REFORMED ✝ THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

The Origin and Authority of the NT Canon/ NT-6500
Winter, 2026

I. Details
  A. Time: Jan 26-29, 2025; M, T, W 9-4:30PM, Th 9-3:30PM
  B. Professor: Dr. Michael J. Kruger
    1. Email: mkruger@rts.edu
    2. TA email: fkey@rts.edu
    3. Office hours: Feel free to stop by or make appointment.

II. Purpose
  A. To gain familiarity with the history of the NT Canon.
  B. To gain acquaintance with the main theological approaches to the authority of the canon
  C. To understand the patristic and textual evidence for the development of the canon.
  D. To understand and articulate the Reformed self-authenticating approach to canon and biblical authority.

III. Course Requirements
  A. Faithful class attendance
    - Attendance is vital in a one-week class
    - Expect class participation when applicable
    - Feel free to ask questions during lecture
  B. Prepare any Greek assignments from the photographic facsimiles by:
    - Providing an English translation
    - Parsing all verbs
    - Assessing the use/function of key words or grammatical constructions
    - Analysing any noteworthy scribal features or habits.
    - **See additional information below for instructions on Greek readings
  C. Canon Paper
    - Serious paper approximately 10 pages in length (typed) due on March 13 at 11:59PM.
    - Assignment: Write a fictional dialogue between two individuals contrasting different theological approaches to canon (e.g., Reformed vs. Catholic, Reformed vs. Neo-Orthodox, etc.). Dialogue should demonstrate knowledge of a Reformed approach to defending the canon. Although not a research paper, per se, you should incorporate the required readings (and other research you may do) into the paper. Creativity, originality, and profundity are rewarded.
    - For all footnotes, use the standard *SBL* format, sections 3, 4, 5.2, 5.4, 6, 7 and abbreviations (8-16). The *SBL* standards are in the reference section in the library, or you can purchase the book, *The SBL Handbook of Style*, (Hendrickson, 1999). The paper should have footnotes (not endnotes) and resemble the articles found in the standard journals; e.g., *JBL*, *JTS*, *JETS*, *NTS*, etc.
  D. Complete the required reading in preparation for class sessions and examinations.
  E. No Midterm Exam. Final Exam to be taken via lockdown browser by March 13th at 11:59PM.

IV.   Grading
   A. Greek Readings—10%
   B. Canon Paper—40%
   C. Final Exam—50%

V.   Textbooks
   A. Michael J. Kruger, *Canon Revisited: Establishing the Origin and Authority of the New Testament Writings* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2012). ALL.
   B. Bruce M. Metzger, *The Canon of the New Testament: Its Origin, Development, and Significance* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1987). ALL.
   C. John Barton, *Holy Writings, Sacred Text* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1997), 63-162.
   D. M.J. Kruger, "Manuscripts, Scribes, and Book Production within Early Christianity," in *Christian Origins and Classical Culture: Social and Literary Contexts for the New Testament* (ed. S.E. Porter and A. W. Pitts; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2013): 15-40.

Special Assignment for Greek Readings

   A. Students taking the class for credit are responsible for preparing two photographs of Greek manuscripts to be read in class. Photos will be available on Self-Service online.

   B. Students need to have this preparation complete by **Monday, Jan 26. We will translate at various points during the week. So prepare before the week of class begins.**

   C. Print color photos of each manuscript.

   D. Translate each manuscript into English. Feel free to write on your printout.

   - Keep in mind that all letters are in caps with no spaces. Note: what looks like a capital "C" is really a Greek sigma

        ▪ First photo is of John 1:1-13.
        ▪ Second photo is of John 7:52-8:14

   E. Take note of grammatical and textual issues

      - Be prepared to parse all verbs
      - Take note of scribal differences that vary from your printed Greek text
      - Take note of any other odd scribal patterns or habits

   F. Be prepared to read aloud and discuss the text in class. **Participation in Greek reading will be 10% of your grade.**

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SYSTEM

Course Objectives Related to MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes

Course: NT6500 The Origin and Authority of the New Testament Canon
Professor: Dr. Michael Kruger
Campus: Atlanta
Date: Winter 2026

Mdiv* Student Learning Outcomes *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.*		Rubric • Strong • Moderate • Minimal • None	Mini-Justification
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.	Moderate	-Theology of NT canonical development -Historical Development of NT Canon -Lectures and paper equip student to teach biblical view of canon - Students will write a fictional dialogue interacting two models of canon
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	-History of NT book acceptance -Some Scriptural support for early canon -Some of the content of Scripture is studied in terms of the manuscripts which represent it
Reformed Theology	Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards.	Moderate	-Reformed/Westminster view of canonical development
Sanctification	Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student's sanctification.	Minimal	-Deeper love for God and his Word by strengthening confidence that we have the right books
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.	Strong	-Understanding the formation of the NT canon is foundational to an informed Christian worldview
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.)	Moderate	-Survey of critical scholarship on canonical process; students are taught good aspects and bad aspects of critical thinking -Other canonical approaches are surveyed and critiqued in a respectful manner.
Pastoral Ministry	Ability to minister the Word of God to hearts and lives of both churched and unchurched, to include preaching, teaching, leading in worship, leading and shepherding the local congregation, aiding in spiritual maturity, concern for non-Christians.	Moderate	-Questions concerning canon underlie numerous questions most pastors will face

Appendix 1
Zoom & Extension Policy

Zoom Policy

Your professor may allow you to Zoom into class or watch Zoom recordings for excused absences based on the professor's discretion and subject to the availability of equipment. Students should contact their professor well in advance of the class meeting. For a third absence the Registrar should be consulted. Your professor may require additional interactive assignments to offset the absence of classroom interaction. Sync or Remote Live courses have priority for the limited Zoom equipment.

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 Registrar's Office. The request must be approved by the Professor and the Academic Dean. A grade penalty may be assessed. (RTS Catalog p. 46 and RTS Atlanta Student Handbook p. 18)

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. 49)

Appendix 2
RTS Artificial Intelligence Policy

Artificial Intelligence Policies for Use in Coursework

RTS has instituted the following policy pertaining to the use of AI-enabled tools (including, but not limited to, generative chatbots like ChatGPT and Claude, writing assistants like Grammarly, and other AI-enabled assistants like Google Gemini, Microsoft Copilot, and Apple Intelligence).

It is noted that the policy below does allow for a limited use of AI. This will be the default RTS policy. *A professor, however, has the right to modify this policy, including denying the use of AI altogether. Any modifications to these policies by a professor for a specific RTS course will be explicitly noted by the professor.*

Gathering research leads: AI-enabled tools may be employed in a manner similar to using Wikipedia, blogs, social media, or other online sources in generating basic raw material (e.g., "What verses in the Old Testament use the word 'covenant'?") or leads for further reading (e.g., "What recent books deal with the topic of divine simplicity?"). Such uses *do not generally have to be disclosed,* but the student is encouraged to consult with the professor of record if there are any questions or doubts. Note: even the best AI tool is not infallible and often generates junk data; the student is, therefore, fully responsible for vetting the accuracy or validity of any such information generated.

Generating or analyzing content: AI-enabled tools may be used to generate small portions of content that would be used in a manner equivalent to quoting a commentary or other written or digital sources. Any use of such information in an assignment, either through direct quotation or indirect summarization, must be fully disclosed in keeping with the guidance provided by the Chicago Manual of Style and APA. The following examples illustrate appropriate methods of citation.

> *Footnoting direct usage (e.g., quotation) of the result generated by an AI tool:*
> 1. Text generated by ChatGPT, Open AI, March 7, 2024 (https://chat.openai.com).
> 2. Text generated by Claude, Anthropic, March 20, 2024 (https://claude.ai).
>
> *Footnoting indirect use of AI results that are further modified/summarized by student:*
> 3. ChatGPT, response to "What are the differences between Calvinists and Arminians concerning regeneration?" OpenAI, March 12, 2024.
>
> 4. When given a prompt of "What is the traditional Reformed view of church discipline," the Claude-generated text outlined three reasons: "Obedience to God's word," "protection of the church," and "restoration of the sinner" (https://claude.ai, April 2, 2024; see Appendix A for the full transcript).

Bibliographic entry

CMS/SBL: OpenAI, ChatGPT [large language model]. March 7, 2024.
                 https://chat.openai.com.

APA: OpenAI (2024). ChatGPT (March 7 version). [Large language
                 model]. https://chat.openai.com.

Proofreading: AI writing assistants (e.g., Grammarly) *may* be used for standard help with basic spellchecking and grammatical proofreading; such uses *do not have to be disclosed*. However, AI *may not* be used to *fully rewrite* sentences or paragraphs.

Creative process and textual composition: All writing in every course assignment must be, for all intents and purposes, the original work of the student. Thus, AI *may not* be used to generate key components of a writing project that are aimed at cultivating certain competencies in the student, such as thesis/topic sentences, outlines, critical engagement with other views, and so forth. In addition, AI may not be used to write full sentences or paragraphs.

Other: AI-enabled tools *may not* be used in any way for online-discussion forum posts (e.g., TDQs), response papers, quizzes, and examinations.

Penalties
Illegitimate uses of AI are subject to penalties in line with the severity of the violation, ranging from letter-grade reductions, a grade of F for a course, or academic probation.