

Covenant Theology



Reformed Theological Seminary
Washington D.C.

NB: Before the first class meeting, please read *as much as possible*, but definitely have read Geerhardus Vos, “The Doctrine of the Covenant in Reformed Theology” (see below) and J.I. Packer, “Introduction: On Covenant Theology” in Herman Witsius, *The Economy of the Covenants* (on the course homepage).

6ST601 (2 Credits)
Winter 2012
January 25-27, 9AM-5PM

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Office Hours: make an appointment—I enjoy getting to know everyone I can.

Course Description:

As the bond of fellowship God establishes with man, created and fallen, covenant is central to the entire message of Holy Scripture. It is especially important in understanding the saving work of Christ, and so forms an indispensable foundation for preaching and pastoral ministry.

We will survey the successive biblical covenants from a redemptive historical perspective as well as examine the bi-covenantal structure of creation and redemption. Consideration will be given to issues such as the relation of the Old and New Testaments, the character of the Mosaic covenant, the significance of the covenants for the doctrine of the atonement, the implications of the covenant for Reformed hermeneutics, and family life.

Required Texts:

Vern S. Poythress, *Understanding Dispensationalists*; 978-0875523743
O. Palmer Robertson, *The Christ of the Covenants*; 978-0875524184
Geerhardus Vos, *Biblical Theology*; 978-0851514581
Rowland S. Ward, *God and Adam: Reformed Theology and the Creation Covenant*; 978-0958624169 (**available at Reformation Heritage Books**)

Articles (these will be on the course homepage):

Heinrich Heppe, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 281-319, 371-409.
 Donald Macleod, “Covenant Theology” in *Dictionary of Scottish Church History & Theology*, 214-218.
 Donald Macleod, “Covenant: 2” in *Banner of Truth* 141:22-28.
 Donald Macleod, “Federal Theology -- An Oppressive Legalism?” in *Banner of Truth* 125:21-28.
 J.I. Packer, “Introduction: On Covenant Theology” in Herman Witsius, *The Economy of the Covenants*.

Geerhardus Vos, “The Doctrine of the Covenant in Reformed Theology” in R.B. Gaffin, ed., *Redemptive History and Biblical Interpretation, The Shorter Writings of Geerhardus Vos*, pp. 234–67 (available at <http://www.biblicaltheology.org/dcrt.pdf>).
Westminster Confession of Faith 7: Of God's Covenant with Man.
Larger Catechism Questions 20-22, and 30-36.
Shorter Catechism Questions 12,16, and 20.

Requirements:

1. Class attendance is required of all students.
2. Completed reading, 20%.
3. Study notes, 30%. See below.
4. Final Exam, 50%. See below.

Course Outline:

Topic	Required Reading
Introduction; history; objections; the complex: “Covenants of ‘works/redemption/grace’”; controversies.	Macleod, “Covenant Theology”; Robertson, <i>Christ of the Covenants</i> , 3-63; WCF 7; LC Questions 20-22, 30-36; and SC Questions 12,16, & 20.
The Covenant of Works	<i>Christ of the Covenants</i> , 67-87; Macleod, “Covenant: 2” & “Federal Theology-An Oppressive Legalism?”; Heinrich Heppe, <i>Reformed Dogmatics</i> , 281-319; Ward, <i>God and Adam</i> , 1-27.
The Covenant of Redemption/ <i>Pactum Salutis</i>	Geerhardus Vos, “The Doctrine of the Covenant in Reformed Theology.”
The Covenant of Grace—Adam	<i>Christ of the Covenants</i> , 91-107; Heppe, <i>Reformed Dogmatics</i> , 371-409; Ward, <i>God and Adam</i> , 28-76.
The Covenant of Grace—Noah	<i>Christ of the Covenants</i> , 109-125; <i>God and Adam</i> , 77-125.
The Covenant of Grace—Abraham (Isaac, Jacob, Joseph)	<i>Christ of the Covenants</i> , 127-166; <i>God and Adam</i> , 126-197.
The Covenant of Grace—Moses	<i>Christ of the Covenants</i> , 167-199.
Dispensationalism	Poythress, <i>Understanding</i>

	<i>Dispensationalists (all); Christ of the Covenants, 201-227.</i>
The Covenant of Grace—David	<i>Christ of the Covenants, 229-269.</i>
The Covenant of Grace—Jeremiah 31	<i>Christ of the Covenants, 271-300.</i>
The Covenant of Grace—The New Covenant	<i>Vos, Biblical Theology, 3-182; 185-342.</i>
The Covenant of Grace and the Family	

Study Notes: (typed, double-spaced, twelve point font)

1. *Westminster Confession of Faith* Outline Assignment: develop a concise, typed outline of WC Chapter 7.
2. Ward Synopsis: produce a one-page synopsis of Rowland Ward's *God and Adam*. The synopsis should be in outline form. Begin with a paragraph stating book's thesis and conclusions. Then state the key points in each section, and be as compact and lucid as possible. The goal is to accurately reproduce the flow of the book's argument and its main points. You may also want to create a list of the best quotes, and points of weakness or disagreement.
3. Answer *Questions for Robertson's Christ of the Covenants*. This will be on the course homepage.

The Study Notes are due in hard copy (no electronic submissions please) to me on **February 18th, 2012**. I do not accept late submissions.

4. *Final Exam:*

This 3-hour exam will cover the readings and lectures. It will be posted on the course homepage. It will be due, uploaded to the homepage on **March 10th, 2012**. The exam is to be proctored by a minister or elder. I do not accept late submissions.

Extra Credit: you may wish to write a brief paper on some aspect of the course. Please discuss this with me. I will offer bibliographic suggestions.

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

Course: 6ST601

Professor: Howard Griffith

Campus: Washington

Date: Winter 2012

<u>MDiv Student Learning Outcomes</u>		<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.	Strong	Preparation of outlines, summaries and exam questions. Optional research paper.
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	Biblical theological emphasis on progressive realization of covenants.
Reformed Theology	Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards.	Strong	Reiterates the basics and reinforces God's sovereign grace in each epoch of redemptive history.
Sanctification	Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student's sanctification.	Moderate	Relevance to the Christian life and Christian family life is stressed.
Desire for Worldview	Burning desire to conform all of life to the Word of God.	Strong	The covenant structures the entire life of the Christian. That is central content in the course.
Winsomely Reformed/ Evangelistic	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	Emphasis on the relation of the offer of grace in the covenant to evangelism.
Preach	Ability to preach and teach the meaning	Moderate	Much on proper interpretation

	of Scripture to both heart and mind with clarity and enthusiasm.		for preaching.
Worship	Knowledgeable of historic and modern Christian-worship forms; and ability to construct and skill to lead a worship service.	None	
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.	None	
Church/World	Ability to interact within a denominational context, within the broader worldwide church, and with significant public issues.	Minimal	Distinctives of Reformed churches' theology, related to that of other Protestants.