Covenant Theology
ST 601
Reformed Theological Seminary – Charlotte
Spring 2011

Professor:
Dr. Stephen G. Myers
Telephone: 704-763-3732
Email: s.goodnight.myers@live.com

Office Hours:
Tuesdays 12:00 PM – 1:00 PM

Required Texts:
The Bible
The Westminster Confession of Faith

Other brief readings will be either required or recommended at various points in the course.

Course Structure and Objectives:
In this course, we will examine the role of Covenant in God’s redemptive purposes, giving attention to both the interrelationship and the development of the various covenants found in Scripture. Attention will be given to issues that have arisen within covenantal thought and to the centrality of covenant theology in some areas of contemporary debate. At each point, we will consider the influence of God’s Covenant and of covenant theology on the life of the Church today, placing particular emphasis on how covenant theology is to be preached for the glory of God and the good of His people.

Course Requirements:
Assigned Reading: All assigned reading (relevant Biblical passages; sections of the Westminster Confession; and assigned texts) must be completed prior to the final exam. There will be a question on the final exam asking how much of the assigned reading you have completed.

Exam: There will be a final exam covering all material discussed in class. The exam will consist of short answer and essay questions intended to test an overall command of the structure, implications, and applications of covenant theology. The exam will account for 1/3 of the final grade.

Essay: Each student will submit a 10-12 page (double-spaced, excluding bibliography) essay, due by the term paper deadline on May 12. Each student may determine the topic of his essay,
but each essay topic must be approved by the professor no later than April 26. Some
suggested/potential essay topics are as follows:

- Discuss the covenant of works. What Biblical support is there for such a covenant?
  What objections have been brought against the validity of this covenant? Who have
  been its significant supports and detractors? What are its broader theological
  implications? What role does its validity play in contemporary theological
discussions?

- Discuss the covenant of redemption. Is it distinct from the covenant of grace? What
  Biblical support is there for the covenant and for its relationship with the covenant of
  grace? What impact does the covenant of redemption have on broader theological
  issues?

- Discuss the relationship between the Mosaic covenant and the covenant of grace.
  How does the former fit into the development of the latter? What are some of the
  competing views?

- Discuss the prophetic literature’s development of the New Covenant. How was it
  related to the prior covenants? What was “new” about it?

- How does the Exile fit into the unity of the covenant of grace? How did the
  Scriptures anticipate the Exile? How did the Scriptures interpret the Exile both
during the Exile and after the Exile?

- Discuss the use and development of the “New Covenant” in chapters 8-10 of the book
  of Hebrews.

- Both in the history of covenant theology and in contemporary discussion, the
  interaction of “covenant” and “election” has been very important. Discuss the views
  that have been forwarded and how they have shaped both the development of
  covenant theology and the state of contemporary discourse. What is the proper
  Biblical understanding of the relationship between these two concepts?

- Choose a topic of contemporary theological discussion and explain both the role that
  covenant theology plays in that discussion and what further light covenant theology
  could shed on the issues at hand.

Proper footnote citation throughout the essay and a complete bibliography are required. The
essay will account for 1/3 of the final grade.

Sermon Manuscript: It can be all too easy to leave covenant theology in the classroom – or, at
best, in the background of our own minds – and never allow it openly to enter the pulpit and be
used for the instruction and edification of God’s people. As an exercise in preaching covenant
theology, each student will submit the full manuscript of a sermon on a relevant Biblical passage.
The manuscript will be 8-10 pages (double-spaced, excluding bibliography) and should attempt
both to bring out and to apply the covenantal implications of the passage. Each student may
choose the Biblical text for his manuscript, but each text must be approved by the professor no
later than the end of class on April 26. The manuscript will be due no later than the beginning of
class on May 3. These deadlines are late in the semester to allow students to prepare manuscripts
on New Testament passages covered late in the semester if they desire. However, if a student’s
selected text allows him to receive approval and submit his manuscript earlier in the semester, he
is encouraged to do so. Some suggested/potential texts are

- Foundational passages for the various covenants (these will become clear in the
  lectures and reading)
- Isaiah 42.1-9
- Ezekiel 37.1-14
- Romans 5.12-21
- II Corinthians 3.7-18
- Galatians 3.19-29

A bibliography of sources used is required. The manuscript will account for 1/3 of the final grade.

Policy on Late Assignments:
All late assignments will be assessed a 10 point deduction per day that the due date is exceeded.

Policy on Class Absences:
Attendance at lectures is mandatory. Unexcused absences will be penalized.

Tentative Lecture Schedule:
As the name implies, this schedule is subject to change, allowing for either more or less time to be given to various topics as needed. The assigned readings given for each week are intended to provide a schedule that would allow for a gradual, lecture-appropriate completion of the assigned readings over the course of the semester.

February 1 – Introduction; Terminology and history of covenant theology
  - Horton, chapters 1-2
  - Murray, pages 1-12
  - Robertson, chapters 1-2

February 8 – Foundational principles; Covenant of Works
  - Genesis 1-3
  - Westminster Confession IV; VI; VII.1-2
  - Horton, chapters 3-4; pages 83-104
  - Robertson, chapter 3-5

February 15 – Covenant of Redemption / Council of Peace
  - Horton, pages 77-82

February 22 – Spring Lecture Series; no class

March 1 – Covenant of Grace; Character and first announcement of the covenant
  - Westminster Confession VII.3-5; VIII
  - Horton, pages 104-110
  - Robertson, chapter 6

March 8 – No class

March 15 – Spring break; no class

March 22 – Noahic Covenant
- Genesis 6-9
- Horton, chapter 6
- Murray, pages 12-16
- Robertson, chapter 7

March 29 – Abrahamic Covenant
- Genesis 12, 15, 17
- Murray, pages 16-20
- Robertson, chapter 8

April 5 – Mosaic Covenant
- Exodus 19-20, 24
- Westminster Confession XVI; XIX-XX
- Murray, pages 20-22
- Robertson, chapter 8

April 12 – Davidic Covenant
- II Samuel 1-7
- Murray, pages 22-25
- Robertson, chapter 10

April 19 – The “New Covenant” in the prophetic literature
- Jeremiah 31.31-40
- Robertson, chapter 13

April 26 – Covenant in the New Testament
- Galatians 3.19-4.7; Hebrews 8-10
- Murray, pages 25-32
- Deadline for approval of essay and sermon topics

May 3 – Covenant and ecclesiology
- Westminster Confession VII.6; XXV-XXIX
- Horton, chapters 7-8
- Robertson, chapter 9
- Sermon manuscript due in class

May 10 – Covenant and contemporary theological issues; Review
- Horton, chapter 9
- Robertson, chapter 11

May 12 – Essay due