

**Reformed Theological Seminary
Fall 2009**

**NT508 Gospels 3 Hrs.
Meeting Dates and Times: See Below**

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Description (as per *RTS Catalogue*)

“Attention is given to each writer’s literary art, theological teaching, pastoral purpose, and message for today’s church and world” (p.64).

Course Objectives

- (1) To understand and to evaluate critically academic research in the life of Jesus.
- (2) To identify the major periods of the ministry of Christ and to identify significant events within those periods.
- (3) To understand issues of special introduction pertaining to each Gospel.
- (4) To understand and to articulate the distinctive features of each canonical Gospel.
- (5) To understand and to articulate key aspects of the person and work of Christ as revealed in the Gospels.

Required Texts (see below for page assts.)

- (1) The Holy Bible, preferably in a recent translation such as the New American Standard, English Standard Version, New King James, or the New International Version.
- (2) Carson and Moo, *Introduction to the New Testament* (2d ed.)
- (3) Herman Ridderbos, *The Coming of the Kingdom*
- (4) Craig Blomberg, *Jesus and the Gospels* (2d ed.)
- (5) Everett Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity* (3d ed.)

Course Meeting Dates & Times

NT 506 will meet on the following dates and times. These are required sessions at which your prompt and engaged attendance is expected. If a student anticipates an unavoidable absence, he should notify the instructor in advance. Each hour of unexcused absence will reduce the student’s final grade by one-half of a letter grade.

Sept 11-12	7:30 – 10:00 P.M. / 9:00 A.M. – 4 P.M.
Oct 2-3	7:30 – 10:00 P.M. / 9:00 A.M. – 4 P.M.
Oct 16-17	7:30 – 10:00 P.M. / 9:00 A.M. – 4 P.M.
Nov 13-14	7:30 – 10:00 P.M. / 9:00 A.M. – 4 P.M.

Assignments & Requirements

Your assignments fall into three basic categories: digests, a final exam, and a research paper.

I. Digests (40%)

(1) To read and to prepare a digest of Everett Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity* (3d ed.), pp. 1 – 47, 396 – 582. See attached guidelines. **Due Sept 11.** Late work will subject your work to reduction of one full letter grade per day late (or fraction thereof). **10%** of the final grade.

(2) To read in full and to prepare a digest of Blomberg, *Jesus and the Gospels* (2d ed.). See attached guidelines. **Due Oct 2.** Late work will subject your work to reduction of one full letter grade per day late (or fraction thereof). **10%** of the final grade.

(3) To read in full and to prepare a digest of See attached guidelines. Carson and Moo, *Introduction* (2d ed.) Chapters 1-7. **Due Oct 16.** Late work will subject your work to reduction of one full letter grade per day late (or fraction thereof). **10%** of the final grade.

(4) To read in full and to prepare a digest of Ridderbos, *Coming of the Kingdom*. See attached guidelines. **Due Nov 13.** Late work will subject your work to reduction of one full letter grade per day late (or fraction thereof). **10%** of the final grade.

II. Exam (30%)

To complete a proctored final exam based on class lectures. Your proctor may be any RTS employee, an ordained minister or elder, or an employee of a testing center that offers proctoring services. Your proctor must submit your exam to me **by post** not later than **5 P.M., December 4, 2009.** Late submissions will subject your work to reduction of one full letter grade per day late (or fraction thereof). **25%** of the final grade.

You will be asked on your final exam to declare the extent of your reading in the assigned texts. This question will be worth **5%** of the final grade.

III. Research Paper (30%)

To prepare a 12-15 page research paper. This paper must be submitted to me **by post** not later than **5 P.M. November 20, 2009.** Late submissions will subject your work to reduction of one full letter grade per day late (or fraction thereof). See below for guidelines. **30%** of the final grade.

Submit to me (by e-mail) a brief paper proposal for my approval not later than **October 9, 2009**

Guidelines – Digests (adapted from Dr. Richard B. Gaffin, Jr.'s guidelines)

Please prepare a digest of each assigned reading, double-spaced or 1.5 spaced. A written digest is not simply a repetition but a summary or overview organized to highlight the author's main ideas and distinctive emphases. It may have one of several formats – an outline, a running commentary, a series of brief paragraphs. It should be concise without being superficial. A digest is not a response paper. I want to see that you have understood what you have read.

Your digests should be not longer than 10 pages each.

Paper Guidelines

You will submit a 12-15 page research paper, exclusive of cover page and bibliography. This paper is an exegetical paper that demonstrates awareness of and competence in both the primary and secondary literature.

You must submit your paper both in hard copy and electronically. You may direct your electronic copy to the following e-mail address: gwaters@rts.edu. The subject line of your e-mail should read: "NT 508 Final Paper." Send your paper in this e-mail as an MS-Word attachment **only**. Send the hard copy to me at the following address: Reformed Theological Seminary 5422 Clinton Blvd. Jackson, MS 39209-3099.

The paper should have the following elements and meet the following guidelines:

- A concise introduction that reflects your awareness of the pertinent issues
- A strong, incisive, clearly-stated thesis in the opening of the paper
- A cogent argument that is integrally tied to and flows from your thesis
- Organization that is both inherent to the paper and evident to your reader
- A conclusion that properly concludes the argument of your paper, concisely reflecting on the implications of your thesis for our understanding of biblical teaching (generally) and for the life of the church today.
- Fair and decisive engagement of the secondary literature. You should engage positions that are similar to your own and positions with which you disagree.
- Engagement of the following kinds of sources:
 - Academic commentaries (**not** collections of sermons, lay commentaries, or devotional expositions)
 - Academic monographs
 - Articles published in scholarly journals
 - Literature published both before and after 1900
 - Reformed & evangelical sources as well as non-Reformed sources
- Footnotes (not endnotes or parenthetical references!). Footnotes should be single spaced, 10 pt font. The first line of each footnote should be indented.
- Pagination – each page should be clearly numbered
- Consistent, readable margins – ½ to 1 inch margins on each side of the text
- Text set in left justification, Times New Roman font, 12 pt. Set your indentation at ½ inch.
- Double or 1.5 spacing only.
- Greek or Hebrew typed or handwritten (no transliterations)
- Documentation according to format and standards prescribed in the *SBL Handbook of Style* – this applies both to the body of the paper and the bibliography. Please take special note of the abbreviations.
- Absence of typographical, grammatical, syntactical, or spelling errors. Such errors will result in a lower grade on your paper. Proofread!
- A staple in the upper left hand corner – no folders, etc., please.

The Good Paper Guide

In grading your final paper, I will make reference to the following criteria (in addition to the guidelines set forth above, p.3). I have adopted these criteria, with slight modification, from a syllabus of Dr. W. Duncan Rankin.

General

Is the paper interesting? substantial? well-written?

Is the paper sufficiently focused or developed?

Is the paper organized? organized clearly?

Development and Flow

Does the paper show clear plan and purpose?

Treatment

Is the thesis of your paper stated clearly? Is your thesis pedestrian?

Does your paper raise more issues than you have adequately addressed in it?

Does your paper raise issues that cannot be adequately addressed in a paper of this scope and length?

Does your paper provide sufficient data to enable the reader to understand the problems and issues?

Does your paper set forth and engage various positions fully? fairly? objectively?

Does your paper provide careful, biblical exegesis?

Do your conclusions follow from the premises and data you set forth in the paper?

Does your paper evidence knowledge of and interaction with the broader Reformed tradition? views within modern evangelicalism? non-evangelical views?

Does your paper have material that should have been excised? Does it have material that is not germane to the subject?

Is the length of your paper adequate to address the issues raised?

Documentation

Is your paper well documented? adequately documented? poorly documented?

Bibliography

Does your paper have a bibliography?

Is your bibliography excellent? adequate? poor?

Does your paper omit key secondary sources that should have been included?

Appearance

Is your paper neat in appearance? Is your paper annoying to read?

Errors

Does your paper have typographical errors? grammatical errors? syntactical errors? spelling errors?

Time of Submission

Was your paper submitted on time?

Did you submit it in both hard copy and electronically (*per* syllabus instructions)?

Your assigned grade is based upon the following: your successful completion of the instructions for this assignment, as those instructions are set forth in this syllabus; your overall quality of presentation; my assessment of your grasp of the subject matter; your skill in communicating the material; the quality of your work relative to your peers in the course