

Reformed Theological Seminary
02NT720 • Text and Canon
Course Syllabus • Spring 2022 • RTS-Orlando

1. Course Details

- 2 credit hours
- Mondays 10:00 am – 12:00 pm (February 7 – May 9, 2022)
- Description: A study of the text and canon of scripture, focusing critically on seminal writings from antiquity and on contemporary research.

2. Instructor Information

- Zachary J. Cole, Ph.D., Associate Professor of New Testament, RTS-O
- E-mail: zcole@rts.edu
- Office: Orlando Campus #3-214
- Office phone: 407-278-8167
- Office hours: e-mail to arrange an appointment

3. Course Objectives

- To appreciate the particular manner in which God has preserved his Word.
- To understand the prominent issues related to the text of the New Testament, its transmission, corruption, and restoration.
- To gain proficiency in consulting, reading, and understanding New Testament manuscripts for the purposes of exegesis, spiritual growth, and ministry.
- To communicate with others effectively about the reliability of the New Testament text.

4. Bibliography (Required Textbooks)

- Alan David Black, ed., *Perspectives on the Ending of Mark: Four Views* (Nashville, TN: B&H, 2008).
- Dirk Jongkind, *An Introduction to the Greek New Testament produced at Tyndale House, Cambridge* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2019).
- Edward F. Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, 4th ed. (Des Moines, IA: Christian Research Press, 1984), also at archive.com: [link](#).
- Larry W. Hurtado, *The Earliest Christian Artifacts: Manuscripts and Christian Origins* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2006).
- Elijah Hixson and Peter J. Gurry, eds., *Myths and Mistakes in New Testament Textual Criticism* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2019).
- Bruce M. Metzger and Bart D. Ehrman, *The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration*, 4th ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).
- Maurice A. Robinson, "New Testament Textual Criticism: The Case for Byzantine Priority," *TC: A Journal for Biblical and Textual Criticism* 6 (2001):

[link](#).

- James R. White, *The King James Only Controversy: Can You Trust the Modern Translations?* (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House, 1995).
- A critical edition of the Greek New Testament: Kurt Aland et al., eds., Nestle-Aland, *Novum Testamentum Graece*, 28th ed. (Stuttgart: German Bible Society, 2012) is preferred, but B. Aland et al., eds., *The Greek New Testament*, 5th ed. (Stuttgart: German Bible Society, 2014) is acceptable.
- Additional items for reading (plus audio and video resources) will be assigned and supplied as well.

5. Course Requirements

- **Participation (45%):** This course will take the form of weekly two-hour seminars in which all students will contribute actively to discussion. To participate well, students must read the assigned materials before class (or listen/watch the relevant videos), engage in quality discussion about them, and complete any assignments. Students will receive a grade based on the consistency and quality of their participation throughout the semester.
- **Research paper (45%):** Students will write a research paper on an issue related to any topic covered in the reading or class discussion. Students are strongly encouraged to discuss possible topics with the professor. The paper must be at least 3,000 words but no more than 5,000 words. DUE DATE: any time before May 13, 2022 @ 11:00 am.
- **Response paper (10%):** Students will write a 500-word (roughly a page) response to the following quotation: "No television preacher has ever read the Bible. Neither has any evangelical politician. Neither has the pope. Neither have I. And neither have you. At best, we've all read a bad translation—a translation of translations of translations of hand-copied copies of copies of copies of copies, and on and on, hundreds of times." The response must be charitable, helpful, and understandable to a lay person. DUE DATE: any time before May 13, 2022 @ 11:00 am.

6. Course Requirement Summary

- Participation 45%
- Research paper 45%
- Response paper 10%

7. Grading System

A	(97-100)	4.00
A-	(94-96)	3.66
B+	(91-93)	3.33
B	(88-90)	3.00
B-	(86-87)	2.66
C+	(83-85)	2.33

C	(80-82)	2.00
C-	(78-79)	1.66
D+	(75-77)	1.33
D	(72-74)	1.00
D-	(70-71)	0.66
F	(below 70)	0.00
I	(incomplete)	-
W	(withdraw)	-
S	(satisfactory)	-
P	(passing)	-

8. Other Information

- Attendance is mandatory. Students must notify the instructor in writing regarding any expected absence.

9. Class Schedule

Broadly speaking, the first half of the semester will focus on skills for locating, consulting, and using New Testament manuscripts, including their texts and paratexts, and the second half of the semester will focus on recent debates about text-critical theory, including the Majority Text, the *textus receptus*, the King James Version, and apologetics.

A detailed reading schedule will be supplied.

Date	Topic
Feb 7	Orientation
Feb 14	Paleography
Feb 21	Paleography
Feb 28	Manuscripts as artifacts
Mar 7	Manuscripts as artifacts
Mar 14	<i>No class: Spring Break</i>
Mar 21	Scribal habits
Mar 28	Scribal habits
Apr 4	Text and paratext
Apr 11	Text-critical theory
Apr 18	Text-critical theory
Apr 25	Text-critical theory
May 2	Pastoral and apologetic issues
May 9	Applied examples

10. Grading Criteria

Grading Criteria for Participation (45%) Student name: _____	
Criteria	Comment
Attendance: the student is consistently present in class.	
Preparation: the student presents evidence of having read, studied, and prepared the relevant readings.	
Participation: the student is fully engaged in careful, critical study.	
Contribution: the student contributes positively to class discussion.	
Charity: the student interacts charitably with others, including peers, instructor, and scholars.	
Overall comment(s) and grade:	

Grading Criteria for Research Paper (45%) Student name: _____	
Criteria	Comment
Style: the student abides by the word limit, uses correct citation style, and writes in clear and correct English prose.	
Topic: the student has chosen a sufficiently narrow, relevant, and focused topic.	
Analysis: the student demonstrates critical knowledge, skills, and awareness in handling text-critical issues.	
Thesis: the student argues a clear, well-defined, and defensible thesis with supporting evidence.	
Christian charity: the student conducts work with academic honesty, intellectual rigor, and Christian charity.	
Overall comment(s) and grade:	

Course Objectives Related to MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes

Course: Text and Canon (NT720)

Professor: Zachary Cole

Campus: Orlando

Date: Spring 2022

<u>MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes</u> <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> <i>*As the MDiv is the core degree at RTS, the MDiv rubric will be used in this syllabus.</i>		<u>Rubric</u> ➤ Strong ➤ Moderate ➤ Minimal ➤ None	<u>Mini-Justification</u>
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 seminar format requires consistent, substantive, and charitable verbal interaction; the essay requires skills in written articulation.
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 course content develops knowledge and skills related to the New Testament text.
Reformed Theology	Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards.	None	
Sanctification	Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student's sanctification.	None	
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.	Minimal	Students will be pushed to apply their reading to relevant issues in the contemporary world.
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.)	Minimal	Students will be required to engage charitably with the viewpoints of non-believers as well as believers who disagree.
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	Students will be pushed to consider how text-critical issues should be handled pastorally and apologetically.