



COURSE SYLLABUS

NT7315 Current Issues in Text & Canon (ThM)

NT6502 Current Issues in Text & Canon (MDiv)

Dr. Zach Cole and Dr. Greg Lanier

Winter 2026

PROFESSOR'S CONTACT INFORMATION

Dr. Zach Cole (zcole@rts.edu)

Dr. Greg Lanier (gланier@rts.edu)

COURSE DATES

IN CLASS DATES:

Monday (January 12): 1:00–6:00pm

Tuesday (January 13) through Thursday (January 15): 9:00am–5:00pm

Friday (January 16): 9:00am–1:00pm

COURSE COMPLETION DATE: February 27, 2026

COURSE OVERVIEW

DESCRIPTION:

The purpose of this course is to familiarize the student with recent developments in the fields of New Testament textual criticism and biblical canon.

GOALS:

- To develop the skills needed to interact with biblical manuscripts (papyri, majuscules, minuscules)
- To learn about key tools and methodologies in modern NT textual criticism, from transcription and collation to working with the CBGM
- To gain exposure to current topics surrounding NT and OT canon studies

COURSE DETAILS

GRADING SCHEDULE

Late work will be penalized 1 letter grade per day, unless prior permission for late submission was granted.

The published RTS grading scale is used in this course. See the latest Catalog.

ATTENDANCE AND LATE ASSIGNMENTS

Attendance and prepared participation is required. If class is not attended, the student's final grade will be affected.

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.

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 before the beginning of the course.

SUPPORT

Canvas allows you to interact with the Professors or teaching assistants via the Inbox function. Canvas also allows for interaction with classmates. You can interact with classmates via the Student-to-Student forum or Conferences. See FAQ on the Home Page or at Modules > Course Resources for instructions on various Canvas features.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

READING

Students are to read all assigned texts prior to the intensive/in-person. Students must read actively and critically so that they are prepared for discussion during class time. ThM students are required to do all the reading listed below. MDiv/MA students are required to read a total of ~1,000 pages from the list based on their own choice (keeping track of approximate totals from each).

1. Zachary J. Cole and Gregory R. Lanier, *New Testament Textual Criticism: A Comprehensive and Practical Guide* (Baker Academic, 2026); a pre-publication version will be provided electronically.
2. W. Edward Glenny and Darian R. Lockett, eds., *Canon Formation: Tracing the Role of Sub-Collections in the Biblical Canon* (T&T Clark, 2024)
3. Larry Hurtado, *The Earliest Christian Artifacts: Manuscripts and Christian Origins* (Eerdmans, 2006)
4. Elijah Hixson and Peter Gurry, eds., *Myths and Mistakes in New Testament Textual Criticism* (IVP, 2019)
5. Peter Gurry and Tommy Wasserman, *A New Approach to Textual Criticism: An Introduction to the Coherence-Based Genealogical Method* (SBL, 2017)

6. Additional readings provided via Canvas
 - a. Zachary Cole, “‘Some Copies Have It’: Textual Criticism in Post-Reformation Sermons,” *JETS*, forthcoming
 - b. Gregory R. Lanier, “The Question of Old Testament Canon,” pages 18–38 in Lanier/Ross, *The Authority of the Septuagint: Biblical, Historical, and Theological Approaches* (IVP Academic, 2025)
 - c. Excerpts from Dirk Jongkind, *Scribal Habits of Codex Sinaiticus* (Gorgias, 2007)

Students must submit a 5-page reflection paper of their key learnings from the readings.

ADDITIONAL ASSIGNMENTS

- *Short exercises*
 - Throughout the intensive week, students will be required to do various practical exercises (individually or sometimes in groups), which will be turned in for grading.
- *Case study & presentation*
 - Each student is required to select one significant textual variant in the NT (not covered in chapter 9 of our textbook) and complete a full analysis of the evidence.
 - At the end of the intensive week, each student will present his/her work in the form of a 30-minute presentation (with appropriate data, visuals from manuscripts, etc.) followed by a time of Q&A.

RESEARCH PAPER

Students will write a research paper on an advanced topic related to course material (of their own choosing). Students are expected to present and defend a thesis, and secondary research from at least 15 academic sources is required. Citations should follow a standard format (SBL, Turabian, Chicago, APA—student’s choice). Word count: 5,500-6,500 for ThM (including bibliography and footnotes) and 2,500-4,000 for MDiv/MA (including bibliography and footnotes).

You must submit your topic on Canvas at the date specified to receive approval from the professors.

GRADE COMPONENTS

All assignments are due on the dates set in Canvas and will be weighted as follows:

Reading (percent completion + reflection paper)	35%
Short exercises	10%
Case study & presentation	20%
Research paper	25%
<u>Participation</u>	10%
Total	100%

COURSE WEEK SCHEDULE

MONDAY, JANUARY 12

- **Afternoon session**
 - Introductions
 - Group reading: selection from Romans in Papyrus 46
 - Building blocks
 - Transcription and collation exercise
 - Using the NTVMR

TUESDAY, JANUARY 13

- **Morning session**
 - Group reading: selection from Luke in Papyrus 75
 - History of textual criticism through the Reformation period
 - Reformers/Puritans on textual criticism
 - Recent reappraisals of the Byzantine text
- **Afternoon session**
 - Group reading: selection from Revelation in Papyrus 47
 - Codicology and paleography
 - Papyrus fragment analysis

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 14

- **Morning session**
 - Group reading: selection from James in Codex Vaticanus (including hands-on look at the Vaticanus facsimile)
 - Scribal habits (i.e., *nomina sacra* etc.) and paratextual features
 - Eusebian canons and Euthalian apparatus
- **Afternoon session**
 - Group reading: selection from 1 Peter in Codex Sinaiticus (including hands-on look at the Sinaiticus facsimile)
 - Text-critical “canons”
 - Prominent variants
 - Navigating the *Editio Critica Maior*

THURSDAY, JANUARY 15

- **Morning session**
 - Group reading: selection from John in Codex Bezae
 - Text-critical philosophies, including the Coherence-Based Genealogical Method
 - Exercise using the CBGM database(s)
- **Afternoon session**
 - Group reading: selection from Galatians in Codex Boernerianus (012/B)

- State of the question on NT canon studies
- State of the question on OT canon studies

FRIDAY, JANUARY 16

- **Morning session**
 - Group reading; selection from Matthew in GA 1424
 - Student seminar presentations

FURTHER READING

For additional resources, consult the bibliography of our *Comprehensive Textbook*.

Course Objectives Related to ThM* Student Learning Outcomes

Course: NT7315 Current Issues in Text & Canon

Professor: Cole and Lanier

Campus: Orlando

Date: Winter 2026

ThM Student Learning Outcomes		Rubric	Mini-Justification
<p><i>In order to measure the success of the ThM 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 ThM outcomes.</i></p>			
Articulation (oral & written)	Articulates knowledge, both oral and written, regarding advanced biblical, theological, and historical scholarship, demonstrating attention to details, concepts, methods, and frameworks.	Strong	Seminar discussions and research paper
Primary Texts	Significant knowledge of, and skills to engage, primary texts within the student's chosen track (Bible or theology). This includes a demonstrated expertise in interpreting primary languages as appropriate (Bible = Greek and/or Hebrew; Theology = optional proficiency in a theological language)	Strong	Reading of the Greek New Testament both in critical editions and ancient manuscripts
Secondary Literature	Demonstrates a breadth of knowledge of and skill to research and engage critically with secondary literature related to the appropriate discipline.	Strong	Assigned readings + additional reading for research purposes
Winsomely Reformed	Embraces a winsomely Reformed ethos. (Includes a charitable engagement with a wide variety of views, of those both inside and outside the Evangelical and Reformed perspectives)	Moderate	Engagement with scholarly/critical views of textual criticism as well as approaches taken by Reformed scholastics and preachers in the past

Course Objectives Related to MDiv Student Learning Outcomes

Course: NT6XX Current Issues in Text & Canon
 Professor: Cole and Lanier
 Campus: Orlando
 Date: Winter 2026

<u>MDiv Student Learning Outcomes</u>		<u>Rubric</u>	<u>Mini-Justification</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>			
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	Paper assignments and end-of-class presentation
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	Reading of the Greek New Testament both in critical editions and ancient manuscripts
Reformed Theology	Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards.	Minimal	Engagement with Reformed preachers on TC
Sanctification	Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student's sanctification.	Moderate	Reading of Scripture in Greek
Desire for Worldview	Burning desire to conform all of life to the Word of God.	Minimal	Understanding of issues in text and canon
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	Reading material from a variety of viewpoints
Preach	Ability to preach and teach the meaning of Scripture to both heart and mind with clarity and enthusiasm.	None	Not an emphasis of the class
Worship	Knowledgeable of historic and modern Christian-worship forms; and ability to construct and skill to lead a worship service.	None	Not an emphasis of the class
Shepherd	Ability to shepherd the local congregation: aiding in spiritual maturity; promoting use of gifts and callings; and encouraging a concern for non-Christians, both in America and worldwide.	Moderate	Increased ability to help congregants grapple with difficult topics associated with textual criticism and canon