
REFORMED  THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
GLOBAL



ACTS AND ROMANS
DR. ROBERT J. CARA

Course Overview

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Course Description:

00NT5250 Acts and Romans, 2 hours
Lecturing Professor: Dr. Robert J. Cara
Professor of Record: Dr. Benjamin Gladd

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

Course Objectives:

The over arching aim is to provide tools to the student in order that one might better interpret Acts and Romans to one's self, the church, and the world.

- Learn outlines and basic content of Acts and Romans.
- Learn major biblical-theological (BT) categories in Acts and Romans along with methodology to do further BT interpretation.
- Compare and contrast various systematic theology (ST) categories (e.g., Calvinism, RC) and various current church methodologies (e.g., "church growth") with/ Acts and Romans.
- Learn enough about critical views to:
 1. Utilize common grace insights in critical commentaries.
 2. Provide an intelligent global critique of critical theories.

Required Textbooks:

Cara, Robert J. *Cracking the Foundation of the New Perspective on Paul: Covenantal Nomism Versus Reformed Covenantal Theology*. Great Britain: Mentor Imprint, 2017.

Kruger, Michael J. *A Biblical - Theological Introduction to the New Testament: The Gospel Realized*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2016.

Ladd, G. E. *A Theology of the New Testament*. Revised ed. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993.

Luther, Martin. *Preface to Commentary on Romans*. Translated by J. T. Mueller. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1976.

Holy Bible (Read Acts and Romans twice)

[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 [Midterm Exam](#)
5. Take the [Final Exam](#)
6. Submit [Research Paper](#)
7. Submit [Mentor Report/Course Application Paper](#)

Meet the Professors

Lecturing Professor:



Dr. Robert J. Cara is the Hugh and Sallie Reaves Professor of New Testament at RTS-Charlotte and Provost and Chief Academic Officer for the RTS institution. He has been a professor at RTS since 1993. Dr. Cara was an engineer for seven years before the Lord re-directed him toward seminary. As a former college basketball player for Penn State-Capitol, he has developed a reputation as an energetic and challenging classroom teacher, and he is a personable scholar who is very student oriented.

In addition to the traditional New Testament topics, Dr. Cara's academic interests include relating the New Testament to Reformed Theology, creeds, hermeneutics, Second Temple Judaism documents, and narrative criticism. In addition to numerous book reviews and articles, he has written a commentary on 1 & 2 Thessalonians and a forthcoming book critiquing the New Perspective on Paul. Currently, Dr. Cara is working

on a commentary for the book of Hebrews in the Mentor Commentary series. He recently released a defense of the Reformed doctrine of justification in a book entitled *Cracking the Foundation of the New Perspective on Paul: Covenantal Nomism Versus Reformed Covenantal Theology*. Dr. Cara has several courses available on RTS iTunes U and the RTS Mobile app, which can be listened to for free.

As an ordained minister in the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church, Dr. Cara has been very involved at both the presbytery and synod levels. He is a former vice-moderator of the denomination and for several years was the chairman of the denominational Inter-Church Relations Committee. He preaches regularly in the Charlotte area.

Professor of Record:



Dr. Benjamin Gladd received his B.A. in Greek and Hebrew from The Master's College (2001) and M.A. in Biblical Exegesis from Wheaton College (2003). He then completed a Ph.D. from Wheaton College in New Testament in 2008. Prior to joining the RTS faculty, he served as an adjunct faculty member at Wheaton College, teaching New Testament exegesis and interpretation, Greek, and introductory courses on the Old and New Testaments.

Dr. Gladd's interests lie in biblical theology, the use of the Old Testament in the New, and biblical exegesis. RTS believes that the Bible is God's Word, he wants to instill in his students the desire to

interpret Scripture seriously. He is passionate about teaching students how to engage the Bible in its original languages, by learning how to analyze syntax, perform word studies, recognize the logical flow of the passage, and determine how the Old Testament is used in the New Testament. Dr. Gladd hails from the eastern shore of Maryland, and his wife, Nikki, from Grand Rapids, Michigan. They are proud parents of two sons, Judah and Simon. Dr. Gladd enjoys playing sports and catching any football or basketball game, using spare time to do woodworking and all sorts of DIY projects around the house.

Grades

Forum Discussion (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.

Examination (Midterm 25%, Final 25%):

There will be two exams for this course; the midterm covers Acts material (Lessons 1-10) and the final exam covers Romans material (Lessons 11-19). Many of the questions are closely related to the Lesson Questions at the end of each lesson. Others will be miscellaneous questions from lectures and any readings. Please note the outline for Acts and for Romans, which are available on the LMS, will also appear on the exams. The exam will be 2 hours long and completely closed book.

The midterm and final 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.

Research Paper (20%):

A research paper is required to for this course. The paper may concern either Acts or Romans. If one has not had any Gree, you must do the paper on Acts. The paper will be 10 - 15 typed pages in Turabian format. For more information and guidelines regarding the research paper, please see section titled "[Research Papers Instructions](#)" in this syllabus.

Reading Report (10%):

The student must complete all of the required reading. Reading assignments are broken down week by week within the LMS. As an assignment, the student will be asked to report the percentage of reading they have completed in the LMS.

Mentor Report OR Course Application Paper (5%):

If you are enrolled in an **RTS Global** degree or certificate 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 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:

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Lessons

Lesson One
Mini-Hermeneutics and Theological
Categories

Lesson Two
Acts Introduction

Lesson Three
The History of Interpretation of Acts

Lesson Four
Acts 1-2 (Pentecost)

Lesson Five
Acts 4 (The Name of Christ)

Lesson Six
The Word of God Theme in Acts

Lesson Seven
Acts 10-11 (Peter and Cornelius)

Lesson Eight
Acts 15 (Jerusalem Council)

Lesson Nine
Acts 19 (John's Disciples)

Lesson Ten
Acts 20 (Ephesian Elders)

Lesson Eleven
Romans Introduction

Lesson Twelve
Romans 1 (Theme of Romans)

Lesson Thirteen
Romans 1-3 (The Law and Sin)

Lesson Fourteen
Perspectives on Justification

Lesson Fourteen A
The New Perspective on Paul

Lesson Fifteen
Romans 4 (Abraham was Justified by
Faith)

Lesson Fifteen A
Romans 5 (Adam-Christ Parallels)

Lesson Sixteen
Romans 7-8 (The Flesh vs. The Spirit)

Lesson Seventeen
Romans 9 (Not all Israel is Israel) Romans
10 (Paul's Gospel in the OT)

Lesson Eighteen
Romans 11 (All Israel will be Saved)

Lesson Nineteen
Romans 14-15 (The Strong and Weak
Brother)

Research Paper Instructions

General Comments

This should be a serious research paper, using at least six to eight serious commentaries (including both critical and conservative) and a few BT's. You must also footnote at least one journal article. Take advantage of the helpful annotated bibliographies in Appendices A & B.

You must theologize! Connect the dots on the original and modern levels. Solve a problem, draw attention to something neglected, make an interesting or unique point, explain modern relevance, etc.

- 10-15 pages typed with page numbers.
- Paper may concern either Acts or Romans. If one has not had *any* Greek, you must do the paper on Acts.

Example of How to Cite Bible Verses

Paul opens Romans by reinforcing his apostleship, prophetic office, and Damascus Road experience (1:1). Paul also begins his epistle by calling attention to Christ. At the very beginning of the epistle, the focus lies squarely upon Jesus and the gospel (1:3-5). Paul then reveals that his mission is to “call all Gentiles to faith and obedience” (1:5), and Gentile Romans play an integral role in that mission: “You are among those Gentiles who are called to belong to Jesus Christ” (1:6). After mentioning the importance of the gospel, Paul proceeds to discuss his love for the church at Rome and his desire to be with them (1:8-15). The gospel, he claims, is a demonstration of God’s power by saving those to have faith in Christ (1:16-17).

As this section makes clear, Jesus’ ministry continues to gain popularity around Galilee (3:7-12). He finally assembles all twelve disciples, though he summoned four in 1:16-20. Symbolically, the Twelve constitute true Israel and not only follow their rabbi, Jesus, they are even charged with the authority to proclaim the kingdom message and cast out demons (3:14-15). By identifying themselves with Jesus, their ministry is inextricably bound up with his authority over evil. The paradigmatic Parable of the Soils explains why not all are able to accept the kingdom message (4:1-20), and the Parable of the Seed and the Mustard Seed explain how the end-time kingdom radically differs from expectations. The presence of the kingdom mysteriously overlaps with wickedness. With the kingdom message flourishing in Galilee, opposition grows against Jesus (3:20-21, 31-34; 3:22-30). This phase climaxes with four miracles that encapsulate the totality of Jesus’ miracles--a nature miracle (4:35-41), an exorcism (5:1-20), a healing (5:25-34), and a resurrection (5:21-24, 35-43).

Acts Options

1. BT study on any major or minor theme in Acts or Luke-Acts.
2. Exegesis of a pericope highlighting (in a BT way) its (or one aspect in the pericope) relationship to the rest of Acts or Luke-Acts.
3. Compare and contrast two similar pericopes of which one is in Luke, and the other, Acts.

Romans Options

1. Exegesis of a pericope within the introduction (1:1-15) and hortatory (12:1-16:27) sections highlighting its relationship to any or all of the doctrinal sections (1:16-11:36).
2. Hermeneutical study of any OT quote or allusion in Romans. You must consider the LXX and MT. (If you don’t know Hebrew, consult both standard OT commentaries and OT in NT works).

Course Objectives Related to MAR Student Learning Outcomes

Course: Acts / Romans
 Professor: Dr. Robert J. Cara

MAR Student Learning Outcomes <i>In order to measure the success of the MAR 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 MAR outcomes.</i>		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	1. Acts and Romans theology 2. Historical-critical view of Paul, including New Perspective 3. Significant academic paper on a Acts or Romans theology topic
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	1. Major part of class is exegeting Acts and Romans texts 2. Original languages are used in class and encouraged in academic paper 3. It's a BIBLE class!
Reformed Theology	Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards.	Moderate	1. Traditional Reformed categories are used for explaining many Pauline categories, including Justification, three uses of the law. 2. References to creeds
Sanctification	Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student's sanctification.	Moderate	1. Psalm singing in class 2. Personal application is made in class to many Acts and Romans texts
Desire for Worldview	Burning desire to conform all of life to the Word of God.	Minimal	1. Attempt to analyze critical views from a consistently Scriptural view.
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	1. Common grace use of historical-critical scholars is discussed & required in paper 2. Both Acts and Romans have significant implications for interacting w/ non-Xns.
Teach	Ability to teach the meaning of Scripture to both heart and mind with clarity and enthusiasm.	Moderate	1. Many times teaching applications are made from Acts and Romans texts 2. The Acts view of preaching being termed the "Word of God" is
Church/World	Ability to interact within a denominational context, within the broader worldwide church, and with significant public issues.	Minimal	1. Lutheran, Reformed, and RC views/creeds of Justification. 2. New Perspective views.
MAR Specific SLO	An ability to integrate such knowledge and understanding into one's own calling in society	Moderate	1. Discussion of weak/strong in Romans 14-15 is discussed. 2. Acts' concern for reaching non-Xns.