

**REFORMED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY** (Jackson, Mississippi)  
*ST601 Covenant Theology \* Spring Semester, 2012 \* Ligon Duncan*

### **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.

### **Course Requirements**

Required Texts:

Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* [211-218; 262-301]; 978-0802838209

Vern Poythress, *Understanding Dispensationalists*; 978-0875523743

O.Palmer Robertson, *Christ of the Covenants*; 978-0875524184

Geerhardus Vos, *Biblical Theology* [3-182, 185-342] 978-0851514581

Rowland Ward, *God and Adam: Reformed Theology and the Creation Covenant* 978-0958624169

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, *Federal Theology -- An Oppressive Legalism?* in *BoT* 125:21-28

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

Approximately 1137 pages of reading are required for this course. The breakdown is as follows: Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* [46]; Vern Poythress, *Understanding Dispensationalists* [137]; O.Palmer Robertson, *Christ of the Covenants* [300]; Geerhardus Vos, *Biblical Theology* [336]; Rowland Ward, *God and Adam: Reformed Theology and The Creation Covenant* [202]; Syllabus Articles: Heinrich Heppe, *Reformed Dogmatics* [76]; Donald Macleod, *Covenant Theology* [4]; Donald Macleod, *Covenant: 2* [7]; Donald Macleod, *Federal Theology -- An Oppressive Legalism?* [8]; Donald Macleod, *The Lord's Supper as a Means of Grace* [7]; Donald Macleod, *Qualifications for Communion* [7]; Donald Macleod, *The Real Presence* [4]; *Westminster Confession of Faith* 7: Of God's Covenant with Man [1]; *Larger Catechism* Questions 20-22,30-36 [1]; *Shorter Catechism* Questions 12,16,& 20 [1].

### **Class Attendance**

Given the huge amount of material we have to cover and the relative scarcity of classroom hours, attendance will be at a premium and, of course, to the benefit of the student. My TA will take roll at every class. If you need to miss a class or to leave early or to arrive late, you should seek permission (via my TA, my EA or myself). Failure to attend class, or to engage while in the class, will be noted. No unexplained absences.

### **Academic Integrity**

All work submitted must be the student's own. Group-produced work is not permitted. Plagiarism and copying of old assignments are all considered cheating. Students who do not fulfill assignments with requisite academic integrity will be referred to the Academic Dean with a recommendation for discipline (the student should also consult pp. 33-34 in the Handbook for further details).

### **Technology Use**

Laptop computers may not be used during this course. Students desiring to use a laptop for note-taking purposes only may request an application for permission to do so.

### **Course Evaluation**

1. **Reading and Course Notebook** (20%) Each student will keep a course notebook to reflect his studies in the course as well as provide the basis for future study or teaching opportunities. Please see the directions below for completing this assignment.
2. **Doctrinal Précis'** (15%) Each student must complete four, one-page précis' of 4 assigned topics: *Covenant Theology (Definition, Description, Distinctives, and History)*; *Covenant of Redemption*; *Covenant of Works*; *Covenant of Grace*. Please be sure to follow the correct format; see the TA if you have any questions, uncertainties, or difficulties.
3. **Weekly Quizzes** (15%) The Student should prepare for and expect a quiz each week over the reading that is due on that day.
4. **Final Examination** (50%) The Exam will cover reading and lecture material from the whole of the course. Further details will be given.

*NB:* Assignments and quizzes will be returned via campus mail. Per Seminary policy, all students enrolled for credit are *required* to have a campus mailbox; the mailroom does not "hold" assignments for students who choose not to open a mailbox, so please ensure that you have done this well in advance of the first assignment's due date.

### **Late Work**

Students should make every effort to turn in work on time or early. In the rare case of medical or other providential emergency, extensions and/or alternative arrangements may be granted. In most cases, late assignments will be accepted but penalized one letter grade per day. Please make these arrangements with the TA as soon as possible.

### Instructions for Course Notebook

The notebook assignment is designed to reward students for their labors in engaging in the classroom and in assigned reading, and to provide them with a study guide for the final exam—as well as a permanent reference resource for studying and teaching Covenant Theology in the future.

#### 1. Classnotes Assignment:

Inclusion of the student's classnotes in the course notebook will enable the instructor to gauge the quality of classroom listening and comprehension, and notetaking (and make adjustments in delivery or content beneficial for students).

#### 2. Reading Notes Assignment:

Please include your notes taken (*typed or neatly scripted*) on reading of Berkhof, Poythress, Macleod and Heppie.

#### 3. Westminster Confession of Faith (WCF) Outline Assignment:

This project calls for the student to develop a concise, typed, outline of the *assigned* chapter of the *WCF* (chapter 7).

#### 4. Ward Synopsis

The student will produce a one-page synopsis of Rowland Ward's *God and Adam*. The synopsis should be in outline form or in abbreviated narrative, should aim to enumerate the key points in each section, and should be as compact and lucid as possible. The goal of the synopsis is for the student to accurately reproduce the flow of the book's argument and its main thrust and points. The synopsis should begin with a paragraph-length statement of the book's thesis and conclusion. Then, an outline of the assigned contents should follow. The student may also want to create a list of the best quotes, and points of weakness or disagreement.

### Due Dates Summary

<b>Feb. 25</b>	Précis on Covenant of Works
<b>Mar. 18</b>	Précis on Covenant of Grace
<b>Apr. 8</b>	Précis of Covenant Theology
<b>Apr. 22</b>	Précis on Covenant of Redemption
<b>Apr. 29</b>	Course Binder Due (Last Day of Class)

### Collection of Assignments

All assignments are due at the beginning of class. Assignments received after this time will be considered late and penalized accordingly. Assignments are not to be emailed to the TA, but rather physical copies should be submitted.

## Course Outline and Assignment Schedule

Listed below are the dates and topics and weekly assignment timetable/due dates for our course.

***Please factor these into to your term calendar now!***

- January 28            **Introduction to Covenant Theology**  
 What is Covenant Theology?; What is a Covenant? Why study it?  
 Syllabus/Reading/Assignment Review
- February 4            **Introduction to Covenant Theology**  
 Covenant Theology (History and Objections)  
 DUE: Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 211-218.  
 DUE: Donald Macleod, *Covenant Theology*.  
 DUE: O. Palmer Robertson, *Christ of the Covenants*, 3-63.  
 DUE: *WCF* 7; *LC* Questions 20-22, 30-36; and *SC* Questions 12,16,& 20.
- February 11           **Covenant of Works (or Creation)**  
 DUE: O. Palmer Robertson, *Christ of the Covenants*, 67-87.  
 DUE: Donald Macleod, *Covenant: 2 & Federal Theology-An Oppressive Legalism?*  
 DUE: Heinrich Heppe, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 281-319.  
 DUE: Ward, *God and Adam*, 1-27.
- February 18           **Covenant of Grace (Adam)**  
 DUE: O. Palmer Robertson, *Christ of the Covenants*, 91-107.  
 DUE: Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* [262-301].  
 DUE: Heinrich Heppe, *Reformed Dogmatics* [371-409]  
 DUE: Ward, *God and Adam*, 28-76.
- February 25           **Covenant of Grace (Noah)**  
 DUE: O. Palmer Robertson, *Christ of the Covenants*, 109-125.  
 DUE: Ward, *God and Adam*, 77-125.  
 \*\* All students submit précis on *Covenant of Works*.
- March 4                **Covenant of Grace (Abraham)**  
 DUE: O. Palmer Robertson, *Christ of the Covenants*, 127-146.  
 DUE: Ward, *God and Adam*, 126-146.
- March 11              **No Class today — Happy Spring Break!**
- March 18              **Covenant of Grace (Abraham)**  
 DUE: O. Palmer Robertson, *Christ of the Covenants*, 147-166.  
 DUE: Donald Macleod, *The Lord's Supper as a Means of Grace* (all),  
*Qualifications for Communion* (all), and *The Real Presence* (all).  
 DUE: Ward, *God and Adam*, 147-197.  
 \*\*All students submit précis on *Covenant of Grace*.

- March 25                   **Covenant of Grace (Moses)**  
DUE: O. Palmer Robertson, *Christ of the Covenants*, 167-199.
- April 1                     **Dispensationalism**  
DUE: Vern Poythress, *Understanding Dispensationalists* (all).  
DUE: O. Palmer Robertson, *Christ of the Covenants*, 201-227.
- April 8                     **Covenant of Grace (David)**  
DUE: O. Palmer Robertson, *Christ of the Covenants*, 229-269.  
\*\*All students submit précis on *Covenant Theology*  
(*Definition, Description, Distinctives, and History*).
- April 15                   **Covenant of Grace (Jeremiah-New)**  
DUE: O. Palmer Robertson, *Christ of the Covenants*, 271-300.
- April 22                   **Covenant of Grace (New)**  
DUE: Vos, *Biblical Theology*, 3-182.  
\*\*All students submit précis on *Covenant of Redemption*.
- April 29                   **Covenant of Grace (New) [Last Day of Class]**  
DUE: Vos, *Biblical Theology*, 185-342.  
Course Notebook and Revised Précis Deadline  
\*\*All students submit Course Notebook

**Paper Day: May 6, 2013 5:00 p.m.**

**Final Exams: May 7-9, 2013**

## Teacher Information

### About the Teacher

For inquiring minds who want to know, I taught full-time at RTS from June 1990- July 1996 and then became the Minister of the historic First Presbyterian Church (1837), Jackson, Mississippi in August of 1996. I am a native of Greenville, South Carolina, and was born and reared in a Christian home (a ninth generation Southern Presbyterian to be precise!). I am a graduate of Furman University, Greenville, SC (BA); Covenant Theological Seminary, St. Louis (MDiv, MA); and the University of Edinburgh, Scotland (PhD). I have been here in Jackson for over 21 years now.

My wife, Anne (who is a graduate of Furman University, BA; Gordon-Conwell Seminary, MRE; and Reformed Theological Seminary, MA [MFT]) is currently Director of Community Service at the Jackson Preparatory School, in Flowood, MS. She is an accomplished Christian Educator in her own right, and is the loving mother of our daughter, Sarah Kennedy (now 16), and son, Jennings (now 12).

### Contacting the Teacher

My address and contact numbers are below. Catching me can be a challenge, my Executive Assistant Ms. Jan Hyde or my Teaching Assistant Ryan Biese may be your best bet. Appointments should be scheduled through Ms. Hyde, at 601 973 9104.

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First Presbyterian Church

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Jackson, MS 39202

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Phone 601.973.9104 FAX 601.353.9686 (direct lines to Ministers' Office)

Website: [www.fpcjackson.org](http://www.fpcjackson.org)

**Executive Assistant** Jan Hyde: [JHyde@fpcjackson.org](mailto:JHyde@fpcjackson.org)

**Campus Office** Dean Center

**Campus Phone** 601.923.1689 (extension 689 if dialed internally)

**TA:** Ryan Biese – [rbiese@rts.edu](mailto:rbiese@rts.edu)

**TA:** Rev. Kevin Phipps –

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

Course: Covenant Theology  
 Professor: Rev. Dr. J. Ligon Duncan III  
 Campus: Jackson  
 Date: Spring 2013

<b><u>MDiv Student Learning Outcomes</u></b>		<b><u>Rubric</u></b> > Strong > Moderate > Minimal > None	<b><u>Mini-Justification</u></b>
<b>Articulation (oral &amp; written)</b>	Broadly understands and articulates knowledge, both oral and written, of essential biblical, theological, historical, and cultural/global information, including details, concepts, and frameworks.	Strong	<i>The student will have a firm grasp of the fundamentals of Covenant theology as it spans and integrates the Scripture; the student will articulate his knowledge on the cumulative, comprehensive final exam as well as on four précis assignments.</i>
<b>Scripture</b>	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	<i>The student will be able to understand how God has dealt with man in terms of covenants throughout all of history.</i>
<b>Reformed Theology</b>	Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards.	Strong	<i>Covenant Theology is an important concept to Reformed Theology; without a firm foundation and introduction to the Covenants, the student will be unable to grasp the Westminster Standards.</i>
<b>Sanctification</b>	Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student's sanctification.	Moderate	<i>The student will glorify the God who freely bound Himself save dead sinners by means of the Covenant of Grace.</i>
<b>Desire for Worldview</b>	Burning desire to conform all of life to the Word of God.	Moderate	<i>The student will be able to articulate a world and life view in which the Covenant of Grace is freely offered to all men as the one means of salvation from the wrath to come.</i>
<b>Winsomely Reformed/ Evangelistic</b>	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	<i>The student will understand the distinctiveness and necessity of Covenant Theology as well as a respectful engagement of alternatives such as Dispensationalism.</i>
<b>Preach</b>	Ability to preach and teach the meaning of Scripture to both heart and mind with clarity and enthusiasm.	Strong	<i>The student will find that a Scripture united by covenants provides fertile ground for harvesting preaching texts, topics, and applications.</i>
<b>Worship</b>	Knowledgeable of historic and modern Christian-worship forms; and ability to construct and skill to lead a worship service.	Moderate	<i>This course will aid the worshiper to better know the God who commands us to worship Him according to His word.</i>
<b>Shepherd</b>	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.	Moderate	<i>By studying the theology taught in God's Word, the man of God is equipped to better use his gifts and callings, to encourage, reprove, rebuke, and exhort with complete patience and teaching.</i>

<b>Church/World</b>	Ability to interact within a denominational context, within the broader worldwide church, and with significant public issues.	<b>Moderate</b>	<i>While ecclesiology is covered a different course, proper theology is essential for good and right doxology, both to understand how to love one's neighbor as well as love one's brethren.</i>
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