ST5300/01 Syllabus

Spring 2022

RTS Charlotte

**Covenant Theology**

**Meeting Information**

Wednesdays, February 2 – May 4, 8:30-10:30am

**Contact Information**

Dr. Kevin DeYoung (kdeyoung@christcovenant.org)

My assistant at Christ Covenant is Barry Peterson (bfpeterson@christcovenant.org)

My TA is Alberto Paredes (aparedes@christcovenant.org)

**Course Description**

Most believers in the Reformed tradition are familiar with the language of covenant. We hear terms like covenant membership or covenant baptism, and yet we may still have a hard time explaining what we mean by “covenant.” Why is this theme so important in Scripture? How does it help us make sense of the whole Bible? Why does it matter in the Christian life? This course will systematically present biblical teaching on covenant theology as understood and taught within the Reformed tradition. We will seek to answer relevant questions (old and new), analyze current controversies, and apply what we learn to life and ministry.

**Course Requirements**

In addition to attending the entire class and being a joyful and active participant in the class, there are four requirements.

1. Mid-term Exam (15%) – The exam will cover the lecture material up to this point in the course. The questions will focus on facts and terms, with a few short answer questions. The mid-term exam will be on **March 23**.
2. Final Exam (15%) – The exam will cover the lecture material from the second half of the course. The questions will focus on facts and terms, with a few short answer questions. The final exam will be on the last day of class, at the end of the period on **May 4**.
3. Required Reading (35%) – Reading is an important part of the class. Students are expected to read all the assigned material *with reasonable care*. This means skimming does not count. There is an above average amount of reading in this class, but there are no other assignments outside of two in-class exams and a final paper. The reading is a key component of what you are meant to do and learn in this course. All the required reading must be completed by **May 12**.
4. Research Paper (35%) – A final research paper is also due on **May 12**. The paper should be in 12pt., Times New Roman font, fully justified, 1-inch margins on all sides, 1.5 spacing, page numbers at the bottom, a title at the top of the first page, with your name, class, and date on the right top of the first page. The paper should be 3500-4000 words, which is roughly 8-12 pages (given the formatting above). Do not go over 4000 words. Use footnotes (not endnotes) according to the Chicago Manual, but really the most important thing is to be consistent with your citation style. Your paper should include a bibliography. The bibliography does not contribute to your word count, but the footnotes do. The goal of a research paper is to state and defend an argument, demonstrating facility with academic sources and showing that you are familiar with the major arguments, including those you do not agree with. Papers will be marked down for grammatical mistakes, sloppy writing, syntactical errors, and failure to communicate your argument clearly and cogently.

**Possible Paper Topics**

You are not limited to these topics, but some possible ideas are listed below. When in doubt, please clear your topic with me before proceeding.

* Is the Covenant of Works a biblical idea?
* Can the *pactum salutis* be supported by Scripture? Why does it matter for life and ministry?
* How should we preach and apply the law?
* How should we assess reconstructionism and theonomy?
* What are some of the notable variations among Reformed thinkers when it comes to covenant theology?
* How should we respond to Federal Vision or N.T. Wright’s views on covenant?
* Is Republication a biblical and Reformed idea?
* How should we assess the various covenantal frameworks advocated by non-paedobaptist theologians?
* How should Reformed Christians think about the nation of Israel?

**Required Reading**

Rhodes, Jonty. *Covenants Made Simple: Understanding God’s Unfolding Promises to His People.* Phillipsburg, PA: P&R Publishing, 2013. (176 pages)

Francis Turretin. *Institutes of Elenctic Theology. Volume 2*. Phillipsburg, PA: P&R Publishing, 1994. Read pages 1-32, 137-269 (155 pages)

Venema, Cornelis P. *Christ and Covenant Theology: Essays on Election, Republication, and the Covenants.* Phillipsburg, PA: P&R Publishing, 2017. Read the chapter(s) on republication OR Federal Vision OR N.T. Wright (around 100 pages)

Vos, Geerhardus. *Biblical Theology: Old and New Testaments, 3rd Edition*. Edinburgh, UK: Banner of Truth, 2014. (400 pages)

**Other Class Rules**

Computers and tablets are not allowed in class. Unless there is an emergency, cell phones are not allowed either. Even with the godliest, most focused student, screens are almost always a distraction. Besides, recent articles have suggested that students learn better when taking notes by hand.

**(Tentative) Class Schedule**

February 2

Introduction: Terms and History

February 9

Covenant of Redemption

February 16

Covenant of Works

February 23

Noahic Covenant

March 2

Abrahamic Covenant

March 9

Mosaic Covenant

March 16 – Spring Break (NO CLASS)

March 23

Davidic Covenant

March 30

New Covenant

April 6

The Law of God

April 13

Controversies and Conversations I: Dispensationalism, Confessional Baptists, Progressive Covenantalism, Republication

April 20 - T4G Conference (NO CLASS)

April 27

Controversies and Conversations II: John Murray, Meredith Kline, Federal Vision, N.T. Wright, Israel

May 4

Covenant Theology in Life and Ministry



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

Course: Covenant Theology

Professor: Dr. Kevin DeYoung

Campus: Charlotte

Date: Spring 2022

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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 | We will focus on learning and articulating foundational truths about covenant theology. |
| **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 entire class is concerned with redemptive historical hermeneutics and the unity and diversity of Scripture. |
| **Reformed Theology** | Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards.  | Strong | Covenant is a central, unifying theme and has played a significant role in the historical development of Reformed theology. |
| **Sanctification** | Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student’s sanctification. | Strong | There will be intentional exploration of the use of the law and how the law applies to our lives as Christians |
| **Desire for Worldview** | Burning desire to conform all of life to the Word of God. | Moderate | The material covered in this class relate to all of life and godliness. |
| **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 | While other views are considered, engaged, and expounded, this course focuses on Reformed Theology without alienating those who disagree.  |
| **Preach** | Ability to preach and teach the meaning of Scripture to both heart and mind with clarity and enthusiasm. | Strong | We will explore how covenant theology, in particular our understanding of the law, can be preached and taught effectively.  |
| **Worship** | Knowledgeable of historic and modern Christian-worship forms; and ability to construct and skill to lead a worship service. | Moderate | Some of the ideas in the class touch on Christian worship. We will have the privilege to focus on the nature and character of God himself. |
| **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 | Many of the theological themes covered will be immediately applicable to local church ministry. |
| **Church/World** | Ability to interact within a denominational context, within the broader worldwide church, and with significant public issues. | Moderate | Points of application will help the student understand the church’s role and mission in the world. |