

Theological Dutch 1: Grammar and Literature

Syllabus

Reformed Theological Seminary, Fall 2026

In collaboration with Apeldoorn Theological University, Netherlands

Course: Theological Dutch I

Instructor: Lianne Kalkman-Mahdi, ResMA

Time: Wednesdays, 09:00-11:00

An online office-hour for contacting the instructor will be determined in consultation with the students.

Course Description: This is an introductory course in the Dutch language designed to teach basic proficiency in reading Dutch for theology students. After building basic vocabulary and an understanding of Dutch grammar, students will focus on reading theological texts written in Dutch. Emphasis will be placed on the basics of translation of these texts. Translation is a skill in itself, but to translate a language, one must also learn the feel of the language and have an ability and desire to speak it, read it, and write it. For this reason, pronunciation, speaking, and listening skills will be included in the lessons. This course is designed to be the first part of a two-or-more-semester sequence.

Bibliography: The textbook for this course will be the newest edition of the “Delftse Methode – Het Groene Boek” (the Delft Method, the Green Book; hereafter DM), including the online audio component, available together from Boom publishers here: https://www.nt2.nl/en/product/100-17209_Nederlands-voor-anderstaligen-tekstboek. Literature to translate will be made available through Canvas during the semester, as well as suggestions for further reading. Please purchase the textbook as soon as possible because shipping delays from the Netherlands may occur.

Attendance and participation: This course meets entirely online and is taught through lecture and discussion. Learning a language requires a lot of repetition and practice. Attending and preparing each lecture is the best way to prepare for the exam. If you cannot make a class, please email the instructor.

Since this course takes place online, the instructor will be extra mindful of ways to ensure a stimulating learning environment. Multiple applications in Canvas will be used for preparation and consolidation of class material. This will also include a shared wordlist in which both instructor and students can track the vocabulary expansion throughout the semester. The wordlist will be part of the study material for the exam.

Grading:

Participation: 30% (For exceptions related to personal circumstances, please email the instructor.)

Assignments: 30% (Weekly course preparation includes reading and translating primary sources, increasing in difficulty over the course of the semester. Assignments will be graded good/satisfactory/unsatisfactory.)

Final exam: 40% (This will probably be an online, oral exam; details to be determined.)

Instructions for handing in translation exercises:

Before each class starts, submit a digital document (a – readable – scan of a handwritten translation is allowed) in Canvas via the ‘Assignments’ button. In class, we will discuss the translations. A translation should be annotated: you can mark as many parts of your working process as you want in your working document (verbal stems, words guessed based on context, (pro)nouns recognized, etc.). In this way, you show your instructor that you have taken the assignment seriously. In order to receive a good/satisfactory grade for this part of the class, it is not ultimately important that the translation is as flawless as possible (though try to do your best, of course!); rather, it is important that you show active engagement with the material and show that you have knowledge of the ‘skill’ of translation, via your annotations. Don’t be afraid to make mistakes along the way – that is how we learn!

Instructions for working with Delftse Methode:

Read the user manual on p. 10 in your textbook for a full explanation of the most effective way to integrate the physical and online teaching materials. The lessons follow a specific set-up, designed to help you learn the language with a natural flow. It is important that you take the time to listen to the audio files of each lesson and that you challenge yourself by doing the exercises. These do not need to be handed in for each class, but it is your responsibility to keep up with the pace of the book. Alert your instructor in a timely fashion if you fear you can’t keep up, so that she can assist you.

Outline of classes: The class will meet for 12 periods of 2 hours each. Some of the topics we will cover include (modifications might be made; discretion of the instructor):

In order to consolidate the learned material from each class, it is advised that you spread out your preparations for each class over the course of the week. The more days you are actively engaging with a new language, the easier it is to make your newly acquired knowledge stick. Classes are on Wednesdays; you could, e.g., try to do some preparations on Mondays and some on Fridays. Or you could incorporate some Dutch Bible reading or listening to music/news broadcasts into your daily routine. Feel free to ask your instructor for tips on finding online resources! (There are many, even if you are only interested in Reformed materials ☺)

Week	Date/Datum	Class/College	Preparations/Voorbereidingen	Notes/Opmerkingen
37	Sept. 9	1. Brief overview of the language (alphabet, numbers, personal introductions)	Prepare: DM – Les 1 (= ‘Lesson 1’) Theological text to translate: Genesis 1: 1-2, Bijbel in Gewone Taal (= ‘Bible in Plain Language’ (Dutch-English); use an English translation to guide your work Additional preparation: 1. While you prepare Les 1, pause and reflect: are you fully understanding what you are reading/hearing? Do you understand the concept of studying using the Delft Method? 2. Learn Grammar (= ‘Grammatica’) 1, p. 204 in DM (use the wordlist on p. 13) – don’t worry if you struggle with this! 3. Listen to Het Alfabetlied (= ‘The Alphabet Song’) and try to sing along: https://youtu.be/OuDp-C9w-vQ?si=VMMbGIErLMzs7fyi or, if you prefer a spoken version (with examples of pronunciation): https://youtu.be/3BIzyDnbq60?si=mihaWmY-edq75dx8	<i>DM = ‘Delftse Methode’ (‘Delft Method’), our textbook. Please make sure to order the textbook timely!</i> <i>NB: add. prep. 2: ‘nu’ = now (present tense); ‘vroeger’ = past (past and perfect tense – we will discuss this later)</i>
38	Sept. 16	2. Personal pronouns; (in)definite articles; nouns	Bereid voor: DM – Les 2 Canvas: Go to ‘Discussions’ in the menu of the course. Reply to my comment in ‘Aangenaam kennis te maken! (‘Nice to meet you!’)’ with a	Translation of the parts in bold (see also under Les 1:

			short introduction of yourself. Reply to two others as well. You can read my own introduction if you visit my Profile in Canvas. Theologische tekst om te vertalen: part of the Apostolische geloofsbelijdenis (= the Apostles' Creed) (some sections will be offered in translation); Can you find the numbers in this text? Verdere voorbereiding: 1. Learn Grammatica 2 (p. 205), revise Grammatica 1; read Grammatica 11 (p. 210) don't worry if you <i>still</i> struggle with this – try to see how far you can get!	Bereid voor = Prepare (imperative, sg.; separable verb, inf. = 'voorbereiden') Theologische tekst = Theological text Om te vertalen = to translate (infinitive) Verdere voorbereiding = additional preparation (sg.)
39	Sept. 23	3. Word order, plural nouns, negation	Bereid voor: DM – Les 3 Theologische tekst om te vertalen: Genesis 1: 1-5, Herziene Statenvertaling (= revised version of the States' Translation. Compare verses 1-2 to your translation prepared for Les 1 (based on the Bijbel in Gewone Taal); mark nouns and articles Verdere voorbereiding: 1. Listen to this reading of Genesis 1: 1-5 (or until 2: 3, if you feel so inclined) in the Herziene Statenvertaling. Read along in the Dutch translation. 2. Learn Grammatica 3, 10 (p. 205, 209); revise Grammatica 1-2, 11	
40	Sept. 30	4. Adjectives, possessives	Bereid voor: DM Les 4 Theologische tekst om te vertalen: Genesis 1: 1-5, Statenvertaling (States' Translation). Compare to your earlier translations.	

			Verdere voorbereiding: 1. Listen to this reading of Genesis 1: 1-5 (or the entirety of Genesis, if you feel so inclined) in the Statenvertaling. Read along in the Dutch translation. 2. Learn Grammatica 4 (p. 206); read Grammatica 12, 14 (p. 210, 212)	
41	Oct. 7	5. Recap lesson (= 'Herhaling')	Bereid voor: DM Les 1 t/m 4 Theologische tekst om te vertalen: Sunday 9, question and answer 26 of the Heidelbergse Catechismus in Gewone Taal (= 'Heidelberg Catechism in Plain Language'); mark possessive pronouns and articles Verdere voorbereiding: 1. Do some revision of concepts you still struggle with. 2. Repeat Grammatica 1-4, 10-12, 14 3. Take a moment to reflect on how far you are with memorizing the Canvas wordlist – are you up to speed?	<i>Please bring your questions!</i>
42	Oct. 14	Reading week		<i>No class/geen college</i>
43	Oct. 21	6. Verbs and conjugation; Present tense, infinitive	Bereid voor: DM – Les 5 Canvas: Read the introduction to the verbal system in preparation for this class Theologische tekst om te vertalen: Selection from Dutch Wikipedia on Herman Bavinck Verdere voorbereiding: Repeat Grammatica 1-4, 10-12, 14; learn Grammatica 19, p. 215	
44	Oct. 28	7. Separable, reflexive, and modal verbs	Bereid voor: DM – Les 6 Canvas:	

			Read the introduction to imperatives in preparation for this and next class Theologische tekst om te vertalen: Psalm 136 (States' Translation) Verdere voorbereiding: Learn Grammatica 5, p. 206, and 15, p. 212; repeat Grammatica 19	
45	Nov. 4	8. Perfect tense and past tense; Imperatives	Bereid voor: DM – Les 7 Canvas: Read the introduction to perfect & past tense in preparation for this class Theologische tekst om te vertalen: Psalm 136: 1, 3, 22, 26 (1773 metrical translation); mark the imperatives Verdere voorbereiding: 1. Listen to the recording of these verses on YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rFtlxJ_iS2k and try to read (or sing!) along 2. Learn Grammatica 6-7, p. 207	<i>Dutch 'Thanksgiving' (Dankdag)</i>
46	Nov. 11	9. Herhaling + Introduction to the <i>Tale Kanaäns</i> ('The Language of Canaan' – archaic religious Dutch)	Bereid voor: DM – Les 8, 9 Theologische tekst om te vertalen: Selection from Dutch Wikipedia on Abraham Kuyper Verdere voorbereiding: 1. Do some revision of concepts you still struggle with. 2. Learn Grammatica 8-9, p. 208-209	<i>Please bring your questions!</i>
47	Nov. 18	10. Irregular verbs I	Bereid voor: DM – Les 10 Canvas: Read the introduction to irregular verbs in preparation for this class Theologische tekst om te vertalen:	

			Abraham Kuyper, <i>Conservatisme en orthodoxie: valse en ware behoudzucht</i> ('<i>Conservatism and Orthodoxy: False and True Preservation</i>') (Amsterdam, 1870), 6-9, available via Google Books Verdere voorbereiding: 1. Read this essay outlining the key concepts of <i>Conservatisme en orthodoxie</i> by R. Edwards, Westminster Theological Seminary: https://wm.wts.edu/magazine-articles/kuypers-cautionremain-faithful-to-christ-in-cultural-conflict 2. Learn Grammatica 23, p. 217-225	
48	Nov. 25	11. Irregular verbs II	Bereid voor: DM – Les 11 Theologische tekst om te vertalen: Abraham Kuyper, <i>Conservatisme en orthodoxie: valse en ware behoudzucht</i> ('<i>Conservatism and Orthodoxy: False and True Preservation</i>') (Amsterdam, 1870), 6-9, available via Google Books Verdere voorbereiding: 1. Watch this short clip introducing a 'Kuyperjaar' (= 'Kuyper Year') at VU Amsterdam (2020-2021). Try to make out a translation where possible. (Dutch captions available!) If necessary, try watching the clip a few times, or decrease the video speed. After you are finished with this, you can watch the English version of the clip. Does this version help you to improve your understanding of the first video? Additional question: what do you think of the way Kuyper is portrayed in this clip? Can you think of any reasons why the VU has chosen to highlight these aspects of Kuyper's life? 2. Repeat Grammatica 23	
49	Dec. 2	Herhaling: verbs	Bereid voor: DM – Les 5 t/m 11 Theologische tekst om te vertalen: Abraham Kuyper, <i>Conservatisme en orthodoxie: valse en ware behoudzucht</i>	<i>Please bring your questions!</i>

			(<i>'Conservatism and Orthodoxy: False and True Preservation'</i>) (Amsterdam, 1870), 6-9, available via Google Books Verdere voorbereiding: 1. Do some revision of concepts you still struggle with. 2. Repeat Grammatica 1-9, 15, 19, 23	
50	Dec. 9	Exam prep	<i>Preparations to be decided, depending on the needs of the students</i>	
51	Dec. 16	Exam		

Course Objectives Related to MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes

Course: Theological Dutch I

Instructor: Lianne Kalkman-Mahdi, ResMA

Campus: Online

Date: Filled in June 2026, concerning Fall Term 2026

<u>MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes</u> 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.		<u>Rubric</u> • Strong • Moderate • Minimal • None	<u>Mini-Justification</u>
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	The focus is on written, historical texts, but not on oral exposition.
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	This course includes practice translating scriptures from Dutch to English.
Reformed Theology	Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards.	Strong	This course explores theological writings.
Sanctification	Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student's sanctification.		n/a
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	Helps to provide a connection to theology/theologians in the Netherlands.
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	Texts are primarily from within the Reformed tradition.
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	Indirect. This is designed for scholars, and such scholarship may help to better understand scripture and traditions.

