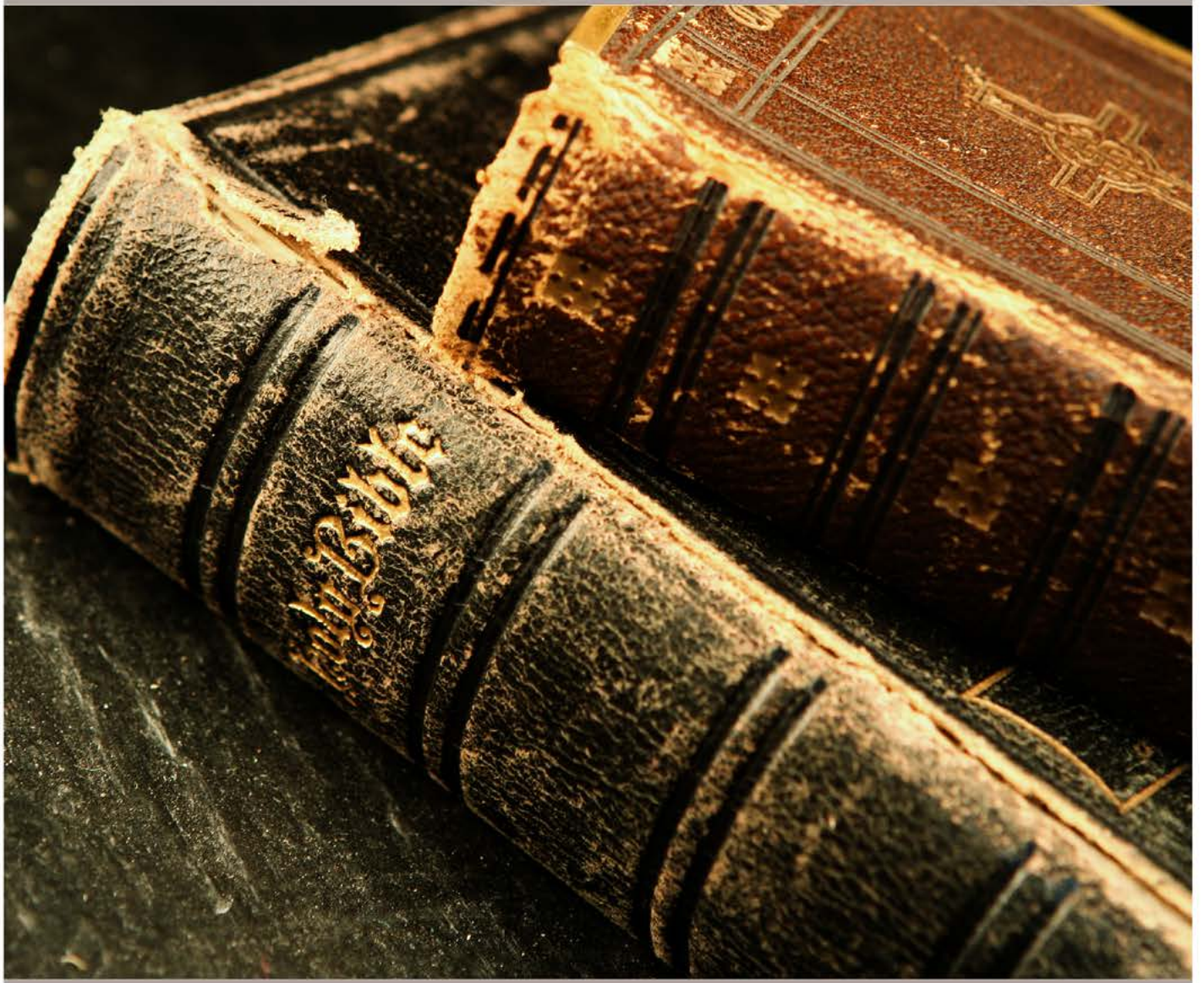


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REFORMED  THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY  
DISTANCE EDUCATION

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ADVANCED BIBLICAL EXEGESIS  
DR. ROBERT J. CARA & DR. RICHARD P. BELCHER, JR.

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# Course Overview

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## Course Description:

00N504 Advanced Biblical Exegesis, 3 hours

Lecturing Professor: Dr. Robert J. Cara

Lecturing Professor and Professor of Record: Dr. Richard P. Belcher, Jr.

Emphasis will be placed upon OT-NT issues, particularly redemptive-historical considerations and covenant theology. Background hermeneutical issues will be covered, including the role of the interpreter and creeds/confessions. In addition, the course will include a brief overview of the history of interpretation of the Bible from the early church to modern day. Finally, the class will explore the relationship between original meaning and modern meaning.

This course is team taught with the first half of the course being taught by Dr. Cara and the second half of the course being taught by Dr. Belcher. The final lecture includes a guest lecture from Dr. Michael J. Kruger.

## Course Objectives:

- Become familiar with personal and historical factors that influence one's hermeneutic
- Present the history of hermeneutics in the church and draw both positive and negative consequences
- Understand "meaning" and "application" of a Scriptural text
- Justify using the same hermeneutic that the Bible itself uses

## Required Textbooks:

Beale, Greg K. *Handbook on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament: Exegesis and Interpretation*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2012.

Greidanus, Sidney. *Preaching Christ from the Old Testament: A Contemporary Hermeneutical Method*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999.

Pratt, Richard L. *He Gave Us Stories: The Bible Student's Guide to Interpreting Old Testament Narratives*. Phillipsburg: P&R, 1990.

Silva, Moises, ed. *Foundations of Contemporary Interpretation*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996.

Swain, Scott R. *Trinity, Revelation, and Reading: A Theological Introduction to the Bible and its Interpretation*. New York: T&T Clark, 2011.

[These books may also be available in ebook format through various retailers]

### *Online Student Handbook:*

The [Online Student Handbook](#) has been designed to assist you in successfully navigating the Distance Education experience, whether you are taking a single course or pursuing a certificate or degree program. In it you will find valuable information, step-by-step instructions, study helps, and essential forms to guide you through every aspect of your distance education opportunity from registration to graduation. Please use this resource as your first-stop reference manual.

### *Summary of Requirements:*

1. Listen to all recorded [Lectures](#)
2. Complete all [Readings](#)
3. Participate in [Forum Discussions](#) (with other students and the professor)
4. Take the [Final Exam](#)
5. Submit [Two Reading Papers](#)
6. Submit [Reading Report](#)
7. Submit [Mentor Report/Course Application Paper](#)

# Meet the Professors

## *Lecturing Professor:*



**Dr. Robert J. Cara** is the Hugh and Sallie Reaves Professor of New Testament at RTS-Charlotte and Provost and Chief Academic Officer for the RTS institution. He has been a professor at RTS since 1993. Dr. Cara was an engineer for seven years before the Lord re-directed him toward seminary. As a former college basketball player for Penn State-Capitol, he has developed a reputation as an energetic and challenging classroom teacher, and he is a personable scholar who is very student oriented.

In addition to the traditional New Testament topics, Dr. Cara's academic interests include relating the New Testament to Reformed Theology, creeds, hermeneutics, Second Temple Judaism documents, and narrative criticism. In addition to numerous book reviews and articles, he has written a commentary on 1 & 2 Thessalonians and a forthcoming book critiquing the New Perspective on Paul. Currently, Dr. Cara is working on a commentary for the book of Hebrews in the Mentor Commentary series. Dr. Cara has several courses available on RTS iTunes U and the RTS Mobile app, which can be listened to for free.

As an ordained minister in the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church, Dr. Cara has been very involved at both the presbytery and synod levels. He is a former vice-moderator of the denomination and for several years was the chairman of the denominational Inter-Church Relations Committee. He preaches regularly in the Charlotte area.

## *Lecturing Professor and Professor of Record:*



**Dr. Richard P. Belcher** is the Professor of Old Testament and Academic Dean of RTS Charlotte. He is an ordained minister in the PCA and pastored an urban nondenominational church in Rochester, NY for ten years before pursuing the Ph. D. This pastoral experience in an unusual and challenging setting gives him great insight into the practical, modern issues that will be faced by future pastors studying with him at RTS. He graduated from Covenant College and received his M. Div from Covenant Seminary. He also received an S.T.M. from Concordia Theological Seminary, and his Ph. D. is from Westminster Theological Seminary. He has served as stated supply for numerous churches in the area since coming to RTS Charlotte in 1995.

# Grades

## *Forum Discussion (15%):*

The student is required to interact in two (2) forums:

1. Student-Professor Posts (15 total posts)
  - A. Personal Introduction Forum: The student is required to post a brief personal introduction to the professor/class. Suggested details include your vocation, where you live, your church background, why you chose RTS, and what you hope to gain through the course (1 required post).
  - B. 5 Topical Discussion Q&A Forums: The student is required to answer each topical discussion question with one (1) response. The professor will acknowledge the student's answer and will follow up with a subsequent question to which the student must also answer with one (1) response. Each topical discussion question, therefore, requires two (2) total posts/responses from the student (Total of 5 forums x 2 posts = 10 total posts).
  - C. Student-Professor Forum: The student is required to post four (4) times in this forum. Posts in this forum should focus on course-related content such as research paper topics, lectures and reading assignments, or other academic issues related to the course.
2. Student-Student Forum (5 total posts)
  - A post may be either a new topic or a response to an already existing topic.

## *Examination (Final 30%):*

There will be 1 examination for this course. No helps, including Bibles, are allowed. The student should use the Lesson Questions to guide them in their preparation and study for the exam. You will have 3 hours to complete the exam. The exam will consist of short answer (from 1 sentence to 2 paragraphs) and objective (multiple-choice, T/F, etc.) questions.

The exam for this course is to be taken online in the Learning Management System (LMS). Please note that you will need to have a proctor for your exams. Your proctor can be anyone except a relative or current RTS Student. After clicking on the exam link, you will be given detailed instructions about the exam. Please read these instructions carefully before entering the exam.

## *Reading Papers (40%):*

The student will submit two (2) seven to ten (7-10) page papers, with no or few footnotes, covering Pratt's *He Gave Us Stories* and Silva, M., ed. *Foundations of Contemporary Interpretation*. See section titled "[Reading Papers Instructions](#)" in this syllabus.

## *Reading Report (10%):*

Read the assigned reading from Beale, Greidanus, and Swain. To receive full credit, the student must read all of the required readings listed at the beginning of each lesson.

***Mentor Report OR Course Application Paper (5%):***

If you are enrolled in an **RTS Global** degree program, you are required to submit a mentor report at the end of the course. Every portion of the form (goals, summaries, assessments, and signatures) should be filled out completely by both the student and the mentor to receive full credit. You can download the Mentor Report form in your Canvas classroom.

If you are receiving your degree through another **RTS campus** (Orlando, Jackson, Charlotte, et. al.), or are a certificate student, or special student (e.g. from another seminary), you are asked to write a 200-word summary of how you perceive what you have learned in this course will fit into the objectives you have for your ministry, your educational goals, or other objectives you wish to achieve in life. Course Application Papers (CAP) that fall well-short of 200 words will receive a grade deduction.

***Assignments:***

Best practice for your time management is for you to submit all assignments at the end of the week in which they fall, using the upload links provided in the LMS. All work must be submitted by midnight of the course end date, per your course start letter. You are responsible for turning in all assignments on time; no late submissions are permitted. Any student who needs an extension must get approval from the Registrar prior to that time.

***Contact Information:***

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1-855-854-6920

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# Lessons

## Lesson One

Hermeneutics and Revelation

## Lesson Two

Macro-Hermeneutics and Heritage Covenant  
Community Influence

## Lesson Three

Present Covenant Community Influence  
and Meaning

## Lesson Four

Hermeneutical Methodologies and Sermons

## Lesson Five

Modern Audience - Meaning and Adjustments

## Lesson Six

Hermeneutical Proverbs

## Lesson Seven

History of Exegesis and Allegorical Exegesis

## Lesson Eight

Antiochene Exegesis and Exegesis in the  
Middle Ages

## Lesson Nine

Reformation Exegesis and Enlightenment  
Exegesis

## Lesson Ten

Jewish Exegesis and New Testament Exegesis

## Lesson Eleven

Preaching Christ From the Old Testament

## Lesson Twelve

Covenant Theology

# Reading Papers Instructions

## **Paper #1 (20%): Pratt's He Gave Us Stories, pages 1-128, 306-402.**

- Submit a 7-10 page paper, with no or few footnotes, that includes:
  - o A statement that student read 100% of Pratt reading requirement.
  - o A self-conscious evaluation of one or more aspects of the student's interaction within his covenant community (both heritage and present) that has (or will have) influenced the student's biblical interpretation (BT/R-H/ST). This influence can be either positive, negative, or both.
  - o The paper should show knowledge of your covenantal community, and categories in Pratt's book and Cara's lectures.
  - o Although no research is required, this paper should have a sophisticated understanding of macro-hermeneutics and indicate that the student can "theologize" about himself relative to his theological community.
  - o Paper due at the conclusion of Cara's portion of the lectures (week 6).

## **Paper #2 (20%): Silva, M., ed. Foundations of Contemporary Interpretation.**

- Read any one of the books in this volume, except *God, Language and Scripture* and *Has the Church Misread the Bible*.
- Submit a 7-10 page paper, with few or no footnotes, that includes:
  - o A statement that student read 100% of book within the volume.
  - o A summary of the book (1/3 of paper).
  - o Critique one small or large section in the book (2/3 of paper). The critique should show knowledge of Cara/Belcher lectures and the ability of the student to theologize about hermeneutics.
  - o Paper due at the end of the course.



**Course Objectives Related to Student Learning Outcomes With Mini-Justification**

Course: ABX/Macro-Hermeneutics  
Professor: Robert J. Cara and Richard P. Belcher

<u>MDiv Student Learning Outcomes</u>		<u>Rubric</u>	<u>Mini-Justification</u>
<b>Articulation</b> (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.	Moderate	1. Submits one self-reflected hermeneutics paper. 2. Submits one critical book review. 3. Significant overview of the history of hermeneutics, both in the church and philosophy, is included.
<b>Scripture</b>	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.)	Moderate	1. Scriptures' interpretation of Scripture is included. 2. Scriptures' understanding of "meaning" is evaluated.
<b>Reformed Theology</b>	Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards.	Moderate	1. Overview of Reformed view of General and Special Revelation. 2. Reformed hermeneutics. 3. History of Reformed denominations.
<b>Sanctification</b>	Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student's sanctification.	Minimal	1. Psalm singing in class 2. Self-reflection paper.
<b>Desire for Worldview</b>	Burning desire to conform all of life to the Word of God.	Strong	1. The Bible is the ultimately authority of hermeneutical questions. 2. Student's background affects hermeneutics.
<b>Winsomely Reformed</b>	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	1. The ethos of RTS is presented and evaluated as to how that affects hermeneutics.
<b>Preach</b>	Ability to preach and teach the meaning of Scripture to both heart and mind with clarity and enthusiasm.	Moderate	1. Section of hermeneutics of "modern meaning."
<b>Worship</b>	Knowledgeable of historic and modern Christian-worship forms; and ability to construct and skill to lead a worship service.	None	
<b>Shepherd</b>	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.	Minimal	1. Understand one's own background is an aid to understanding others.
<b>Church/World</b>	Ability to interact within a denominational context, within the broader worldwide church, and with significant public issues.	Strong	1. Overview of theological traditions (Reformed, Lutheran, RC, EO). 2. Creed discussions. 3. Philosophical hermeneutics. 4. Modernism vs Post-Modernism.