

'Acts & Romans' (NT5250) 2024

Nashville: 2 hours

Syllabus

INSTRUCTOR

Dr Bruce Lowe received his first doctorate in Analytical Chemistry and taught, consulted and researched in a university setting over several years in both Chemistry and Chemical Engineering departments. He then completed his MDiv at RTS Orlando, becoming an ordained Presbyterian minister and working in college ministry, as a youth pastor, and in church revitalization. His second doctorate is in Ancient History/New Testament Studies, where his thesis has focused on the purpose of Romans through attention to its cultural setting (*Romans Read Relationally*). **Both Acts and Romans are of special interest for Bruce, the latter for obvious reasons, but the former because of his interest in its narrative structure.**

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SUBJECT TIME: **Wednesday, Thursday, Friday** 1pm-5:00pm, 6pm-9pm
& **Saturday** 9am-12pm, 1pm-3pm

COURSE DESCRIPTION

There is a real sense in which this course provides an exciting supplement to other New Testament courses, as well as advancement in its own right. In the Gospel's course you will have opportunity to study Luke's story of Jesus, but in this course we will focus on volume 2 – the continuing story! This course will therefore begin with the gospel of Luke before moving onto Acts. If you have already done Gospel's, then this will be a wonderful complement. If you haven't yet done it, this will be a foretaste as well as an wonderful learning experience in its own right. Likewise in "Paul" you have opportunity to study all of Paul's letters including Romans. But in this course there is opportunity to dig so much deeper into Romans (Paul's richest letter). One of the assigned texts will be the Professor's PhD thesis on Romans. Though this you will be challenged to hone your fishing skills on this all-important letter.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. To gain a solid understanding of both Acts and Romans.
2. To refine "fishing" skills for both *letters* and *narratives* of the New Testament.
3. To highlight and apply specific texts for application to yourself and others.

Required Texts:

- L. T. Johnson, *Acts of the Apostle*
(Liturgical Press, 1992) ISBN 9780814658079
- Martin Luther *Preface to Romans & Commentary on Romans 1*
(See Included PDF on Canvas)
- John Calvin *Argument of Romans & Commentary on Romans 1*
(See Included PDF on Canvas)
- C. S. Keener, *Romans*
(Lutterworth Press, 2011) ISBN 9780718892388

ASSESSMENT

- 30%** Book Review - **due date see below.**¹
- 40%** Research Papers – Topic say of your choice.... **due date see below.**²
- 30%** Final exam - **due date, see below.**
- 10%** Listen to two assigned sermons on Acts (TBA in class) and write up 1 page (single spaced) report on each.

General Outline

| Week/Date | Hour | Subject |
|--------------|------|--|
| Jan10 | 1 | Acts: <i>Some opening considerations</i> |
| | 2 | Acts: <i>What IS Acts?</i> |
| | 3 | Acts: <i>Redemptive history leading into Luke/Acts</i> |
| | 4 | Acts: <i>Acts 2</i> |
| | 5 | Acts: <i>The Martyrdom of Stephen</i> |
| | 6 | Acts: <i>Bible study principles</i> |
| Jan11 | 7 | Acts: <i>The full shift (Acts 8-12)</i> |
| | 8 | Acts: <i>Paul's first journey</i> |
| | 9 | Acts: <i>Paul's second journey</i> |

¹ This review should be up to **eight pages** (single spaced). The **first four pages** will be a review of Johnson's commentary persuading me you have read and thought through the book in a thoughtful way. So best to start with a short summary of his main views... then things you liked, things you didn't like and a short conclusion. Include specifics, which will show me that you have really thought it through. The **second four pages** of the book review will compare and contrast and integrate Luther, Calvin and Keener paying particularly attention to Romans 1:16-17.

² This will be approx. 10-25 pages double-spaced (or longer if you wish). It will be a critical paper in which you should interact with at least 10 good sources.

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| | 10 11 12 | Acts: <i>Paul's third journey</i> Acts: <i>The story of Paul's conversion.</i> Acts: <i>Paul's shipwreck</i> |
| Jan12 | 13 14 15 16 17 18 | Romans: <i>What's so great about a Letter?</i> Romans: <i>The argument of Romans 1-5 (part 1).</i> Romans: <i>The argument of Romans 1-5 (part 2).</i> Romans: <i>Romans 7 (part 1).</i> Romans: <i>Romans 7 (part 2).</i> Romans |
| Jan13 | 19 20 21 22 23 24 | Romans: <i>Romans 7 (part 2).</i> Romans: <i>How can I change (Romans 8)?</i> Romans: <i>Why Predestination (Romans 9)?</i> Romans: <i>What about the Jews (Romans 11)?</i> Romans: <i>Let's get practical (Romans 12&13; Part I).</i> Romans: <i>Conflict in action (Romans 14-15; Part I).</i> |
| In our own time | (25) (26) | Acts Sermon #1 Acts Sermon #2 |
| Feb01 | Book Review Due | |
| Feb15 | Final Exam Due (take home) | |
| Mar01 | Paper due | |

Course Objectives Related to MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes

| <u>MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes</u> | | <u>Rubric</u> | <u>Mini-Justification</u> |
|---|--|---|---|
| <p><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></p> <p><i>*As the MDiv is the core degree at RTS, the MDiv rubric will be used in this syllabus.</i></p> | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Strong ➤ Moderate ➤ Minimal ➤ None | |
| 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 | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Book review of Johnson's commentary on Acts 2. Lengthy exegetical essay. 3. Informal class presentations of outcomes to group discussion |
| Scripture | Significant knowledge of the original meaning of Scripture. Also, the concepts for and skill to research further into the original meaning of | Strong | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Close interaction with the text of Romans and Acts. 2. Instructor to address key |

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| | 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.) | | elements of key Greek words. 3. Cultural background to the text covered in detail. |
| Reformed Theology | Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards. | Strong | 1. Particularly in reference to Romans, reformed doctrine is highlighted in dialogue with current alternative perspectives. |
| Sanctification | Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student's sanctification. | Moderate | 1. Singing worship song in class. 2. Group discussion of how text applies to life at various points. |
| Desire for Worldview | Burning desire to conform all of life to the Word of God. | Moderate | 1. Application of the text of Romans and Acts to practical life situations and to ask questions of comparison about life and doctrine then and its application for now. |
| 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. Our study of both Romans and Acts highlights the character of Christians with reference to knowledge (c.f. Rom. 9-15). This is a subject of significant interest to this course. |
| 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-Xns. | Moderate/ Strong | 1. One goal is to develop a bible study that can be used in the future for Romans, by developing questions within class. 2. Some worship songs of ancient origin. 3. Practical illustrations of instructors experience, particularly with reference to Acts. |

Extension Policy

All assignments and exams are to be completed by the deadlines announced in this syllabus or in class.

Extensions for assignments and exams due within the normal duration of the course must be approved beforehand by the Professor. Extensions of two weeks or less beyond the date of the last deadline for the course must be approved beforehand by the Professor. A grade penalty may be assessed.

Extensions of greater than two weeks but not more than six weeks beyond the last deadline for the course may be granted in extenuating circumstances (i.e. illness, family emergency). For an extension of more than two weeks the student must request an Extension Request Form from the Student Services Office. The request must be approved by the Professor and the Academic Dean. A grade penalty may be assessed. (RTS Catalog p. 42 and RTS Atlanta Student Handbook p. 14)

Any incompletes not cleared six weeks after the last published due date for course work will be converted to a failing grade. Professors may have the failing grade changed to a passing grade by request. (RTS Catalog p. 42).