Advanced Biblical Exegesis
0ON504, 3 Credit Hours

Lectures by
Robert J. Cara, Ph.D. and
Richard P. Belcher, Jr., Ph.D
This course notebook is for the coordination of your course materials, including reading assignments and lecture recordings. Each course notebook for RTS Distance Education is arranged by the GUIDE acronym. The five components of GUIDE are organized in each lesson by the following steps in the notebook:

**GUIDE**

- **Getting Started**: To do the lessons, reading and listening assignments are listed.
- **Understanding**: To maximize learning, the purposes are given.
- **Investigating**: To explore the content, outlines are provided for note taking.
- **Developing**: To expand content, readings are suggested.
- **Evaluating**: To help review, lesson questions are based on purposes.
COURSE SYLLABUS

Advanced Biblical Exegesis, OON504, 3 hours
Lecturing Professors: Dr. Robert J. Cara and Dr. Richard P. Belcher, Jr.
Professor of Record: Dr. Richard P. Blecher, Jr.
Reformed Theological Seminary, Distance Education

Lecturing Professor

Dr. Robert J. Cara is Professor of New Testament at RTS-Charlotte and Chief Academic Officer for the RTS institution. Dr. Cara was an engineer for seven years before the Lord re-directed him toward seminary. In addition to the traditional New Testament topics, Dr. Cara’s academic interests include relating the New Testament to Reformed Theology, creeds, hermeneutics, creation, and narrative criticism. His commentary on 1 & 2 Thessalonians was recently published with Evangelical Press. As an ordained minister in the ARP 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. 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.

Course Description

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

The overarching purpose is for the student to interact with a variety of macro-hermeneutical issues, including Reformed models, to enable the student to better interpret/apply the Bible. Course objectives as coordinated with MDiv Student Learning Outcomes are shown at the end of this document.

Required Textbooks


All required books are available through the RTS Online Bookstore at www.mindandheart.com.
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. You will find it located at the RTS Distance Education website (www.rts.edu/distance) under the Student Services tab.

Summary of Requirements
• Listen to all Recorded Lectures
• Complete all Readings
• Participate in Forum Discussions (with other students and Professor)
• Take the Final Exam
• Submit Reading Report
• Submit Two Papers
• Submit Mentor Report/Course Application Paper

Forum Discussions (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.

Examinations (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. 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 Report (10%)

Each student must complete all of the required reading in the Beale, Greidanus, and Swain books. Reading assignments are broken down week by week in the modules of the LMS. Please click on “Submit Assignment” and provide the following information:

- Your Name
- Percentage of Required Reading you have completed
- Your course end date

Papers (40%)

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:
  - A statement that student read 100% of Pratt reading requirement.
  - 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.
  - The paper should show knowledge of your covenantal community, and categories in Pratt’s book and Cara’s lectures.
  - 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.
  - 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*.
- Submit a 7-10 page paper, with few or no footnotes, that includes:
  - A statement that student read 100% of book within the volume.
  - A summary of the book (1/3 of paper).
  - 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.
  - Paper due at the end of the course.

Mentor Report/Course Application Paper (5%)

Each Global/Non-Residential student is required to have a mentor submit a report at the end of the course. This report will contribute to 5% of the student’s grade. For students who are not Global/Non-Residential, 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.

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 (Learning Management System). 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.

Grading Scale
The Seminary’s published grading scale, is as follows:

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<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
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<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td>71-70</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>69 and below</td>
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</tbody>
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Contact Information
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Web site: www.rts.edu/distance
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
# Course Objectives Related to MDiv Student Learning Outcomes With Mini-Justification

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

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>MDiv Student Learning Outcomes</th>
<th>Rubric</th>
<th>Mini-Justification</th>
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| **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 | 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. |
| **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.) | Moderate | 1. Scriptures’ interpretation of Scripture is included.  
2. Scriptures’ understanding of “meaning” is evaluated. |
| **Reformed Theology** | 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. |
| **Sanctification** | Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student's sanctification. | Minimal | 1. Psalm singing in class  
2. Self-reflection paper. |
| **Desire for Worldview** | Burning desire to conform all of life to the Word of God. | Strong | 1. The Bible is the ultimate authority of hermeneutical questions.  
2. Student’s background affects hermeneutics. |
| **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 | 1. The ethos of RTS is presented and evaluated as to how that affects hermeneutics. |
| **Preach** | 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.” |
| **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. | Minimal | 1. Understand one’s own background is an aid to understanding others. |
| **Church/World** | 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.  