

ACTS / ROMANS NT5250
RTS Dallas
Spring 2026

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: Class meets Feb 6–7; Mar 27–28; April 17–18. Fri 6pm to 9am. Sat 8am to 3pm.

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* (use in class).

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 papers, see <https://rts.edu/campuses/charlotte/students/pen-and-parchment/>

GRADES

1. Final Exam

- * There will be two tests, a midterm and a final.
- * 85% of tests will be verbatim questions from LRQ's and Reading Questions.
- * Remaining 15% will be misc questions from lectures and *all* readings.
- * Reading Questions related to Ladd and Cara's “Acts” on the first test; Cara's *Cracking* and Waters' “Romans” on the second.
- * Test will be 2 hours long and completely closed book.
- * Each test 25% of grade.

2. Daily Quizzes

- * 10% of grade

3. Paper

- * Paper due at end of semester.
- * 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 Dec and May counts.
- * On first test, you will be asked if you read 100% of Luther and Acts-Romans.
- * On second test, you will be asked if you read Acts-Romans for a second time.
- * 5% of grade per test.

5. *Trinity Psalter*

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

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 (Cara)

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 (Waters)

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: Dallas

Date: Spring 2026

<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	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.