

**Reformed Theological Seminary
Fall 2026**

**NT 5300 Pauline Epistles 3 Hrs.
Wednesday 8:00 – 10:55 A.M.**

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Course TA: TBA
TA Contact Information: TBA**

Description (as per RTS Catalogue)

“An exposition of Paul’s epistles in chronological order that emphasizes the application of Paul’s theology to the pastoral needs of the churches of his day and ours.” (p. 69).

Course Objectives

- (1) To understand and critically to evaluate academic research in the Pauline Epistles.
- (2) To understand issues of special introduction pertaining to the Pauline Epistles.
- (3) To understand the letters of Paul in their first-century context.
- (4) To understand the implications of Paul’s writings for the contemporary church, and to understand Paul as a model of applying theology to the life of the church.
- (5) To understand with greater clarity and precision key questions and issues in the Pauline Epistles: the person and work of Christ, the nature and condition of man, covenant and law, the application of redemption (justification by faith alone, sanctification, union with Christ, etc.).

Required Texts (see below for page assts.; note the abbreviations)

- (1) The Holy Bible, preferably in a recent translation such as the New American Standard or the English Standard Version. Students who are competent in Hellenistic Greek are strongly encouraged to bring their Greek New Testaments to each class session.
- (2) Paul Barnett, *Paul: Missionary of Jesus* (Eerdmans) [B]
- (3) Carson and Moo, *An Introduction to the New Testament* (2d ed.; Zondervan) [C&M]
- (4) R. B. Gaffin, *By Faith, Not By Sight: Paul and the Order of Salvation* (2d ed.; P&R) [G]
- (5) Herman Ridderbos, *Paul: An Outline of His Theology* (Eerdmans) [R]

Recommended Texts

- (1) Guy Prentiss Waters, *The Life and Theology of Paul* (Reformation Trust)
- (2) ed. Michael J. Kruger, *A Biblical-Theological Introduction to the New Testament: The Gospel Realized* (Crossway)
- (3) Richard B. Gaffin, Jr., *In the Fullness of Time: An Introduction to the Biblical Theology of Acts and Paul* (Crossway)

Assignments & Requirements

(1) A mid-term exam, worth **25%** of your final grade. The mid-term exam will be taken in class on **14 October**. Midterms will not be administered after this date.

(2) A final exam will be taken during final exam week and will be cumulative. The final exam must be taken on the date posted by the seminary. Please arrange your schedule accordingly. The final exam is worth **30%** of your final grade.

(3) Memorization of **Ephesians 2:1-22**. You must recite Eph 2 (in any translation) to a fellow student in the course. That student must indicate to the course TA in writing that you have successfully completed the assignment (i.e. that you have recited Ephesians 2, from memory, without error). This assignment is due at the beginning of the final exam. It will be 10% of your final exam grade [i.e. **3%** of your course grade].

(4) Read the Pauline Epistles (minus Romans) in English. You must read the PE (minus Romans) in their entirety this semester. This assignment is due at the beginning of the final exam. You will be asked to give a percentage reflecting the extent of your reading. This assignment will be 10% of your final exam grade [i.e. **3%** of your course grade].

(5) Weekly quizzes on the assigned reading. Each quiz will cover all the assigned reading for that particular week. You may **not** access quizzes previously administered in this course. On each quiz you will be asked to report the extent of your reading for that week. Quizzes will be administered outside of class, and should be arranged with the course TA. The quizzes are worth **25%** of your final grade. Students may drop one quiz grade. **Please note that the first reading quiz will be the week of 02 September.**

(6) An assignment closely examining an important text from the Pauline Epistles. See guidelines below. Complete the assignment according to the category in which you fall:

(a) *For those who have had Greek*, the assignment will be to translate the passage into English (without using an English translation) and to parse all verbs and verbal forms (without using parsing helps of any kind). Then list five (5) exegetical observations per verse based on the Greek text. It is recommended that students use commentaries or other books to help gather these observations.

(b) *For those non – M.Div. students or M.Div. students who have not had Greek*, the assignment is to outline the passage and list ten (10) exegetical, theological, or practical observations per verse. It is recommended that students use commentaries or other books to help gather these observations.

This assignment is worth **20%** of your final grade. It is due at the beginning of class on **28 October**. You must submit it through Canvas as a PDF file. This assignment will be accepted late, but it will be subject to a penalty of one letter grade per day (or fraction thereof) after the due date.

Attendance

Class attendance is required for NT 5300. If a student anticipates an unavoidable absence, he should notify the instructor in advance. Each hour of unexcused absence subjects the student to a reduction of his final grade by one-half of a letter grade. Two tardies (arriving after the beginning of the hour) constitute an hour of unexcused absence. Students missing more than two sessions (for any reason) may **either** submit an additional, compensatory

assignment [determined by the instructor] **or** choose to receive a full letter grade reduction in their final grade.

Grading Scale

The grading scale for this course is the seminary's grading scale. You may find it listed in the *RTS Catalog*, p. 48.

Plagiarism

Please review the seminary's policy on plagiarism. Plagiarized work will subject the student to failure in the course and possible disciplinary action.

In-Class Computer Use

Computers and tablets are not permitted in this course. Cell phones must be set to silent and stowed. If for some extraordinary reason you need to take a call, you may either wait until the break or leave the classroom.

Approximate Course Schedule

Please note that this schedule is approximate and subject to change at any time. The instructor's announced changes in class will be the final word on the nature and date of assignments. They are the student's sole responsibility to note and to implement.

26 Aug	Course Introductions
02 Sep	Introduction to Paul and the Pauline Epistles Reading Asst: B 1-218
09 Sep	Historical-Critical Study of Paul Reading Asst: R 1-2
16 Sep	The Life of Paul Reading Asst: R 3-5
23 Sep	1 & 2 Thessalonians Reading Asst: R 6-7
30 Sep	Galatians Reading Asst: R 8-10
07 Oct	Reading Week – Classes Will Not Meet
14 Oct	Mid-term Exam
21 Oct	1-2 Corinthians Reading Asst: R 11-12
28 Oct	1-2 Corinthians Exegetical Asst: Titus 2:11-15

04 Nov	1-2 Corinthians Reading Asst: CM 456-478, 415-455, 331-353
11 Nov	Philippians, Philemon Reading Asst: CM 354-390, 532-553, 516-531
18 Nov	No Class – ETS Reading Asst: CM 479-497, 498-515, 588-595, 554-587
25 Nov	Colossians, Ephesians Reading Asst: G 1-2
02 Dec	The Pastoral Epistles Reading Asst: G 3-4

Paul & The Letters of Paul in Church History

“At length they saw a man coming (namely Paul), of a low stature, bald (or shaved) on the head, crooked thighs, handsome legs, hollow-eyed; had a crooked nose; full of grace; for sometimes he appeared as a man, sometimes he had the countenance of an angel.”

Acts of Paul and Thecla, 1.7

“With avid intensity I seized the sacred writings of your Spirit and especially the apostle Paul. Where at one time I used to think he contradicted himself and the text of his words disagreed with the testimonies of the law and the prophets, the problems simply vanished. The holy oracles now presented to me a simple face, and I learnt to ‘rejoice with trembling’ (Ps. 11:7).”

Augustine, Confessions, VII.xxi (27)

“Meanwhile in that same year, 1519, I had begun interpreting the Psalms once again. I felt confident that I was now more experienced, since I had dealt in university courses with St. Paul’s Letters to the Romans, to the Galatians, and the Letter to the Hebrews. I had conceived a burning desire to understand what Paul meant in his Letter to the Romans, but thus far there had stood in my way, not the cold blood around my heart, but that one word which is in chapter one: “The justice of God is revealed in it.” I hated that word, “justice of God,” which, by the use and custom of all my teachers, I had been taught to understand philosophically as referring to formal or active justice, as they call it, i.e., that justice by which God is just and by which he punishes sinners and the unjust.

But I, blameless monk that I was, felt that before God I was a sinner with an extremely troubled conscience. I couldn’t be sure that God was appeased by my satisfaction. I did not love, no, rather I hated the just God who punishes sinners. In silence, if I did not blaspheme, then certainly I grumbled vehemently and got angry at God. I said, “Isn’t it enough that we miserable sinners, lost for all eternity because of original sin, are oppressed by every kind of calamity through the Ten Commandments? Why does God heap sorrow upon sorrow through the Gospel and through the Gospel threaten us with his justice and his wrath?” This was how I was raging with wild and disturbed conscience. I constantly badgered St. Paul about that spot in Romans 1 and anxiously wanted to know what he meant.

I meditated night and day on those words until at last, by the mercy of God, I paid attention to their context: "The justice of God is revealed in it, as it is written: 'The just person lives by faith.'" I began to understand that in this verse the justice of God is that by which the just person lives by a gift of God, that is by faith. I began to understand that this verse means that the justice of God is revealed through the Gospel, but it is a passive justice, i.e. that by which the merciful God justifies us by faith, as it is written: "The just person lives by faith." All at once I felt that I had been born again and entered into paradise itself through open gates. Immediately I saw the whole of Scripture in a different light. I ran through the Scriptures from memory and found that other terms had analogous meanings, e.g., the work of God, that is, what God works in us; the power of God, by which he makes us powerful; the wisdom of God, by which he makes us wise; the strength of God, the salvation of God, the glory of God.

I exalted this sweetest word of mine, "the justice of God," with as much love as before I had hated it with hate. This phrase of Paul was for me the very gate of paradise. Afterward I read Augustine's "On the Spirit and the Letter," in which I found what I had not dared hope for. I discovered that he too interpreted "the justice of God" in a similar way, namely, as that with which God clothes us when he justifies us. Although Augustine had said it imperfectly and did not explain in detail how God imputes justice to us, still it pleased me that he taught the justice of God by which we are justified."

Martin Luther, 1545 (LW 4:421-428, trans. Andrew Thornton, OSB; © 1983, St. Anselm Abbey)

"In the evening I went very unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate Street, where one was reading Luther's preface to the Epistle to the Romans. About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone, for salvation; and an assurance was given me that He had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death."

John Wesley, *The Journal of John Wesley*

"The Reformation fought and conquered in the name of Paul"

Albert Schweitzer, *The Mysticism of Paul the Apostle*

Exegetical Assignment

Your exegetical assignment is an opportunity for you to work closely with a particular passage in the Pauline epistles.

For those who have had Greek, the assignment should follow the following format:

- Typewritten (no handwritten assignments accepted)
- Verse-by-verse translation
- Parsing given, in order, after each verse. Parsing should follow the format you learned in Mounce.
- Exegetical observations in a separate section following your translation and parsing.

What follows are some guidelines to help you prepare a strong exegetical assignment.

- *Avoid* making observations that simply restate the passage in different words; or that are pedestrian.
Instead, make observations that draw out the passage's meaning and significance.
- *Avoid* pointing out obvious grammatical or syntactical facts, i.e., "this noun is a genitive"; "this verb is in the aorist"; "this statement is a conditional clause."
Instead, explain the significance of your grammatical and syntactical observations.
- *Avoid* making arguments based on the aspect of the verb or verbal.
Instead, make arguments that can be supported by other considerations.
- *Avoid* drawing observations without reference to the statements or paragraphs immediately preceding or following the verse in question. This does not mean that every observation should make such references. Rather, make sure that you do not overlook this important element of exegesis.
Instead, try, as much as possible, to incorporate the immediate context of the passage and the context of the letter as a whole into your observations. If a word or concept finds meaningful parallel elsewhere in the letter or the Pauline corpus, reference it.
- *Avoid* making unsubstantiated assertions.
Instead, take time to defend the claims that you make from the text.
- *Avoid* submitting an assignment with incomplete parsing (for those to whom this applies).
Instead, for those of you parsing, be sure to parse ALL verbs and verbals in the way that you were instructed; and to include the verb(al)'s lexical form.
- *Avoid* simply quoting a commentary or other secondary source, especially without comment.
Instead, when quoting or referencing a secondary source, be sure to indicate why that quote/reference is exegetically significant.

Course Objectives Related to MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes

Course: NT 5300 Pauline Epistles
 Professor: Waters
 Campus: Jackson
 Date: Fall 2026

MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes		Rubric	Mini-Justification
<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>		<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	1. Theology of the PE 2. Exegetical written assignment on a passage in the PE
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	1. Major part of the class is exegesis of the PE 2. Original languages are used in class and encouraged in writing assignment
Reformed Theology	Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards.	Moderate	Traditional Reformed categories are shown to find their basis in the PE
Sanctification	Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student's sanctification.	Moderate	Personal application is made in class from many texts of the PE
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.	Moderate	Multi-faceted applications are made from texts of the PE, e.g. church and culture.
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	Non-Reformed scholarship is charitably discussed and engaged in class and readings.
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	Paul's pastoral practice is addressed throughout the course.