

'Acts & Paul' (2NT518) – 4 hours

Syllabus

INSTRUCTOR

Dr Bruce Lowe received his first doctorate in Analytical Chemistry and taught, consulted and researched in a university setting over several years in both Chemistry and Chemical Engineering departments. He then completed his MDiv at RTS Orlando, becoming an ordained Presbyterian minister and working in university ministry, as a youth pastor, church planting and in church revitalization. He is in the final stages of a doctorate in New Testament Studies, where his thesis has focused on Romans through attention to its cultural setting (*Debating Romans Relationally*). **Both Paul and Acts are a special area of interest for Bruce. In this course students will not only gain a classic seminary understanding of Paul, but through interaction with Greco-Roman culture, understand him and his letters more broadly.**

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Little needs to be said about Paul. He and his letters are a vital part of how we are to understand the Christian faith. In this course there is both a theoretical and practical bent. You will be given an understanding of Paul himself, but also against his cultural context. It is only as we understand both of these that we are truly in a position to see the powerful message Paul speaks to our culture today. One key question we will explore in this course is “What does it look like to think like a Christian in the 21st century?”

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. To provide a general understanding of each of Paul's letters.
2. To highlight the specific value of each of Paul's letters for today – particularly the counter-cultural message Paul presented in his own day and its relevance for us today.
3. To resolve the key issues & 'problem passages' in Paul and his writings.
4. To highlight passages of 'special importance' in each of Paul's letters and to investigate how they might be preached to our present generation.

Required Texts:

Carson & Moo, *An Introduction to the New Testament* (Zondervan, 2005)
ISBN 0310238595

Hawthorne, Martin & Reid (eds.), *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters* (IVP, 1993)
ISBN 9780851106519

Williams, *Paul's Metaphors* (Hendrickson, 2003)
ISBN 1565632877 (Available on Amazon & Hendrickson)

Ridderbos, *Paul: An Outline of his Theology* (Eerdmans, 1997)
ISBN 9780802844699

Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Liturgical Press, 1992)
ISBN 9780814658079

ASSESSMENT

40% Research Paper; **due four weeks after last class (i.e. Midnight April 22nd)¹**

40% Final exam - **due one weeks after last class (i.e. Midnight April 1st)**

10% Summary of 12 Metaphors (1 each chapter) **due on or before March 21st 2**

10% Review of the first two chapters of Ridderbos **due on or before March 21st 3**

WHEN IS THE COURSE BEING RUN?

Friday, MARCH 11 (8am - 5pm) and then resume MARCH 21 - 25 (8am-5pm daily)

¹ This will be approx 10-15 pages double spaced. It will be a critical paper in which I wish you to interact with secondary literature (journal articles, monographs and a range of commentaries from at least three different traditions). The topic will be one of your choice negotiated with me. If you are stuck for a topic, I will assign one to you.

² This will be about 4 pages single spaced – approx three summaries per page. The sections you choose will be examinable – so, for example, on the final exam you may be asked to write an essay on the metaphor you chose from the chapter on “Slavery and Freedom.”

³ About 2 pages single spaced. You will want to structure it like this: A short paragraph summarizing the content of the first two chapters, then a lengthy section listing succinctly the things you liked about it, then a similar sized section on the things you didn't like. A brief conclusion will list things like who you might recommend this book for.

Course Objectives Related to MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes

Course:
 Professor:
 Campus:
 Date:

MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes		Rubric	Mini-Justification
<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.	Moderate	The students will be required to write a 10-15 page essay (written) as well as being asked to interact with each other in organized discussions (oral).
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	Not only will we cover Acts and Paul in detail, but we will constantly discuss what it means to think like a Christian today in light of what the Scriptures say.
Reformed Theology	Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards.	Moderate	Especially in covering Romans we will engage closely with reformed doctrine.
Sanctification	Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student's sanctification.	Strong	In covering Romans 7 and Galatians 5 there is strong emphasis upon not only Father and son, but also the power of the Spirit in sanctification.
Desire for Worldview	Burning desire to conform all of life to the Word of God.	Strong	As mentioned already, close attention will be given to how we should think as Christians.
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	As we cover reformed doctrine in Romans 9 and Ephesians 1 we will ask why Paul spoke of these things in these places... noting that humility not pride is a key point he wishes to highlight
Preach	Ability to preach and teach the meaning of Scripture to both heart and mind with clarity and enthusiasm.	Moderate	In covering Acts and Paul from a Greco-Roman perspective also, we will have a chance to look at principles of communication which also have relevance for preaching today
Worship	Knowledgeable of historic and modern Christian-		This is not a focus of the course,

	worship forms; and ability to construct and skill to lead a worship service.	Minimal	although in covering some passages on worship in both Acts and throughout Paul, some comment will be made.
Shepherd	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	Again, this is not a specific focus of this course.
Church/World	Ability to interact within a denominational context, within the broader worldwide church, and with significant public issues.	Moderate	With covering world-view strongly in this course, this will certainly come up as a subject for discussion.