

Reformed Theological Seminary
02NT5250 • Acts and Romans
Course Syllabus • Fall 2026 • RTS-Orlando

1. Course Details

- 2 credit hours
- Course dates: Thursdays 9:00 AM – 11:00 AM
- August 27 – December 3, 2026
- Course description: “A study of Acts and Paul’s Epistle to the Romans that emphasizes both the original meaning and the modern meaning” (*RTS Catalog 2023–2025*, p. 69).

2. Instructor Information

- Zachary J. Cole, Ph.D., Associate Professor of New Testament, RTS-O
- E-mail: zcole@rts.edu
- Office: Orlando Campus #3-214
- Office hours: e-mail to arrange an appointment

3. Course Objectives

- To enable comprehension of the background, content, message, and redemptive-historical significance of Acts and Romans.
- To encourage responsible reading of Acts and Romans.
- To deepen exegetical skills in the interpretation of the Acts and Romans.
- To facilitate wise and charitable interaction with scholarly contributions to the study of Acts and Romans.

4. Required Textbooks

English Bible: Acts and Romans

Ridderbos, Herman. *Paul: An Outline of His Theology*. Eerdmans, 1975. Read 400 pages of your choice, but must include pgs. 44–90.

And either:¹

Thompson, Alan J. *Acts of the Risen Lord Jesus: Luke’s Account of God’s Unfolding Plan*. IVP, 2011. [Available as eBook]

Or:

Padilla, Osvaldo. *The Acts of the Apostles: Interpretation, History and Theology*. IVP Academic, 2016. [Available as eBook]

¹ **Brief comparison of Padilla and Thompson:** Padilla’s book is essentially an overview of the content, background, and interpretation of Acts. Thompson is less of an overview and more of a thesis he seeks to defend regarding how Acts should be interpreted.

5. Course Requirements

- **Biblical reading (10%)**
 - i. Read Acts and Romans in English once.
 - ii. If you have not taken Greek, read Acts and Romans again in a different translation.
 - iii. If you have taken Greek, read Acts again in a different translation, and then read any four chapters of Romans again in Greek. (No need to write out a translation.)
 - iv. You will indicate in Canvas the percentage of reading you completed.
- **Textbook Reading and notes (10%)**
 - i. Read either Thompson or Padilla.
 - ii. Read 400 pages of Ridderbos, which must include pgs. 44–90.
 - iii. Take summary notes on Ridderbos pgs. 44–90 and submit these in Canvas.
 - iv. You will indicate in Canvas the percentage of reading you completed.
- **Research paper (40%):** Write an essay of 3,000–3,500 words on a topic of your choice from Acts or Romans. You must propose and defend a thesis, using secondary sources (commentaries, journal articles, etc.). Criteria:
 - i. **Argument:** does the paper articulate a clear and coherent thesis?
 - ii. **Focus:** does the paper provide supporting evidence for the thesis?
 - iii. **Awareness:** does the paper responsibly engage relevant sources?
 - iv. **Quality:** is the paper well-structured, logical, and clear?
 - v. **Style:** does the paper adhere to the style guidelines?
- **Final exam (40%):** A final exam will cover the lecture content (not the readings). The exam is taken in Canvas. It is closed-book. Further guidance will be provided.

6. Grading System

A	(97-100)	4.00
A-	(94-96)	3.66
B+	(91-93)	3.33
B	(88-90)	3.00
B-	(86-87)	2.66
C+	(83-85)	2.33
C	(80-82)	2.00
C-	(78-79)	1.66
D+	(75-77)	1.33
D	(72-74)	1.00
D-	(70-71)	0.66
F	(below 70)	0.00
I	(incomplete)	–
W	(withdraw)	–

S	(satisfactory)	-
P	(passing)	-

7. Course Schedule

August 26	Classes begin
September 7	Labor Day holiday (no class)
September 9	Last day to add a class
September 30	Last day to drop a class
October 12-16	Reading week (no class)
November 25-27	Thanksgiving holidays
December 7	Last day of fall semester classes
December 9	Term paper deadline (11:00 a.m.)
December 10-15	Examination period

8. Other information

- Students are encouraged to read the RTS policy on Artificial Intelligence (see student handbook).
- Late work is subject to penalties determined by the professor and is not normally accepted without permission.

Course Objectives Related to MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes

Course: Acts and Romans (NT5250)

Professor: Zachary Cole

Campus: Orlando

Date: Fall 2026

<u>MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes</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> <i>*As the MDiv is the core degree at RTS, the MDiv rubric will be used in this syllabus.</i>		<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.	Strong	The research paper and exam require students to understand and articulate essential biblical knowledge.
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	The course content and assignments focus directly on the original meaning of Scripture.
Reformed Theology	Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards.	Moderate	Traditional categories of Reformed theology are discussed in class and engaged in the Romans paper.
Sanctification	Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student's sanctification.	Minimal	Direct engagement with Scripture (Acts & Rom) allows students to encounter God in his self-revelation.
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	In lectures, students will be pushed to apply their reading to relevant issues in the contemporary world.
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 positions are discussed charitably and fairly in class and in the paper.
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	Instructor will frequently push students to consider how Acts & Rom are to be applied in pastoral ministry.