

## ST5300-01 COVENANT THEOLOGY

RTS-O

SPRING 2024

J. Nicholas Reid, D.Phil.

Class meets WEDNESDAY afternoon 2:00pm – 4:00pm.

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION (According to the RTS Catalogue)**

An examination of covenant theology from exegetical and historical perspectives. Consideration is given to such issues as the relation of the Old and New Testaments, the significance of the covenants for sacramental theology, and the hermeneutics of Dispensationalism and Theonomy. Emphasis is placed on the role of the biblical doctrine of the covenants in preaching and pastoral ministry.

### **COURSE DETAILS**

1. *Grading Schedule.* The letter grading scale for this course is institutional catalogue and is summarized below.
  - 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  - W (withdrawn)
  - S (satisfactory)
  - P (passing)

2. *Attendance and Late assignments.* **Attendance and prepared participation is required.** If class is not attended, the student's final grade will be affected. Late assignments are reduced one letter grade per day.
3. *Special Needs.* In order to ensure full class participation, any student with a disabling condition requiring special accommodations (e.g. tape recorders, special adaptive equipment) is strongly encouraged to contact the instructor at the beginning of the course.
4. *Disclaimer.* This syllabus is intended to reflect accurately the learning objectives, instructional format and other information necessary for students to appraise the course. However, the instructor reserves the right to modify any portion of this syllabus as may become necessary.

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

### **Textbooks**

#### **Required a choice between:**

Jonty Rhodes, *Covenants Made Simple: Understanding God's Unfolding Promises to His People*. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing 2014.

OR

O. Palmer Robertson, *The Christ of the Covenants*. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing 1987.

#### **Required:**

*Covenant Theology: Biblical, Theological, and Historical Perspectives*, eds. John R. Muether, J. Nicholas Reid, and Guy P. Waters

\*Students must read the Introduction and chapters 14-27 *plus* 200 more pages of their choosing.

Jones, Mark. "The 'Old' Covenant," in *Drawn into Controversy: Reformed Theological Diversity and Debates Within Seventeenth-Century British Puritanism*, ed. Michael A.G. Haykin and Mark Jones. Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2011. (Available on Canvas)

Kline, Meredith. "Covenant Theology Under Attack." *New Horizons*, February 1994. (Available on Canvas)

Wellum, Stephen J. "Baptism and the Relationship Between the Covenants," in *Believer's Baptism: Sign of the New Covenant in Christ*, ed. Thomas R. Schreiner and Shawn D. Wright. B&H Publishing Group, 2006.

## 2024 Spring Semester

**December 1** — Registration opens through Self-Service

**January 30** — Orientation

**January 31** — Classes begin

**February 14** — Last day to add a class

**March 6** — Last day to drop a class

**March 18-22** — Spring Break

**May 7** — Last day of spring semester classes

**May 10** — Term paper deadline (11:00 a.m.)

**May 13-16** — Examination period

**May 17** — Graduation

### Assignments

1. Complete all of the **assigned readings**. These readings constitute **40%** of the final grade.

2. **Write three précis'** on the topics of: (1) the covenant of work, (2) the covenant of grace, and (3) the covenant of redemption. Each précis is worth **10%** of the total grade for a total of **30%**. (Submit via Canvas. See canvas for written description and example)

3. **Write a final paper (8-10 pages)** on one of the topics below. Paper topics on anything other than the topics listed below require approval by the professor. This paper will constitute **30%** of the term grade. The paper is **due May 10 by 11 am**.

*Paper Topics may include:*

- Is the doctrine of the Covenant of Works a biblical doctrine?
- Is the doctrine of the *pactum salutis* a biblical doctrine?
- Are the various postlapsarian covenants (e.g., Abrahamic, Mosaic, Davidic, New) administrations of one Covenant of Grace?
- In what sense (if any) is the Covenant of grace “unconditional”?
- How should Reformed theology respond to Gentry and Wellum’s, Kingdom through Covenant?
- What is the relationship between the moral law and the covenants according to the Westminster Confession of Faith?
- An original language exegetical paper on a key text in covenant theology (i.e. Hos. 6:7; Jer. 31; Heb. 8, etc.).
- A historical theological paper devoted to a major theme in covenant theology as developed in the thought of a major Reformed theologian.

*Other topics/questions may be chosen with the approval of the professor.*

### ASSIGNMENT DUE DATES

Due **Feb 28: Précis Covenant of Works**

Due **Mar 27: Précis Covenant of Grace**

Due **April 24: Précis Covenant of Redemption**

Due Fri **May 10: Final Paper and Reading Percentage**

## **SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY**

J. Mark Beach, *Christ and the Covenant: Francis Turretin's Federal Theology as a Defense of the Doctrine of Grace* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2007).

\_\_\_\_\_. "The Doctrine of the Pactum Salutis in the Covenant Theology of Herman Witsius," *MJT* 13 (2002): 101-142.

Joel Beeke and Mark Jones, *A Puritan Theology* (Grand Rapids: Reformed Heritage Books, 2012).

Lyle Bierma, *German Calvinism in the Confessional Age: The Covenant Theology of Caspar Olevianus* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1997).

Lyle Bierma et al., *An Introduction to the Heidelberg Catechism: Sources, History, and Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005).

Heinrich Bullinger, "A Brief Exposition of the One and Eternal Testament or Covenant of God," in Charles McCoy and J. Wayne Baker, *Fountainhead of Federalism: Heinrich Bullinger and the Covenantal Tradition* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1991).

John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 2 vols. (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1960).

Brian Estelle, John Fesko, and David VanDrunen, ed., *The Law is Not of Faith: Essays on Works and Grace in the Mosaic Covenant* (Phillipsburg: Presbyterian and Reformed, 2009).

Peter Gentry and Stephen Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant: A Biblical-Theological Understanding of the Covenants* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2012).

Michael Horton, *God of Promise: Introducing Covenant Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006).

Meredith Kline, *By Oath Consigned* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968).

Peter A. Lillback, *The Binding of God: Calvin's Role in the Development of Covenant Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001).

Richard A. Muller, "Scripture and the Westminster Confession," in Richard A. Muller and Rowland S. Ward, *Scripture and Worship: Biblical Interpretation and the Directory for Public Worship*, 3-82, (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2007).

\_\_\_\_\_. "Divine Covenants, Absolute and Conditional: John Cameron and the Early Orthodox Development of Reformed Covenant Theology," *MJT* 17 (2006): 11-56.

\_\_\_\_\_. "The Covenant of Works and the Stability of Divine Law in Seventeenth-Century Reformed Orthodoxy: A Study in the Theology of Herman Witsius and Wilhelmus à Brakel," *Calvin Theological Journal* 29 (1994): 75-101.

Robert Rollock, "Robert Rollock's Catechism on God's Covenants," translated and introduced by Aaron C. Denlinger, *MJT* 20 (2009): 105-29.

James B. Torrance, "Contribution of McLeod Campbell to Scottish Theology," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 26 (1973): 295-311.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Covenant or Contract: A Study of the Theological Background of Worship in Seventeenth Century Scotland," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 23 (1970): 51-76.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Strengths and Weaknesses of the Westminster Theology," in *The Westminster Confession in the Church Today: Papers Prepared for the Church of Scotland Panel on Doctrine*, ed. Alasdair I. C. Heron, 40-54 (Edinburgh: Saint Andrew Press, 1982).

\_\_\_\_\_. "The Concept of Federal Theology—Was Calvin a Federal Theologian," in *Calvinus sacrae scripturae professor*, 15-40 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994).

\_\_\_\_\_. "The Covenant Concept in Scottish Theology and Politics and Its Legacy," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 34 (1981): 225-243.

Thomas F. Torrance, *Scottish Theology: from John Knox to John McLeod Campbell* (T & T Clark International, 2000).

Carl Trueman, "From Calvin to Gillespie on Covenant: Mythological Excess or an Exercise in Doctrinal Development?" *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 11 (2009): 378-397.

Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, 3 vols. (Phillipsburg: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1992).

Cornelis P. Venema, "Recent Criticisms of the 'Covenant of Works' in the Westminster Confession of Faith," *MJT* 9 (1993): 165-198.

\_\_\_\_\_. "The Mosaic Covenant: A 'Republication' of the Covenant of Works?" *MJT* (2010): 35-101.

Willem van Asselt, "The Doctrine of the Abrogations in the Federal Theology of Johannes Cocceius (1603-1669)," *Calvin Theological Journal* 29 (1994): 101-116.

\_\_\_\_\_. *The Federal Theology of Johannes Cocceius: (1603-1669)* (Leiden: Brill, 2001). Rowland Ward, *God and Adam: Reformed Theology and the Creation Covenant* (New Melbourne Press, 2003).

Paul R. Williamson, *Sealed with an Oath: Covenant in God's Unfolding Purpose* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2007).

Herman Witsius, *The Economy of the Covenants Between God and Man*, 2 vols. (repr. Kingsburg, CA: den Dulk Christian Foundation, 1990).

Andrew A. Woolsey, *Unity and Continuity in Covenantal Thought: A Study in the Reformed Tradition to the Westminster Assembly* (Grand Rapids: Reformed Heritage Books, 2012).

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

Course: Covenant Theology (02ST5300) Professor: Dr. J. Nicholas Reid

Campus: RTS Orlando

Date: Spring 2024

<b><u>MDiv Student Learning Outcomes</u></b>		<b><u>Rubric</u></b>	<b><u>Mini-Justification</u></b>
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Strong</li> <li>- Moderate</li> <li>- Minimal</li> <li>- None</li> </ul>	
<b>Articulation (oral &amp; written)</b>	Broadly understands and articulates knowledge, both oral and written, of essential biblical, theological, historical, and cultural/global information, including details, concepts, and frameworks.	Strong	Academic paper stresses articulation by engaging with primary sources and secondary literature.
<b>Scripture</b>	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	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Examination and evaluation of historical and biblical theology stressed to develop understanding of covenant theology.</li> <li>2. Interpretive strategies stressed throughout.</li> <li>3. Some engagement with original languages.</li> </ol>
<b>Reformed Theology</b>	Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards.	Strong	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Historic Reformed faith and theological implications of the text stressed throughout.</li> <li>2. Evaluation of Reformed positions and non-reformed positions with regard to covenant theology.</li> </ol>
<b>Sanctification</b>	Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student's sanctification.	Moderate	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Biblical text is an ordinary means by which God communicates grace.</li> <li>2. Text will be applied throughout.</li> </ol>
<b>Worldview</b>	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.	Moderate	Desire to conform worldview to the Biblical text.

<b>Winsomely Reformed</b>	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	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Academic integrity and warm piety expected when engaging the ideas of others.</li> <li>2. Convey how a reformed understanding of covenant theology can be helpful in understanding Scripture.</li> </ol>
<b>Pastoral Ministry</b>	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	The course attempts to give the student knowledge of the biblical text and to prepare the student to engage secondary literature with discernment.