from a redemptive historical perspective as well as examine the bi-covenantal structure of creation and redemption. Consideration will be given to issues such as the relation of the Old and New Testaments, the significance of the covenants for the doctrine of the atonement, for understanding sacramental theology, the implications of Covenant Theology for Reformed hermeneutics and more. Emphasis will be placed on the role of the Biblical doctrine of the covenants for preaching and pastoral ministry.

Course Objectives

To assist the student in mastering an outline of the covenantal structure of redemptive history and to help him/her begin to grasp the manifold implications of the Biblical doctrine of the covenants (for soteriology and especially the atonement, sacraments, evangelism, family life, ecclesiology, and more). The course will also aim to equip the student with a working knowledge of the history of Covenant Theology and some of the more important objections to Covenant Theology from its theological critics.

Contact Information

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Assisting me to facilitate this course will be my RTS Jackson TA:
Tony Doggett Email: tdoggett@rts.edu

All assignments must be submitted via Canvas in pdf format. Tony is available to answer questions for you about logistical matters related to the course.

Course Requirements

Required Texts:
Richard Belcher, ***The Fulfillment of the Promises of God*** [pp. 139-258] 978-1-5271-0519-5
Louis Berkhof, ***Systematic Theology*** [pp. 211-218; pp. 262-301]; 978-0802838209
J. Ligon Duncan III, ***Covenant Theology*** 978-1-938435-21-8 (iBook)
O.Palmer Robertson, ***Christ of the Covenants***; 978-0875524184 (all)
Geerhardus Vos, ***Biblical Theology*** [pp. 3-182, pp. 185-342] 978-0851514581
Guy P. Waters, Reid & Muether, ***Covenant Theology***; [pp. 23-98, pp. 525-570] 978-1-4335-6003-3
Syllabus Articles **(located on Canvas)**:

Donald Macleod, **Covenant Theology** in **DSCH&T**, 214-218
Donald Macleod, **Covenant: 2** in **Banner of Truth [BoT]** 141:22-28
Donald Macleod, ***Federal Theology -- An Oppressive Legalism?*** in ***BoT*** 125:21-28
Donald Macleod, ***The Lord's Supper as a Means of Grace*** in ***BoT*** 64:16-22
Donald Macleod, ***Qualifications for Communion*** in ***BoT*** 65:14-20
Donald Macleod, ***The Real Presence*** in ***BoT*** 66:13-16
Westminster Confession of Faith **7**: Of God's Covenant with Man
Larger Catechism Questions 20-22, and 30-36 ***Shorter Catechism*** Questions 12, 16, & 20

Online Lectures (Available but not required)

Online lectures may be accessed from the following address to assist the student in the class: https://subsplash.com/reformtheosem/lb/ms/+635a671.

Class Attendance

Given the huge amount of material we have to cover and the relative scarcity of classroom hours, attendance will be at a premium and, of course, to the benefit of the student. My TA will take roll at every class. If you need to miss a class or to leave early or to arrive late, you should seek permission (via my TA, my EA, or myself). Failure to attend class, or to engage while in the class, will be noted. No unexplained absences.

Academic Integrity

All work submitted must be the student's own. Group-produced work is not permitted. Plagiarism and copying of old assignments are all considered cheating. Students who do not fulfill assignments with requisite academic integrity will be referred to the Academic Dean with a recommendation for discipline (the student should also consult pp. 33-34 in the Handbook for further details).

Technology Use

Laptop computers may not be used during this course. Students desiring to use a laptop for note-taking purposes only may request an application for permission to do so.

Course Evaluation

1. **Reading and Course Notebook** (20%) Each student will keep a course notebook to reflect his studies in the course as well as provide the basis for future study or teaching opportunities. Please see the directions below for completing this assignment.

2. **Doctrinal Précis'** (15%) Please see the last page for details.

3. **Quizzes** (15%) The student should prepare for and expect a quiz over the reading that is due on select days throughout the semester. **These quizzes will be taken through the Canvas website.** You may **not** use any assistance such as, but not limited to, notes, textbooks, books, Bible, etc.

4. **Final Examination** (50%) The Exam will cover reading and lecture material from the whole of the course. Further details will be given.

Late Work

Students should make every effort to turn in work on time or early. In the rare case of medical or other providential emergency, extensions and/or alternative arrangements may be granted. In most cases, late assignments will be accepted but penalized one letter grade per day. Please make these arrangements with the TA as soon as possible.

Instructions for Course Notebook

The notebook assignment is designed to reward students for their labors in engaging in the classroom and in assigned reading, and to provide them with a study guide for the final exam—as well as a permanent reference resource for studying and teaching Covenant Theology in the future. **The Course Notebook will be submitted as a single PDF document on Canvas**. All legibly-written handwritten classroom notes will need to be scanned and placed in the course notebook. While you may not use a computer during class lecture to take notes, you may type your notes afterward to place in the course notebook.

1. **Lecture notes Assignment**:
Inclusion of the student's lecture notes (*typed or neatly scripted*) from the classroom lectures in the course notebook will enable the instructor to gauge the quality of listening and comprehension, and notetaking (and make adjustments in delivery or content beneficial for students).

2. **Reading Notes Assignment**:
Please include your typed notes taken on the reading of Belcher (see pages under required texts), Berkhof (see pages under required texts), Macleod (all readings), and Waters, Reid & Muether (see pages under required texts).

3. **Westminster Confession of Faith (*WCF*) Outline Assignment**:
This project calls for the student to develop a robust, typed, outline of the *assigned* chapter of the *WCF* (chapter 7). Aim for a one-page single-spaced outline, and include references to the Scripture proofs under each section of the chapter.

4. Geerhardus Vos Biblical Theology Synopsis
The student will produce a two-page single-spaced synopsis of Geerhardus Vos, ***Biblical Theology***. The synopsis should be in outline form or in abbreviated narrative, should aim to enumerate the key points in Part One and Part Two of the text, and should be as compact and lucid as possible. The goal of the synopsis is for the student to accurately reproduce the flow of the book's argument and its main thrust and points. The synopsis should begin with a paragraph-length statement of the book's thesis and conclusion. Then, an outline of the assigned contents should follow. The student may also want to create a list of the best quotes, and points of weakness or disagreement.

Due Dates Summary

Feb. 22	Précis on Covenant of Works
Mar. 22	Précis on Covenant of Grace
Mar. 29	Précis on Covenant of Redemption
April 5	Précis on Covenant Theology
April 26	Course Binder due

Collection of Assignments

All assignments are due by 11:59 PM Central Time of the assigned day. Assignments received after this time will be considered late and penalized accordingly. Assignments are *not* to be emailed to the TA, but rather uploaded to the corresponding Canvas module.

About the Teacher

For inquiring minds who want to know, I taught full-time at RTS from June 1990- July 1996 and then became the Minister of the historic First Presbyterian Church (1837), Jackson, Mississippi in August of 1996. In 2013, I was called to serve as the Chancellor and CEO of Reformed Theological Seminary. At the beginning of 2014, I assumed that role fully as I transitioned from full-time ministry at First Presbyterian Church over to full-time leadership at RTS.

I am a native of Greenville, South Carolina, and was born and reared in a Christian home (a ninth generation Southern Presbyterian to be precise!). I am a graduate of Furman University, Greenville, SC (BA); Covenant Theological Seminary, St. Louis (MDiv, MA); and the University of Edinburgh, Scotland (PhD). I have been here in Jackson for over 25 years now.

My wife, Anne (who is a graduate of Furman University, BA; Gordon-Conwell Seminary, MRE; and Reformed Theological Seminary, MA [MFT]) is an accomplished Christian Educator in her own right, and is the loving mother of our daughter, Sarah Kennedy, and son, Jennings.

Class Meets Select Mondays 8am-11am Central Time

Listed below are the dates and topics and weekly assignment timetable/due dates for our course.

January 25 NO CLASS
DUE: Donald Macleod, ***Covenant Theology*** (all)
DUE: Macleod, ***Covenant: 2*** & ***Federal Theology-An Oppressive Legalism?*** (all)
DUE: Belcher, ***The Fulfillment of the Promises of God***, pp. 139-164
DUE: J. Ligon Duncan III, ***Covenant Theology***, Lesson 1.
AVAILABLE: Online lectures – Lesson 1 (not required)

February 1 ***[CLASS 1]*** **Introduction to Covenant Theology**
Syllabus/Reading/Assignment Review
What is Covenant Theology? What is a Covenant? Why study it?
Covenant Theology (History and Objections)
DUE: Belcher, ***The Fulfillment of the Promises of God***, pp. 165-198
DUE: O. Palmer Robertson, ***Christ of the Covenants***, pp. 3-63.
DUE: Guy P. Waters, Reid & Muether, ***Covenant Theology***, pp. 23-39.
ASSIGNMENT DUE: Quiz 1 (due by 11:59 pm Central Time)

February 8 ***[CLASS 2]*** **Covenant of Works (or Creation)**
DUE: O. Palmer Robertson, ***Christ of the Covenants***, pp. 67-87.
DUE: Louis Berkhof, ***Systematic Theology***, pp. 211-218.
DUE: *WCF* 7; *LC* Questions 20-22, 30-36; and *SC* Questions 12, 16, & 20.
DUE: Guy P. Waters, Reid & Muether, ***Covenant Theology***, pp. 63-97.
DUE: J. Ligon Duncan III, ***Covenant Theology***, Lesson 2.
AVAILABLE: Online lectures – Lesson 2 (not required)
ASSIGNMENT DUE: Quiz 2 (due by 11:59 pm Central Time)

February 15 ***[CLASS 3]*** **Covenant of Grace (Adam)**
DUE: O. Palmer Robertson, ***Christ of the Covenants***, pp. 91-107.
DUE: Louis Berkhof, ***Systematic Theology*** 262-301.
ASSIGNMENT DUE: Quiz 3 (due by 11:59 pm Central Time)

February 22 ***[CLASS 4]*** **Covenant of Grace (Noah)**
DUE: DUE: Belcher, ***The Fulfillment of the Promises of God***, pp. 199-232
DUE: O. Palmer Robertson, ***Christ of the Covenants***, pp. 109-125.
DUE: J. Ligon Duncan III, ***Covenant Theology***, Lesson 3.
AVAILABLE: Online lectures – Lesson 3 (not required)
ASSIGNMENT DUE: Quiz 4 (due by 11:59 pm Central Time)
ASSIGNMENT DUE: Précis on *Covenant of Works*. (due by 11:59 pm CT)

March 1 ***[CLASS 5]*** **Covenant of Grace (Abraham)**
DUE: O. Palmer Robertson, ***Christ of the Covenants***, pp. 127-146.
DUE: O. Palmer Robertson, ***Christ of the Covenants***, pp. 147-166.
DUE: J. Ligon Duncan III, ***Covenant Theology***, Lesson 4.
AVAILABLE: Online lectures – Lesson 4 (not required)
ASSIGNMENT DUE: Quiz 5 (due by 11:59 pm Central Time)

Mar. 8 ***[CLASS 6]* Covenant of Grace (Moses)**
DUE: Belcher, ***The Fulfillment of the Promises of God***, pp. 233-258
DUE: O. Palmer Robertson, ***Christ of the Covenants***, pp. 167-199.
DUE: J. Ligon Duncan III, ***Covenant Theology***, Lesson 5.
AVAILABLE: Online lectures – Lesson 5 (not required)
ASSIGNMENT DUE: Quiz 6 (due by 11:59 pm Central Time)

Mar. 15 SPRING READING WEEK

Mar. 22 ***[CLASS 7]* Covenant of Grace (David) and Dispensationalism**
DUE: O.Palmer Robertson, ***Christ of the Covenants***, pp. 201-227.
DUE: O. Palmer Robertson, ***Christ of the Covenants***, pp. 229-269.
DUE: Guy P. Waters, Reid & Muether, ***Covenant Theology***, pp. 525-550.
DUE: J. Ligon Duncan III, ***Covenant Theology***, Lessons 6-7.
AVAILABLE: Online lectures – Lessons 6-7 (not required)
ASSIGNMENT DUE: Quiz 7 (due by 11:59 pm Central Time)
ASSIGNMENT DUE: Précis on *Covenant of Grace* (due by 11:59 pm CT)

Mar. 29 ***[CLASS 8]* Covenant of Grace (Jeremiah-New) [*Last Day of Class*]**
DUE: O. Palmer Robertson, ***Christ of the Covenants***, pp. 271-300.
DUE: Guy P. Waters, Reid & Muether, ***Covenant Theology***, pp. 551-569.
DUE: J. Ligon Duncan III, ***Covenant Theology***, Lessons 8-9.
AVAILABLE: Online lectures – Lessons 8-9 (not required)
ASSIGNMENT DUE: Quiz 8 (due by 11:59 pm Central Time)
ASSIGNMENT DUE: Précis on *Covenant of Redemption* (due 11:59 pm CT)

April 5 NO CLASS
DUE: Donald Macleod, ***The Lord's Supper as a Means of Grace*** (all), ***Qualifications for Communion*** (all), and ***The Real Presence*** (all).
DUE: Guy P. Waters, Reid & Muether, ***Covenant Theology***, pp. 43-62.
ASSIGNMENT DUE: Quiz 9 (due by 11:59 pm Central Time)
ASSIGNMENT DUE: Précis on *Covenant Theology* (due by 11:59 pm CT) *(Definition, Description, Distinctives, and History)*.

April 12 NO CLASS
DUE: Vos, ***Biblical Theology***, pp. 3-182.

April 19 NO CLASS
DUE: Vos, ***Biblical Theology***, pp. 185-342.

April 26 Course Binder and Revised Précis Deadline **(due by 11:59 pm CT)**

ASSIGNMENT DUE: **All students submit Course Notebook**

Final Exam: TBA

Précis Assignments

A précis is a precise summary or abstract of a particular subject matter or topic. Each student must complete four, one-page précis' of 4 assigned topics: *Covenant Theology (Definition, Description, Distinctives, and History); Covenant of Redemption; Covenant of Works; Covenant of Grace*. These will aid you in understanding more about the doctrine as well as provide you with teaching material for the future. Please see the TA if you have any questions, uncertainties, or difficulties. These must be submitted in pdf format on Canvas. **Each précis must be exactly one page with the bibliography on the second page. The format will be 11 pt., Times New Roman, ½" margins, single spaced.** You must use MLA parenthetical citations such as ["by means of the covenant" (Marcel 127).] Following is an example of how your paper should be titled:

Name	Précis on the Covenant of Works	2/20/2017

Begin by outlining the doctrine. For example, you may break the Covenant of Works down to Contracting Parties, Abiding Significance, Sacraments, Blessings & Curses, Ordinances, Christ's Fulfillment, and Stipulations. Then fill it in with Scripture references and supporting quotations/summaries from your research maintaining the outline format. Following are two examples of précis': one is sparse, the other is full. One is in proper format, the other is not.

Bad

Good

Some Suggested Resources:

Berkhof, Louis. *Systematic Theology*. Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans Pub., 1996.
Fesko, J.V. *The Trinity and the Covenant of Redemption*., Ross-shire, GB: Christian Focus Pub., 2016
Heinrich Heppe, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 281-319, 371-409
Hodge, Archibald Alexander. *Outlines of Theology*. Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1983.
Vern Poythress, *Understanding Dispensationalists*, Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Pub., 1993.
Reymond, Robert L. *A New Systematic Theology of the Christian Faith*. Nashville: T. Nelson, 1998.
The Westminster Confession of Faith: With Proof Texts. Horsham, PA: Great Commission Pub., 1992.
Note: It is also helpful to review the *Belgic Confession* and *Heidelberg Catechism*.

REFORMED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Course Objectives Related to MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes

Course: 01ST5300 Covenant Theology
Professor: Rev. Dr. J. Ligon Duncan III
Campus: Jackson
Date: Spring 2021

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. Also includes ability to preach and teach the meaning of Scripture to both heart and mind with clarity and enthusiasm.	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 four précis 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.*
Reformed Theology	Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards.	Strong	*Covenant Theology is an important concept to Reformed Theology; without a firm foundation and introduction to the Covenants, the student will be unable to grasp 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 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 men 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.*
Pastoral Ministry	Ability to minister the Word of God to hearts and lives of both churched and unchurched, to include preaching, teaching, leading in worship, leading, and shepherding the local congregation, aiding in spiritual maturity, concern for non-Xns.	Moderate	*The student will find that a Scripture united by covenants provides fertile ground for preaching and teaching, proper context and understanding for worship, needed theology to properly use his gifts, and the best of reasons to love brother and neighbor.*