

ACTS / ROMANS NT5250

Note: This syllabus is the “mini-syllabus” and is not to be confused w/ the large syllabus that contains all the class-lecture notes, biblio, various articles, etc. This large syllabus will be posted later on Canvas and is needed for all the class lectures. For the first class, the student should be prepared w/ either a hard-copy of the large syllabus or have it downloaded to his laptop.

Note: Test and paper are due three weeks after the end of the course lectures.

Note: There are no pre-class assignments. However, if the student wants to get ahead, begin answering the Reading Questions below.

PROFESSOR

* Dr. Robert J. Cara or Robert J. Cara, Ph.D.

PURPOSE OF COURSE (Course Objectives)

* The overarching aim is to provide *tools* to the student in order that one might better interpret Acts and Romans to one’s self, the church, and the world.

* See below for relationship of a variety of course objectives related to the MDiv student learning outcomes.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Reading

* Kruger, ed., *A Biblical-Theological Introduction to the New Testament: The Gospel Realized* (Crossway, 2016), 94-96, 104-6, 137-94.

* Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament* (rev. ed., Eerdmans, 1993), 347-93.

* Luther, “Preface,” xii-xxvi. (Included in large syllabus.)

* Cara, *Cracking the Foundation of the New Perspective on Paul: Covenantal Nomism Versus Reformed Covenantal Theology* (Christian Focus / Mentor, 2017).

* Acts, Romans (read twice).

* *Trinity Psalter*—words-only edition (Crown and Covenant). Use in class. (Note, this is *not* the *Trinity Psalter Hymnal*.)

2. Reading Questions for Kruger, Ladd, and Cara.

* See “Reading Questions and Paper Assignment” below.

* Do not hand in but will be on final exam.

* Cara will not answer these questions directly. You may / should enquire of a fellow student *in this class*.

3. Lecture Review Questions (LRQ)

- * Located at the beginning of each lecture.
- * Do not hand in but will be on final exam.
- * Cara will not answer these questions directly (except as part of class lecture). You may / should enquire of a fellow student *in this class*.

4. Daily Quizzes on outlines and chapter identification

- * Possible quiz questions given in advance and located at the beginning of each lecture.
- * Covers Bible content.
- * Quizzes are cumulative.
- * May have up to two quizzes a day.
- * May drop one quiz.

5. Paper

- * See “Real paper” comments below
- * Severe penalty for lateness (32.2 f/s/s).
- * For example, very-good (!) papers, see <https://rts.edu/campuses/charlotte/students/pen-and-parchment/>

GRADES

1. Final Exam

- * There will be only one test.
- * 85% of test will be verbatim questions from LRQ's and Reading Questions.
- * Remaining 15% will be misc questions from lectures and *all* readings.
- * Test may be taken any time up through the Friday, three weeks after the last day of class (32.2 f/s/s). Test will be 2 hours long and completely closed book. See exam procedure rules at end of syllabus.
- * 50% of grade.

2. Daily Quizzes

- * 10% of grade.

3. Paper

- * Submit in pdf to Canvas by the Friday, three weeks after the last day of class.
- * 30% of grade.

4. Read Luther's "Preface" once and both Acts and Romans twice.

- * Must have read 100% to get any credit.
- * Only reading Acts and Romans between October and February counts.
- * On test you will be asked if you read 100% of these.
- * 10% of grade.

5. *Trinity Psalter*

- * Lose points if you do not bring and sing.

Extensions Policy for Assignments: In extenuating circumstances, a deadline extension of **up to one week** may be granted at the discretion of the professor. Requests for extensions of **more than one week** must be submitted to the Registrar for consideration by the Academic Dean in consultation with the professor. Extensions are granted only for significant emergencies or unforeseen circumstances, and a grade penalty may be applied. *All extension requests must be made prior to the assignment deadline.* No retrospective extensions will be granted.

READING QUESTIONS AND PAPER ASSIGNMENT

ACTS / ROMANS

Kruger, ed., *A Biblical-Theological Introduction to the NT: Cara for Acts (and Luke) and Waters for Romans.*

Acts

1. Critical scholars assign a late date to Acts based on (1) Luke 21 relates to destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 and (2) date of Mark. Explain their view and hidden assumptions behind their view. (Read Luke chapter, pp. 94-96.)
2. What is Conzelmann's view as to why only Luke among the Gospels has a sequel? Give Cara's rebuttal. (Read Luke chapter, pp. 104-6).
3. What is the Western text? According to Cara, what is its usefulness?
4. According to Cara, how does Paul's Areopagus address relate to the historical Adam question?

Romans

1. According to Waters, explain how the Roman church was started by Jewish Xns, but by the time of the writing of Romans, Gentile Xns were dominant.
2. Give Waters' three purposes for Paul writing Romans.
3. Give Waters' view that Rom 1:3-4 primarily refers to the humiliation and exaltation of X but also shows the two natures of X.
4. Waters sees Rom 7:14-25 as Paul's speaking of himself as a believer. Briefly give his three arguments for this view.

Ladd, *A Theology of the NT*, rev. ed.

Chapter 24

1. If Luke was with Paul at his Caesarean imprisonment as Acts 21:18 claims, How does this solve many of the supposed problems concerning historical sources?

Chapter 25

2. Explain the "vision" theory of the resurrection that most critics believe.

3. Explain Ladd's comment on p 362, "The resurrection of Jesus ... ought not to be described simply as a supernatural event—a miracle—as though God had interfered with the 'laws of nature.'"

Chapter 26

4. What is Ladd's "best guess" as to why the Son of Man title is virtually dropped in Acts?

5. How does *maranatha* (1 Cor 16:22) argue against Bultmann's view of the rise of the expression "Lord" for Jesus?

Chapter 27

6. According to Ladd, What is the relationship between the "tongues of fire" in Acts 2:3 and "[Jesus] will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire" in Matt 3:11?

Cara, Cracking the Foundation of the New Perspective on Paul

Chapter 1

1. In what sense is the NPP really *two* new perspectives?

2. What is Dunn/Wright's view of final justification?

Chapter 2

1. Define Sanders' Covenantal Nomism.

2. Explain Cara's view that the admission of the Gentiles into the Jewish covenant and admission of Jews to the Qumran community shows that Sanders has exaggerated that "getting in" the covenant is solely by grace in Second Temple Judaism.

Chapter 3

1. What is Sanders' rationale that the works righteousness in 4 Ezra is not representative of Second Temple Judaism?

2. Why has 4QMMT garnered attention in the NPP debate?

3. In the Tosefta Quiddushin, explain the context for the following quote, "A person should always see himself as if he is half meritorious and half guilty."

Chapter 4

1. Many NPP authors concede that Eph 2:8-10, 2 Tim 1:8-10, and Titus 3:4-7 contrast grace and works righteousness. According to Cara, how does this concession argue against Sanders' Covenantal Nomism and ultimately against NPP?

Chapter 5

1. In Concluding Thoughts, about what does Cara complain that the NPP over-emphasizes and about what does he complain that the NPP under-emphasizes?

Appendix

1. Which one of the following categories has no extant writings before AD 200? OT Pseudepigrapha, Apocrypha, Dead Sea Scrolls, Philo, Josephus, Rabbinic Literature.
2. Give Cara's conclusions as to the definition of Hellenistic Judaism and its geographical location.
3. Which book begins "devout reason is sovereign over the emotions" and involves the deadly torture of a Jewish family? 1 Macc, 2 Macc, 3 Macc, 4 Macc, 3 Ezra, 4 Ezra.
4. What is the Mishnah and how does this relate to the Talmuds?

"Real" Paper

- * This should be a serious research paper with a *minimum to pass* of at least six to eight serious commentaries (including both critical and conservative) and a few BT's. Must also footnote at least one journal article. Note helpful annotated biblio at end of Cara syllabus.
- * Must theologize!
- * 10-15 typed pages.
- * Paper may concern either Acts or Romans. If one has not had *any* Greek, must do paper on Acts.
- * Acts Options:
 - 1) BT study on any major or minor theme in Acts or Luke-Acts.
 - 2) Exegesis of a pericope highlighting (in a BT way) its (or one aspect in the pericope) relationship to the rest of Acts or Luke-Acts.
 - 3) Compare and contrast two similar pericopes of which one is in Luke, and the other, Acts.
- * Romans Options
 - 1) Exegesis of a pericope within the intro (1:1-15) and/or hortatory (12:1-16:27) sections highlighting its relationship to any or all of the doctrinal section (1:16-11:36).
 - 2) Hermeneutical study on *any* OT quote or allusion in Romans. Must look at LXX and MT. (If you don't know Hebrew, see Cara for possible fudge room.)

Course Objectives Related to MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes

Course: Acts-Romans

Professor: Cara

Campus: Charlotte

Date: Winter 2026

MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes <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>		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.	Strong	Theology of both Acts and Romans. Critical/liberal views of Paul, including NPP. Significant academic paper on either Acts or Romans.
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	Major part of class is exegeting Acts and Romans texts. Original languages used in class and encouraged in academic paper. It's a BIBLE class!
Reformed Theology	Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards.	Moderate	Traditional Reformed categories are used, e.g., preaching in Acts, justification in Romans. Many references to creeds.
Sanctification	Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student's sanctification.	Moderate	Psalm singing in class. Personal application is made in class to many Acts and Romans texts.
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	Major Paul doctrines have denominational implications. Critical views are analyzed from a Reformed view.
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	Common grace use of critical scholars is discussed in class and required on paper. <i>Cracking Foundation</i> is hopefully a guide to winsome polemics.
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.	Minimal	Preaching theology from Acts and Romans. Course is designed to aid preaching of many texts.

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Student Instructions for Exams with LockDown Browser

1. Install the LockDown Browser application on the computer you intend to use for exams, prior to sitting for the exam, using this link:
<https://download.respondus.com/lockdown/download.php?id=998253613>
 - a. This link is ONLY for RTS students and covers Mac and Windows applications.
 - b. Be sure that you are able to log in to your Canvas account from the LockDown Browser before the day of the exam.
 - c. If you use internet filtering software (for example, Covenant Eyes) you may need to disable it before beginning an exam with LockDown Browser. Some types of filtering software can block your computer's connection to Canvas. Also, please be sure to add an exception for our Canvas URL: <https://rts.instructure.com>
2. The exam proctor should not be a current RTS student (current = taken a class within the past year but not yet graduated) or a member of the library staff.
3. The proctor must observe the student taking the exam and ensure that there are no devices or resources available other than the computer being used for the exam.
4. Access the exam during the date window specified for that exam.
 - a. Sign in with the proctor.
 - b. Start the LockDown Browser application using a wired or known reliable Wi-Fi connection. We do not recommend using restaurant or coffee shop Wi-Fi to take exams.
 - c. Have your student ID number and proctor details available to input into the exam.
 - d. Log in to your Canvas account.
 - e. Navigate to the exam. You will not be able to access the exam with a standard web browser. For additional details on using LockDown Browser, review this [Student Quick Start Guide \(PDF\)](#).
 - f. The time clock will begin once you open the exam.
 - g. The exam must be completed in one sitting. You may not exit and return to the exam later.
 - h. The exam will contain questions regarding an honor pledge, and certification that your proctor was present during the entire exam period.
 - i. Sign out with the proctor.
5. Proctors may be contacted to verify information regarding exam administration.
6. In the rare case of a technical issue (for example, if power goes out during exam) the proctor will document the date and time when the issue was reported. Once you open the exam using the LockDown Browser, you will not be able to access other programs on your computer.

RTS Charlotte Classroom Technology Usage

RTS Charlotte recognizes how essential it is for students to have reliable, campus-wide access to the internet. For that reason, we have made Wi-Fi available for our student body, not only in the library and student lounges, but also in the classrooms. We know that students need to use the internet to download class materials, access files on the Cloud, and locate other important information. However, we also recognize that internet access in the classroom provides opportunity for abuse and misuse. Some students have unfortunately used their internet access to engage in many activities that distract them from the classroom lectures (e.g., surfing the web, checking sports scores, playing games). Not only does such activity hamper a student's own seminary education, but it distracts other students who can easily view the screens of nearby students. In addition, donors and classroom guests (who often sit in the back) can see this inappropriate internet usage, which reflects poorly on RTS. Classroom etiquette includes leaving cell phones turned off, refraining from surfing the Internet or playing computer games or other distracting activities. In addition, students must respect standards set by individual professors regarding the use of technology during their class.

In order to address this issue, we must appeal to the integrity of the students as ones who are preparing for a lifetime of ministry to Christ and his church. We expect each student to take personal responsibility for proper classroom technology usage and to encourage others around them to do the same. All RTS-Charlotte students are accountable to the policies stated in the Student Handbook and Academic Catalog and are therefore expected to use technology in the classroom only for appropriate class-related activities. Student conduct is under the supervision of the Dean of Students.