**REFORMED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY**

**HOUSTON CAMPUS**

**ST601 Covenant Theology**

**Fall 2019**

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**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.

**Course Requirements**

Required Texts:

Louis Berkhof, ***Systematic Theology*** [211-218; 262-301]; 978-0802838209

O.Palmer Robertson, ***Christ of the Covenants***;978-0875524184

Geerhardus Vos, ***Biblical Theology*** [3-182, 185-342] 978-0851514581

Rowland Ward, ***God and Adam: Reformed Theology and the Creation Covenant*** 978-0958624169 [Available for pdf download at rowlandward.net]

Syllabus Articles:

Heinrich Heppe, ***Reformed Dogmatics***, 281-319, 371-409

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, and 20

Approximately 1000 pages of reading are required for this course, as follows: Louis Berkhof, ***Systematic Theology*** [46]; O.Palmer Robertson, ***Christ of the Covenants*** [300]; Geerhardus Vos, ***Biblical Theology*** [336]; Rowland Ward, ***God and Adam: Reformed Theology and The Creation Covenant*** [202]; Syllabus Articles: Heinrich Heppe, ***Reformed Dogmatics*** [76]; Donald Macleod, ***Covenant Theology*** [4]; Donald Macleod, ***Covenant: 2*** [7]; Donald Macleod, ***Federal Theology -- An Oppressive Legalism?*** [8]; Donald Macleod, ***The Lord's Supper as a Means of Grace*** [7]; Donald Macleod, ***Qualifications for Communion*** [7]; Donald Macleod, ***The Real Presence*** [4]; ***Westminster Confession of Faith*** 7: Of God's Covenant with Man [1]; ***Larger Catechism*** Questions 20-22,30-36 [1]; ***Shorter Catechism*** Questions 12,16,& 20 [1].

**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. If you need to miss a class or to leave early or to arrive late, you should seek permission. 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.

**Course Evaluation**

1. **Reading and Course Portfolio** (20%) Each student will build a course portfolio 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 Préces** (20%) 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*.

3. **Term Paper** (20%) Each student must prepare a 6 page research term paper on a topic in Covenant Theology agreed with the professor.

4. **Final Examination** (40%) 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.

**Instructions for Course Portfolio**

The portfolio 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.

1. Classnotes Assignment:

Inclusion of the student’s classnotes in the course notebook will enable the instructor to gauge the quality of classroom listening and comprehension, and notetaking (and make adjustments in delivery or content beneficial for students).

2. Reading Notes Assignment:

Please include your notes taken (*typed or neatly scripted*) on reading of Berkhof, Macleod, and Heppe.

3. Westminster Confession of Faith (*WCF*) Outline Assignment:

This project calls for the student to develop a concise, typed, outline of the *assigned* chapter of the *WCF* (chapter 7).

4. Ward Synopsis

The student will produce a one-page synopsis of Rowland Ward’s ***God and Adam***. The synopsis should be in outline form or in abbreviated narrative, should aim to enumerate the key points in each section, 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.

5. Portfolio Format

The Course Portfolio is to be submitted as a pdf file, complete with bookmarks for easy location of each set of the above materials. All précis and the term paper must also be included.

**Due Dates Summary**

Sept 30 Précis on Covenant of Works

Oct 28 Précis on Covenant of Grace

Dec 6 Précis on Covenant of Redemption

Précis on Covenant Theology

Term Paper

Course Portfolio

**Course Outline**

**Introduction to Covenant Theology**

What is Covenant Theology?; What is a Covenant? Why study it?

Covenant Theology (History and Objections)

Louis Berkhof, ***Systematic Theology***, 211-218.

Donald Macleod, ***Covenant Theology***.

O. Palmer Robertson, ***Christ of the Covenants***, 3-63.

*WCF* 7; *LC* Questions 20-22, 30-36; and *SC* Questions 12,16,& 20.

**Covenant of Works (or Creation)**

O. Palmer Robertson, ***Christ of the Covenants***, 67-87.

Donald Macleod, ***Covenant: 2*** & ***Federal Theology-An Oppressive Legalism?***

Heinrich Heppe, ***Reformed Dogmatics***, 281-319.

Ward, ***God and Adam***, 1-27.

**Covenant of Grace (Adam)**

O. Palmer Robertson, ***Christ of the Covenants***, 91-107.

Louis Berkhof, ***Systematic Theology*** [262-301].

Heinrich Heppe, ***Reformed Dogmatics*** [371-409]

Ward, ***God and Adam***, 28-76.

**Covenant of Grace (Noah)**

O. Palmer Robertson, ***Christ of the Covenants***, 109-125.

Ward, ***God and Adam***, 77-125.

**Covenant of Grace (Abraham)**

O. Palmer Robertson, ***Christ of the Covenants***, 127-146.

Ward, ***God and Adam***, 126-146.

**Covenant of Grace (Abraham)**

O. Palmer Robertson, ***Christ of the Covenants***, 147-166.

Donald Macleod, ***The Lord's Supper as a Means of Grace*** (all),

***Qualifications for Communion*** (all), and ***The Real Presence*** (all).

Ward, ***God and Adam***, 147-197.

**Covenant of Grace (Moses)**

O. Palmer Robertson, ***Christ of the Covenants***, 167-199.

**Dispensationalism**

O. Palmer Robertson, ***Christ of the Covenants***, 201-227.

**Covenant of Grace (David)**

O. Palmer Robertson, ***Christ of the Covenants***, 229-269.

**Covenant of Grace (Jeremiah-New)**

O. Palmer Robertson, ***Christ of the Covenants***, 271-300.

**Covenant of Grace (New)**

Vos, ***Biblical Theology***, 3-182.

**Covenant of Grace (New)**

Vos, ***Biblical Theology***, 185-342.