

NT720 — Text and Canon
Course Syllabus, Spring 2023— RTS-Orlando

1. Course Details

- Two credit hours
- Mondays, 10:00 am–12:00 pm, February 13–May 15
- Course Description: *A study of the text and canon of scripture, focusing critically on seminal writings from antiquity and on contemporary research.*

2. Instructor Information

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| • Zachary J. Cole, Ph.D. | • Gregory R. Lanier, Ph.D. |
| • Associate Professor of New Testament, RTS-Orlando | • Associate Professor of New Testament, RTS-Orlando |
| • zcole@rts.edu | • glanier@rts.edu |
| • Office hours: e-mail to arrange an appointment | • Office hours: e-mail to arrange an appointment |

3. 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. Required Texts

- **Bible:** A critical edition of the Greek New Testament (Nestle-Aland 28 preferred; UBS 5 acceptable).
- **Books (to be purchased and read in their entirety):**
 - Elijah Hixson and Peter J. Gurry, eds., *Myths and Mistakes in New Testament Textual Criticism* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2019). [ISBN 978-0830852574]
 - Gregory R. Lanier, *How We Got the Bible: Old and New Testament Canon and Text* (Christian Pocket Guides; Fearn, Ross-shire: Christian Focus, 2018). [ISBN 978-1527102682]
- **Supplementary essays/chapters** will be provided by the professors and must be read according to the schedule posted on Canvas.

5. Course Requirements

- **Reading of assigned materials (25%):** All materials should be read according to the schedule provided on Canvas. Students will be asked to indicate a percentage of total completion in Canvas.
- **Participation (25%):** 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 be assessed based on the following considerations:
 - Consistent attendance
 - Preparation prior to class
 - Active, thoughtful contributions to class discussion
 - Charity in interacting with peers, professors, and scholars
- **Research paper (50%):** Students will write an academic, rigorous 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 professors. The paper must be between 3,000 and 4,000 words, including footnotes. *In addition*, students must take their research paper and summarize it into a 500-word writeup (as an appendix) that could be used with educated laypersons in church (think: blog post). Papers will be assessed based on the following considerations:
 - *Argument:* Is the paper arguing a clear, coherent thesis throughout?
 - *Scholarship:* Has the paper handled the biblical text and other evidence responsibly? Has the paper made careful and discerning use of secondary sources?
 - *Quality:* Is the paper well-structured, logical, and cohesive? Is it clear and easy to read?
 - *Style:* Does it meet the required guidelines? Are footnotes/bibliography composed correctly?

6. Grading

The standard RTS grading scale will be applied (see the Student Handbook). The summary is as follows:

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|---------------------------------|------|
| • Reading of assigned materials | 25% |
| • Participation | 25% |
| • <u>Research paper</u> | 50% |
| | 100% |

7. Other Details

- A detailed course schedule will be provided via Canvas.
- Attendance is mandatory. Student must notify the instructors by email regarding any absence.
- Students are permitted to use laptops or tablets in class. Phones must be turned on silent mode. You are expected to make use of technology in a way that honors Christ and respects your brothers/sisters sitting near you.

Course Objectives Related to MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes

Course: NT720 – Text and Canon Professors: Dr. Zach Cole and Dr. Greg Lanier
Campus: Orlando Date: Spring 2023

| <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> | | <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. | 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. | Minimal | Students will reflect on the formation of canon within a Reformed doctrine of Scripture. |
| 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. |