Covenant Theology
OST601, 2 Credit Hours

Lectures by
J. Ligon Duncan III, Ph.D.
RTS Distance Education

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 and objectives 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 objectives.
COURSE SYLLABUS
Covenant Theology, 0ST601, 2 hours
Lecturing Professor: Dr. J. Ligon Duncan III
Professor of Record: Dr. Scott R. Swain
Reformed Theological Seminary, Distance Education

Lecturing Professor
Dr. J. Ligon Duncan III, a native of Greenville, South Carolina, was born and reared in the home of an eighth generation Southern Presbyterian Ruling Elder. A 1983 graduate of Furman University, he received an MDiv from Covenant Theological Seminary and studied Systematic Theology at the Free Church of Scotland College under Professor Donald Macleod. He earned the PhD from the University of Edinburgh, Scotland, in 1995.

He served on the staff of The Covenant Presbyterian Church of St. Louis from 1984-1987, and supplied pulpits in churches of the Presbyterian Association of England, Church of Scotland, and Free Church of Scotland while in Britain from 1987-1990. In 1990 he was ordained in the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) and joined the faculty of Reformed Theological Seminary (RTS), Jackson, Mississippi where he was Chairman of the Department of Systematic Theology, and the John R. Richardson Professor of Theology. At RTS he was responsible for teaching courses such as Systematic Theology, Ethics, Apologetics, History of Philosophy and Christian Thought, Covenant Theology, Patristics, Evangelism, and Theology of the Westminster Standards. He became the Senior Minister of First Presbyterian, Jackson in 1996. Ligon and his wife, Anne, are the parents of Sarah, Kennedy and Jennings.

Professor of Record
Dr. Scott R. Swain joined the faculty of Reformed Theological Seminary in 2006. Prior to that, he taught theology at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, Illinois and served on the faculty of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas. He currently serves as Associate Professor of Systematic Theology and Academic Dean on the Orlando campus.

In his teaching and research, Dr. Swain seeks to retrieve the riches of patristic, medieval, and Reformation patterns of biblical interpretation and theologizing for the sake of the contemporary church’s renewal according to the Word of God. With Michael Allen, he edits two series that endeavor to embody a theology of “renewal through retrieval”: Zondervan Academic’s New Studies in Dogmatics and T & T Clark’s International Theological Commentary. Dr. Swain’s main research interests include the doctrine of God and the theological interpretation of Scripture. At present, he is working on a book on the divine names.

Dr. Swain is an ordained minister in the Presbyterian Church in America. He and his wife, Leigh, have four children.
Course Description
This course is a study of Covenant Theology from exegetical, theological and historical perspectives. Covenant theology is the Bible’s way of explaining and deepening our understanding of (1) the atonement; (2) our assurance; (3) the sacraments; (4) the continuity of redemptive history; and (5) Dynamic of God’s sovereignty and Christian responsibility/piety. The doctrine of the covenants is thus important for both Reformed systematic and biblical theology (the study of special revelation from the standpoint of redemptive history).

The course 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 significance of the covenants for the doctrine of the atonement, for understanding sacramental theology, the implications of Covenant Theology for Reformed hermeneutics and more. Emphasis will be placed on the role of the Biblical doctrine of the covenants for preaching and pastoral ministry.

Course Objectives
To assist the student in mastering an outline of the covenantal structure of redemptive history and to help him/her begin to grasp the manifold implications of the Biblical doctrine of the covenants (for soteriology and especially the atonement, sacraments, evangelism, family life, ecclesiology, and more). The course will also aim to equip the student with a working knowledge of the history of Covenant Theology and some of the more important objections to Covenant Theology from its theological critics.

Required Textbooks


Ward, Rowland. God and Adam: Reformed Theology and the Creation Covenant. (This book can be purchased in digital PDF format for $6 from: http://www.rowlandward.net/?page_id=133 by PayPal or credit card. Upon purchase a download link will be emailed to the purchaser. Please note: Because of the low price, the digital version is only intended for personal use and is not to be distributed or copied to others.)

Syllabus Articles:
Heinrich Heppe, Reformed Dogmatics, 281-319, 371-409
Donald Macleod, Covenant Theology in DSCH&T, 214-218
Donald Macleod, Covenant: 2 in Banner of Truth [BoT] 141:22-28
Donald Macleod, The Lord’s Supper as a Means of Grace in BoT 64:16-22
Donald Macleod, Qualifications for Communion in BoT 65:14-20
Donald Macleod, The Real Presence in BoT 66:13-16

*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*
COURSE REQUIREMENTS
Covenant Theology, 0ST601, 2 hours
Lecturing Professor: Dr. J. Ligon Duncan III
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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 (www.rts.edu/distance) under the Student Services tab.

Summary of Requirements
All work is to be completed within three (3) months from your start date:
• Follow the Notebook provided during the course
• Listen to all recorded lectures
• Complete all readings
• Participate in Forum Discussions (with other students and the professor)
• Take the Midterm Exam
• Take the Final Exam
• Submit Course Paper
• 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 (Midterm 20%, Final 20%)

There are two examinations for this course. The midterm examination will cover the lectures and readings from lesson one through lesson four. The final examination will cover the lectures and readings from lesson five through lesson nine, but the student should have a general understanding of all the covenants found in scripture.

The student should use Lesson Questions, and Topical Discussion Questions to guide them in their preparation and study for the exam. The format for both exams will be identification questions (1-2 sentences), short essay questions (1-2 paragraphs), and one long essay question (1 page). The student will have three hours to complete the exam.

The midterm and final exams for this course are 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.

Paper (40%)

The student will write and submit a 12-15 page research paper (12 pt. font and double spaced) with appropriate footnoting and bibliography according to Turabian style. The paper must also:

- Have a proper and clear thesis, introduction, structure, and conclusion
- Consider and investigate the relevant information competently and fairly to all sides
- Interact with both primary and secondary material
- Demonstrate that the student has synthesized the materials coming to their own conclusion, and has clearly thought about it ‘theologically’ and practically
- Cite at least five scholarly sources that are not part of the required reading of this course
- Cite at least two scholarly journal articles

Listed below are broad categories to guide the student in framing their paper topic.
The student should use the categories as a starting place for their research, and then focus on a particular issue of the larger category. For help with paper topics please contact the professor of this course.

1. Explain what we learn about the Davidic Covenant through its application in Psalm 89.
2. Discuss how Christ is the heir of the Davidic Throne.
3. Explore the concept of the Covenant of Works within Reformed theology.
5. Discuss the relationship between circumcision and baptism.
6. Discuss the use of the Covenant idea in the first 500 years of church history.
7. Discuss the way in which Covenant Theology explains and helps us to understand the nature of the atonement.
8. Explore the distinctions and contention between Covenant Theology and Dispensationalism.
9. Evaluate the relationship of the Mosaic Covenant to the Covenant of Works.
10. Examine the prophecies of the New Covenant in the Old Testament.
11. Discuss how the New Covenant is a fulfillment of the Old Covenants.
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. 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.

Contact Information

Reformed Theological Seminary, Distance Education
2101 Carmel Road
Charlotte, NC 28226
(704) 900-1257
1-855-854-6920
FAX: (704) 366-9295
E-mail: dess@rts.edu
Web site: www.rts.edu/distance
Lesson One
   Introduction to Covenant Theology

Lesson Two
   Covenant of Works and the Fall

Lesson Three
   Covenant with Noah

Lesson Four
   Covenant with Abraham

Lesson Five
   Mosaic Covenant

Lesson Six
   Davidic Covenant

Lesson Seven
   Dispensationalism

Lesson Eight
   New Covenant Prophecies in the Old Testament

Lesson Nine
   The New Testament on Covenant
## Course Objectives Related to MDiv Student Learning Outcomes

**Course:** Covenant Theology  
**Professor:** Rev. Dr. J. Ligon Duncan III

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>MDiv Student Learning Outcomes</th>
<th>Rubric</th>
<th>Mini-Justification</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Articulation (oral &amp; written)</strong></td>
<td>Broadly understands and articulates knowledge, both oral and written, of essential biblical, theological, historical, and cultural/global information, including details, concepts, and frameworks.</td>
<td>Strong</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Scripture</strong></td>
<td>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.)</td>
<td>Strong</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Reformed Theology</strong></td>
<td>Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards.</td>
<td>Strong</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Sanctification</strong></td>
<td>Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student’s sanctification.</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
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<td><strong>Desire for Worldview</strong></td>
<td>Burning desire to conform all of life to the Word of God.</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Winsomely Reformed/Evangelistic</strong></td>
<td>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.)</td>
<td>Strong</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Preach</strong></td>
<td>Ability to preach and teach the meaning of Scripture to both heart and mind with clarity and enthusiasm.</td>
<td>Strong</td>
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<td><strong>Worship</strong></td>
<td>Knowledgeable of historic and modern Christian-worship forms; and ability to construct and skill to lead a worship service.</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Shepherd</strong></td>
<td>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.</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Church/World</strong></td>
<td>Ability to interact within a denominational context, within the broader worldwide church, and with significant public issues.</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
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