

Birmingham Theological Seminary 2200 Briarwood Way Birmingham, Alabama 35243 (205) 776-5650

TH3004 Varieties of Evangelical Covenant Theology Syllabus

Semester: Fall 2025 **Course:** TH3004 Varieties of Evangelical Covenant Theology

Day & Time:See scheduleRoom:ZoomProfessor:Harrison PerkinsCredits:3

Email: harrison.perkins@ohcc.net

Course Note: TH3004 is a research-level seminar and prioritizes interaction with the sources. Accordingly, there is no lecture component. The class sessions focus on presentation and discussion concerning the required readings. The goal is to strengthen the students in analytical skills and interpretation of texts. You will need to come to the first class session having completed a reading and a written assignment.

Course Description: TH3004 is a seminar that explores readings on varieties of evangelical covenant theology. The doctrine of the covenant has received surging attention in biblical theology and systematic theology. Various Protestant traditions have treated the covenants as they have recognized their importance for structuring redemptive history. This class considers readings from differing approaches and perspectives to covenant theology. Particular focus is given to understanding and discussing important texts.

Course Objectives:

- Analyze source readings
 - o Classify reading material
 - o **Appreciate** strengths
 - o Criticize weaknesses
- Evaluate differing approaches to a doctrinal and exegetical topic
 - o Compare and relate particular approaches and perspectives
 - o **Defend** a truth claim about covenant theology
 - o Express ability to critique appreciatively and polemically
- Create a statement of constructive doctrinal synthesis
 - o Formulate doctrinal categories
 - o Appropriate truth for significance
 - o **Deploy** knowledge for the local church

Required Texts:

- Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, trans. George Musgrave Giger, ed. James T. Dennison Jr., 3 vol. (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 1992–1997), 1:569–589, 2:169–269.
- O. Palmer Robertson, *The Christ of the Covenants* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R,1980), all.
- Brent L. Parker and Richard J. Lucas (eds.), *Covenantal and Dispensational Theologies:* Four Views on the Continuity of Scripture (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2022), 74–111, 201–220.
- John Murray, The Covenant of Grace (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 1953), all.
- Michael F. Bird, *Evangelical Theology: A Biblical and Systematic Introduction*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2020), 269–291.*
- Samuel Renihan, *The Mystery of Christ: His Covenant and His Kingdom* (Cape Coral, FL: Founders Press, 2020), all.
- Kark Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, ed. G. W. Bromiley and T. F. Torrance, (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1956), IV.1:22–78.
- Greg L. Bahnsen, Walter C. Kaiser Jr., Douglas J. Moo, Wayne G. Strickland, and Willem A. VanGemeren, *Five Views on Law and Gospel* (Counterpoints; Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996), 13–58, 93–143, 177–99, 229–79, 319–76 (main essays, but not responses)
- Geerhardus Vos, Reformed Dogmatics: A System of Christian Theology (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Academic, 2020), 229–238 (Qs 12–20), 249–267 (Qs11–25), 294–255 (Qs1–50).
- Harrison Perkins, *Reformed Covenant Theology: A Systematic Introduction* Bellingham, WA: Lexham Academic, 2024), all

Total reading: 1567 pages

Collateral or Recommended Texts:

- Kark Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, ed. G. W. Bromiley and T. F. Torrance, (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1956), III.1:94–329.
- Daniel I. Block, *Covenant: The Framework of God's Grand Plan of Redemption* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2021).
- Peter J. Gentry and Stephen J. Wellum, *God's Kingdom through God's Covenants: A Concise Biblical-Theology* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015).
- J. V. Fesko, *The Trinity and the Covenant of Redemption* (Fearn: Mentor, 2016).
- J. V. Fesko, Adam and the Covenant of Works (Fearn: Mentor, 2021)
- Peter J. Gentry and Stephen J. Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant: A Biblical-Theological Understanding of the Covenants*, 2nd ed. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2018).
- Scott W. Hahn, Kinship by Covenant: A Canonical Approach to the Fulfillment of God's Saving Promises (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009).*
- Stephen Myers, *God to Us: Covenant Theology in Scripture* (Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 2021).

- Robert Rollock, Some Questions and Answers about God's Covenant and the Sacrament that is a Seal of God's Covenant: with Related Texts, ed. and trans. Aaron Clay Denlinger (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2016).
- John H. Walton and J. Harvey Walton, *The Lost World of the Torah: Law as Covenant and Wisdom in Ancient Context* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2019).*
- Guy Prentiss Waters, J. Nicholas Reid, and John R. Muether (eds.), *Covenant Theology: Biblical, Theological, and Historical Perspectives* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2020).
- Paul R. Williamson, *Sealed with an Oath: Covenant in God's Unfolding Purpose* (New Studies in Biblical Theology; London: Apollos/Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2007).
- Herman Witsius, *The Economy of the Covenants between God and Man*, 2 vol. (Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 2010).

Course Requirements and Assessments:

- Research Paper:
 - Format
 - 15–20 pages, 1-inch margins, Times New Roman, main text being double spaced with 12 pt font and footnotes single spaced with 10 pt font
 - Do <u>not</u> exceed the maximum page number. I am not impressed by defying criteria, even if it means that you have done more work
 - o Topic
 - Examine a debated theological or exegetical issue related to covenant theology
 - The debated issue can be an intramural debate, such as within the Reformed camp, or a debate between parties, such as a Baptist vs. Reformed disagreement
 - o Template: Use the following structure for your paper
 - Introduction
 - Briefly describe the topic and issue that you are exploring.
 - Be concise, and state the aims of your paper
 - The introduction <u>must</u> include a clearly stated thesis identified by the phrase "This essay argues..." If you omit this criteria, 15 points will be immediately deducted
 - State of the Question
 - How has this topic been addressed by others?
 - What is the consensus, if any? Perhaps various parties such as Reformed, Lutheran, Baptist, Roman Catholic have consensus internally to the group, but the parties disagree with one another
 - Outline how this issue has been discussed and debated
 - Make sure to summarize various viewpoints and conclusions
 - Arguments for your view
 - Articulate your defense of the thesis stated in your introduction
 - Use exegetical, theological, and/or whatever arguments you find fitting
 - Potential Objections
 - Describe ways that you anticipate others might object to your view and/or its arguments

- Deal with minimum of two objections
- Response to Objections
 - How would you respond to those anticipated objections?
 - You may either have a separate response section or you may organize each response with the statement of the anticipated objection
- Conclusion
 - Discuss how your argument affects ministry in the local church
- Course Weight 25%

• Seminar Snapshots

- o Compose a written assessment for the reading for each class session
 - 2 pages, 1-inch margins, Times New Roman, main text being double spaced with
 12 pt font and footnotes single spaced with 10 pt font
 - You will have six snapshots due, one on the day of each class meeting
- Here are the sources for which you should compose a snapshot
 - Week 1: Turretin
 - Week 2: Robertson
 - Week 3: Your choice
 - Week 4: Renihan
 - Week 5: Barth
 - Week 6: Vos
- Address the following issues:
 - What is the historical context for this writing? What factors may have been at work in shaping the author's approach?
 - What is the main argument(s)?
 - How are those arguments defended?
 - What seem to be the author's goals in writing this work?
 - What are the strengths?
 - What are the weaknesses
 - What is relevance for the church?
- Course Weight 20%

• Seminar Participation

- Attend class, present something from your seminar snapshot to the class, and be ready to discuss issues raised in your own or other students' presentations
- Be ready to discuss something about each reading, even those not the subject of your snapshot
- o Course Weight 20%

Reading Report

- o Submit the percentage of the assigned reading that you completed
- o Course Weight 10%

BTS Format, Style, and Writing Standards:

All research papers must be formatted in accordance with Turabian Chicago standards including the title page. All papers are to be #12 font Times New Roman and Double-Spaced. Any paper not conforming to these standards will automatically be dropped one letter grade. Please see the BTS Turabian Style Guide for more information on turning in papers and assignments.

The BTS Turabian Style Guide and other resources are available on the BTS Writing Center webpage: https://www.btswritingcenter.net/

In addition, the Writing Center runs 2-3 Writing Workshops every semester. They are very helpful and highly recommended.

BTS Plagiarism / Generative AI Policy

In addition to the BTS plagiarism policy, BTS is implementing a new Generative AI policy. Unless clearly directed by the instructor, the students should submit their own work, independent of artificial intelligence tools. Use of generative AI to write papers or to write significant portions of assignments is considered an ethical violation of our Student Code of Conduct and to be a violation of general academic integrity, which could result in a zero on the assignment and/or a lowered letter grade for the course by the professor. If determined to be an egregious violation, it could lead to further sanctions administered through the Academic Committee, including expulsion from BTS.

Course Schedule:

What is required here?

TM3004 – Exploration of Varieties of Evangelical Covenant Theology –			
Seminar Schedule			
Date	Topic/Readings/Assignments	# of pages	
9/11/2025	Turretin, 1:569–589, 2:169-269	120	
9/25/2025	Robertson, All	300	
10/9/2025	Covenantal and Dispensational Theologies, 74–111,201–	101	
	220; Murray, all; Bird, Evangelical Theology, 269–291.		
10/23/2025	Fall Break		
11/06/2025	Renihan, all	210	
11/20/2025	Barth, all	405	
	Five Views on Law and Gospel, 13–58, 93–143, 177–99,		
	229–79, 319–76		
12/04/2025	Vos, Reformed Dogmatics, 229–238 (Qs 12–20), 249–267	88	
	(Qs11–25), 294–255 (Qs1–50)		
By 12/20/25	Perkins, Reformed Covenant Theology, all	458	

Primary Assignment due dates

• Seminar Snapshots – Each snapshot is due on the date that the class meets to discuss the particular reading

- Reading Report December 20, 2025
- Research paper December 20, 2025

Attendance Policy:

Students are expected to demonstrate punctuality and attend all class sessions. Any absences should be communicated to the professor beforehand. Students may miss up to three classes with impunity.

[NOTE: Standard BTS Attendance Policy is that students may not miss any more than three classes without a course penalty. Given the reality of distance-based students and video conference options, if students clearly identify at the beginning of the semester that they will primarily be asynchronous students (depending on the digital recording of class because of a conflict with their schedule), then the student may attend without incurring a penalty for their "absences," providing they are turning in all their work on time. Please see the BTS Faculty Handbook for more information on synchronous and asynchronous video conference students and policies and the commitments a faculty member agrees to when they teach a video conference or a live hybrid class]

Class Policies and Procedures:

- BTS highly recommends using handwritten note taking methods in class and keeping computer usage to a minimum.
- Other electronics should be used sparingly.
- All assignments must be submitted by email by 11:59 (CDT/CST) on the due date.
- Late assignments will incur a -3 point deduction per weekday after the due date, except in cases of emergency communicated to the professor.
- Missed tests/exams may only be made up with an excused absence, preferably in advance
 of class. Excused absence tests/exams must be made up before the final day of the
 semester.
- [Professor may add any additional policies specific to their class]

Video Conference Policies and Procedures:

- Please utilize the BTS "Best VC (Video Conference) Practices" information for the course
- Laptops/Desktops are the preferred method of attending a video conference course. Information will be shared on the screen, so phones will be less useful.
- In Video Conference, it is preferrable for the student to keep their video on (when possible) so that students and faculty may engage with one another. Extended periods of dark screen will result in follow-up and potential removal from class.
- Other electronics should be used sparingly.
- [Professor may add any additional policies specific to their class]

Course Bibliography / Extended Bibliography

Barrett, Matthew, Canon, Covenant, and Christology: Rethinking Jesus and the Scriptures of Israel (New Studies in Biblical Theology; Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2020). Belcher Jr., Richard P., Christ Fulfills All: Introducing the Biblical Covenants (Fearn: Christian Focus, 2024). The Fulfillment of the Promises of God: An Explanation of Covenant Theology (Fearn UK, Mentor, 2020). Block, Daniel I., Covenant: The Framework of God's Grand Plan of Redemption (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2021). Brown, Michael G., and Zach Keele, *Sacred Bond*, 2nd ed. (Reformed Fellowship, Inc. 2017). Clark, R. Scott, "Baptism and the Benefits of Christ: The Double Mode of Communion in the Covenant of Grace," Confessional Presbyterian 2 (2006): 3–19. (ed.), Covenant Justification and Pastoral Ministry (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2012). Colquhoun, John, A Treatise on the Covenant of Grace (Edinburgh, 1818). A Treatise on the Covenant of Works (Edinburgh: Thomsons, Brothers, 1821). A Treatise on the Law and the Gospel (Edinburgh: J. Ogle, 1816). Coppola, Antonio, Faithful God: An Introduction to Covenant Theology (Pretoria, South Africa: Lig in Duisternis Uitgewers, 2023). Crowe, Brandon D., The Path of Faith: A Biblical Theology of Covenant and Law (Essential Studies in Biblical Theology; Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2021). Dumbrell, William J., Covenant and Creation: An Old Testament Covenant Theology, rev. ed. (Milton Keynes, UK: Paternoster, 2013). Estelle, Bryan D., J.V. Fesko, and David VanDrunen (eds.), The Law Is Not of Faith: Essays on Works and Grace in the Mosaic Covenant (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2012). Fesko, J. V., Adam and the Covenant of Works (Fearn: Mentor, 2021). The Covenant of Redemption: Origins, Development, and Reception (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2016). The Covenant of Works: The Origins, Development, and Reception of the Doctrine (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2020). "The Republication of the Covenant of Works," Confessional Presbyterian 8 (2012): 197–212. "The Republication of the Covenant of Works Part 2," Confessional Presbyterian 9 ---(2013): 178–87, 285.

Signed, Sealed, Delivered: An Introduction to Covenant Theology (Orlando, FL: Reformation Trust, 2025).
The Trinity and the Covenant of Redemption (Fearn, UK: Mentor, 2016).
Gentry, Peter J., and Stephen J. Wellum, <i>Kingdom through Covenant: A Biblical-Theological Understanding of the Covenants</i> , 2 nd ed. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2018).
Golding, Peter, Covenant Theology: The Key of Theology in Reformed Thought and Tradition (Fearn: Mentor, 2004).
Gordon, T. David, <i>Promise, Law, Faith: Covenant-Historical Reasoning in Galatians</i> (Peabod MA: Hendrickson Academic, 2019).
Hildebrand, Pierrick, <i>The Zurich Origins of Reformed Covenant Theology</i> (Oxford Studies in Historical Theology; New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2024).
Horton, Michael, "Covenant," in Michael Allen and Scott R. Swain (eds.), <i>The Oxford Handbook of Reformed Theology</i> (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 434–45.
Introducing Covenant Theology (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2006).
Covenant and Salvation: Union with Christ (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2007).
Introducing Covenant Theology (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2006).
Lord and Servant: A Covenant Christology (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2005).
People and Place: A Covenant Ecclesiology (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2008).
Kline, Meredith G., God, Heaven, and Har Magedon: A Covenantal Tale of Cosmos and Telos (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2006).
Kingdom Prologue: Genesis Foundations for a Covenantal Worldview (Overland Park, KS: Two Age Press, 2000).
MacLeod, Donald, "Covenant Theology," in David F. Wright, David C. Lachmann, and Donald E. Meek (eds.), <i>Dictionary of Scottish Church History and Theology</i> (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 214–18.
"Covenant 2," The Banner of Truth 141 (1975): 22–28.
"Federal Theology – An Oppressive Legalism?" Banner of Truth 125 (1974): 21–28.
McComiskey, Thomas Edward, The Covenants of Promise: A Theology of the Old Testament

Covenants (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publishing Group, 1985; repr. Eugene, OR: Wipf

and Stock, 2019).

- McGowan, A. T. B., *Adam, Christ, and Covenant: Exploring Headship Theology* (London: Apollos, 2016).
- McGraw, Ryan, What is Covenant Theology?: Tracing God's Promises through the Son, the Seed, and the Sacraments (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2025).
- Murray, John, *The Covenant of Grace: A Biblico-Theological Study* (Biblical and Theological Studies; Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 1992).
- Myers, Stephen G., *God to Us: Covenant Theology in Scripture* (Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 2021).
- "The *Marrow* Controversy: Boston, Erskine, and Hadow," in David Fergusson and Mark W. Elliot (eds.), *The History of Scottish Theology*, 3 vol. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 1:342–58.
- Scottish Federalism and Covenantalism in Transition: The Theology of Ebenezer Erskine (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2015).
- Parker, Brent E., and Richard J. Lucas (eds.), *Covenantal and Dispensational Theologies: Four View on the Continuity of Scripture* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2022).
- Perkins, Harrison, Catholicity and the Covenant of Works: James Ussher and the Reformed Tradition (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2020).
- "Meritum ex pacto in the Reformed Tradition: Covenantal Merit in Theological Polemics," Mid-America Journal of Theology 31 (2020): 57–87.
- "Reconsidering the Development of the Covenant of Works: A Study in Doctrinal Trajectory," *Calvin Theological Journal* 53.2 (Nov 2018): 289–317.
- _____ Reformed Covenant Theology: A Systematic Introduction (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Academic, 2024).
- Righteous by Design: Covenantal Merit and Adam's Original Integrity (Reformed Exegetical and Doctrinal Studies; Fearn: Mentor, 2024).
- Poythress, Vern S., *Understanding Dispensationalists*, 2nd ed. (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 1994).
- Rhodes, Jonty, Covenants Made Simple: Understanding God's Unfolding Promises to His People (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2014).
- Richard, Guy M., "The Covenant Idea in Mid-Seventeenth-Century Scotland," in David Fergusson and Mark W. Elliot (eds.), *The History of Scottish Theology*, 3 vol. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 1:238–52.
- Robertson, O. Palmer, *The Christ of the Covenants* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 1981).

- Rollock, Robert, Some Questions and Answers about God's Covenant and the Sacrament that is a Seal of God's Covenant: with Related Texts, ed. and trans. Aaron Clay Denlinger (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2016).
- Schreiner, Thomas R., *Covenant and God's Purpose for the World* (Short Studies in Biblical Theology; Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2017).
- VanDrunen, David, *Divine Covenants and Moral Order: A Biblical Theology of Natural Law* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2014).
- "Israel's Recapitulation of Adam's Probation under the Law of Moses," *Westminster Theological Journal* 73 no 2 (Fall 2011): 303–24.
- Waters, Guy Prentiss, *The Federal Vision and Covenant Theology: A Comparative Analysis* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2006).
- Waters, Guy Prentiss, J. Nicholas Reid, and John R. Muether (eds.), *Covenant Theology: Biblical, Theological, and Historical Perspectives* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2020).
- Wellum, Stephen J., and Brent E. Parker (eds.), *Progressive Covenantalism: Charting a Course between Dispensational and Covenant Theologies* (Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2016).
- Williamson, Paul R., Sealed with an Oath: Covenant in God's Unfolding Purpose (New Studies in Biblical Theology; Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2007).
- Witsius, Herman, *The Economy of the Covenants between God and Man*, 2 vol. (Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 2010).

GRADING CRITERIA AND ASSESSMENT RUBRIC

A to A-	B to B-	C to C-	D to D-
Correct spelling and grammar/punctuation	Minor errors in spelling or grammar/punctuation	Multiple errors in spelling or grammar/punctuation per page	Difficult to read due to English writing errors
Smooth writing that provides for effective and efficient reading	Writing is acceptable, but not as organized and coherent	Writing is not smooth, sometimes confusing and inconsistent	Writing lacks clarity, focus, structure, and is incoherent

Person and format are proper for assignment	Person and format are inconsistent	Person and format are not appropriate	Person and format are totally inappropriate
Scripture, paraphrases, quotes, and summaries are appropriately used, cited, and clearly supports main argument	Scripture, paraphrases, quotes, and summaries are appropriate but need more depth and use of critical thinking	Scripture, paraphrases, quotes, and summaries are inadequate for main argument and do not reflect understanding	Scripture, paraphrases, quotes, and summaries are improperly used, over used, under used, or cited in error
Paper completely conforms to Turabian's <i>Manual</i> for Writers	Paper generally conforms to Turabian's Manual for Writers	Paper somewhat conforms to Turabian's Manual for Writers	Paper does not conform to Turabian's Manual for Writers

BTS Outcomes Evaluation

Please rank each outcome on a scale of 1-5

- 1: this outcome is not covered in this class
- 2: this outcome is only touched on in this class
- 3: this outcome is discussed in conjunction with class material
- 4: this outcome lightly assessed as part of course assessment (one assignment)
- 5: this outcome is fully integrated into the assessment of this course (multiple assignments)
 - 1. <u>Scripture</u>: Students will effectively articulate the truth of Scripture and Scripture as truth, engaged with learning biblical knowledge and reformed principles of the supremacy of Scripture as God's word.
 - 2. <u>Reformed Theology</u>: Students will be able to engage and reproduce the primary and essential elements of Reformed Theology.
 - 3. Local Church: Students will be engaged in applied ministry projects in the local church
 - 4. <u>Wisdom</u>: Students will grow in character; increasing in their demonstration of wisdom and its fruits.
 - 5. <u>Discipleship</u>: Students will be able to understand and articulate the nature and importance of discipleship—both ordinary (means of grace) and extraordinary (biblical counseling).
 - 6. <u>Communication</u>: Students will grow in the efficacy of their communication (articulation, teaching/speaking, and preaching—respective to various departments) both in content knowledge and rhetorical strategies.

- 7. <u>Worldview</u>: Students will demonstrate a growing ability to apply God's word to all spheres of life, evidenced through class discussion and other assigned assessments.
- 8. <u>Leadership</u>: Students will grow in their understanding of godly leadership and ability to lead others in service of the local church.

Outcome	Rank	Rational (one sentence)	
Scripture	5	Exegetical considerations of	
		various views are assessed	
Reformed Theology	5	Reformed covenant theology	
		is taken as the baseline to	
		measure other varieties	
Local Church	3	Oral and written assessments	
		require application to the	
		local church	
Wisdom	1	N/A	
Discipleship	1	N/A	
Communication	3	Written and verbal	
		presentations develop	
		communication skills	
Worldview	1	N/A	
Leadership	1	N/A	