Course Syllabus
WYT2011H – Covenant Theology
Wycliffe College
Toronto School of Theology
Fall 2024

Instructor Information

Instructor:	Michael Allen, PhD
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Course Identification

Course Number:	WYT2011H
Course Format:	*In-class Intensive* (L0101) with remote synchronous section (L6201)
Course Name:	Covenant Theology
Course Location:	St George Campus, Wycliffe College (5 Hoskin Ave), Room Number TBD
Class Times:	October 29 - November 1, 2024; 9:00 am - 4:00 pm
Prerequisites:	NA

Course Description

An introduction to the study of Scripture as God's inspired Word, to covenant as a structuring principle for understanding Scripture, and to the practice of biblical reasoning in shaping Christian faith and practice. Major themes include theological method and the interpretation of Scripture; God's self-revelation in the history of redemption, culminating in Christ; the unity of Scripture in the unfolding of the covenant story; and the role of covenant in theology and ethics. Students explore historic texts from the early Reformed tradition as well as recent accounts of the shape and significance of this tradition for theology today.

Methodology

The course includes lectures, in-class discussions, reading summaries and reflections on select books/articles. Students will independently develop a research paper in accord with class guidelines.

Course Resources

Required Course Texts

1. Scott R. Swain, *Trinity, Revelation, and Reading: A Theological Introduction to the Bible and Its Interpretation* (London: T & T Clark, 2012). 139 pages.

2. John Webster, *The Culture of Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2019). 104 pages.

3. Michael Allen, *The Fear of the Lord: Essays on Theological Method* (London: T & T Clark, 2022). 200 pages.

4. Michael Horton, *God of Promise: Introducing Covenant Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006). 204 pages.

5. Various Essays and Excerpts (to be provided online as PDFs):
    a. The Ten Theses of Berne [1528].
    b. Huldrych Zwingli, "The Clarity and Certainty of the Word of God."
    c. John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* [1559], book 2, chapters 10-11.
    d. Heinrich Bullinger, "Of the Holy Catholic Church."
    e. The Westminster Confession of Faith, chapters 1, 7, 8, and 19.
    f. Michelle Sanchez, "The Logic of Calvin's Reform," *The Christian Century* (August 15, 2017).
    g. Amy Nelson Burnett, "How to Preach a Protestant Sermon: A Comparison of Lutheran and Reformed Homiletics," *Theologische Zeitschrift* 63 (2007): 109-119.
    h. Irena Backus, "The Early Church in the Renaissance and the Reformation," in *Early Christianity. Origins and Evolution to A. D. 600* (ed. Ian Hazlett, London, 1991), 291-304.
    i. J. Nicholas Reid, "Ancient Near Eastern Backgrounds to Covenants," in *Covenant Theology: Biblical, Theological, and Historical Perspectives* (ed. Guy Waters *et al*; Wheaton: Crossway, 2020), 447-466.

Course Website(s)

- Quercus: https://q.utoronto.ca/

This course uses Quercus for its course website. To access it, go to the UofT Quercus login page at https://q.utoronto.ca/ and login using your UTORid and password. Once you have logged in to Quercus using your UTORid and password, look for the **My Courses** module, where you'll find the link to the website for all your Quercus-based courses. (Your course registration with ACORN gives you access to the course website in Quercus.) Information for students about using Quercus can be found at: https://community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC-10701 .

Course Learning Objectives/Outcomes

Course Outcomes	Course Element	Program Outcomes
In taking this course, students will:	**This outcome will be achieved through these course elements:**	**This course outcome corresponds to these aspects of Wycliffe's statements of outcomes (MTS, MDiv)**

demonstrate that they have read and understood modern texts within the Reformed tradition, and the significance of covenant theology for the church today.	Readings notes; Reading briefs; Participation	**MDiv:** 1.4, 3.3 **MTS:** 1.3, 3.2, 3.3
synthesize their learnings to communicate the significance of classical texts of the early Reformed tradition as they relate to their engagement with Scripture and the church.	Reading briefs; Participation	**MDiv** 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4 **MTS:** 2.1, 2.2
identify the contours of a theological method shaped by the Reformed tradition and assess how this identified methodology relates to other Christian traditions.	Final research paper	**MDiv:** 1.2, 1.5, 2.1, 2.2 **MTS:** 1.2, 2.1, 2.2, 3.1

Evaluation

Requirements

The final grade for the course will be based on evaluations in four areas:

1. **Pre-Course Reading Notes. 10%**

Students will read the assigned texts in their entirety. Class discussions will focus on readings, so you must be prepared to talk. Theology is an activity done largely through the process of good reading. Read carefully. Read charitably. Read with others. Read with the expectation that you will learn from others, even when you disagree with their main point. Read even when a text is dense and difficult, for you will learn perseverance and fortitude here. Read that which seems trite and obvious, asking how others might object or criticize. Most importantly, read because God was willing to reveal himself in written words, and because we can best witness to God's grace with corresponding words. Read because words matter in God's economy of grace.

Students will submit reading notes for each of the first four readings. One page of notes (one-sided, single-spaced, point form) is to be submitted per reading, for a total for four pages. Notes can include summaries of chapters/main points, helpful quotes, and/or questions for further thought/discussion. These will be graded on a pass/fail basis.
Notes are due before class begins on October 29.

2. **Reading Briefs. 45%**

Students will prepare a reading brief that summarizes and responds to each reading in item #5 (various essays and excerpts). The purpose of the brief is to summarize the thesis, outline, and argument of that text, as well as to state one's own analysis of it (in the form of questions,

confirmations, objections, etc.). Briefs may (and should) include quotations from various points in the text (so long as page numbers are referenced parenthetically).

Briefs should be no more than 350 words. They should be written in complete sentences and paragraphs and should be edited carefully. Each of the nine briefs is worth 5% for a total of 45%. *Briefs will be due Nov. 15.*

3. **Participation. 5%**

Students will attend all class sessions and participate actively. See the computer policy below regarding limitations to technology use in the classroom.

4. **Final Paper. 40%**

Students will write a 3000-word research paper that addresses some issue of theological method or practice, engaging a range of Reformed theological sources. In so doing, the student will show what Reformed theological practice holds in common with other Christian traditions and in what manner it provides a distinctive pathway to the theological task. *Papers will be due December 6.*

Grading System - Basic Degree Students

90-100 (A+)	Exceptional
85-89 (A)	Outstanding
80-84 (A-)	Excellent
77-79 (B+)	Very Good
73-76 (B)	Good
70-72 (B-)	Acceptable
0-69 (FZ)	Failure

Please see the BD handbook for more details about the grading scale and non-numerical grades (e.g. SDF, INC, etc).

Late work (BD). Basic Degree students are expected to hand in assignments by the date given in the course outline. Under exceptional circumstances a student may request a short extension to be negotiated with the instructor. Instructors are not obliged to accept assignments that are late. If the instructor chooses to accept an assignment, where an extension has not been requested and approved before the due date, then **one percentage point per day will be deducted**. The absolute deadline for the submission of assignments is the examination day scheduled for the course or the last day of exam week for the semester in which the course is taught, whichever is sooner.

Students with documented medical or compassionate difficulties or exceptional reasons (e.g., a death in the family or a serious illness) who are unable to submit their work by the end of the term are requested to consult with their instructor and request an SDF. The form is available on our website at this link https://www.wycliffecollege.ca/sites/default/files/Basic%20Degree%20Request%20For%20Extension.pdf or can be collected from the registrar's office. An SDF request must be submitted, with instructor approval and with an agreed deadline, to the registrar's office no later than the last day of the exam week or the last day of class in which the course is taken. The SDF, when approved, will have a mutually

agreed upon deadline that does not extend beyond one year. If a student has not completed work and has not been granted an SDF, a final mark will be calculated that reckons a grade of zero for that component of work that was not submitted**.**

Course grades. Consistently with the policy of the University of Toronto, course grades submitted by an instructor are reviewed by a committee of the instructor's college before being posted to ACORN. Grades are not official until they are posted to ACORN. Course grades may be adjusted where they do not comply with University Assessment and Grading Practices Policy found at https://governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/secretariat/policies/grading-practices-policy-university-assessment-and-january-26-2012, policies found in the TST conjoint program handbooks, or college grading policy.

Policies

Accessibility. Students with a disability or health consideration, whether temporary or permanent, are entitled to accommodation. Students in conjoint degree programs must register at the University of Toronto's Accessibility Services offices; information is available at http://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/as The sooner a student seeks accommodation, the quicker we can assist.

Computer Policy. Computers, tablets, and smartphones are not allowed in class. Think I'm overreacting? Think you're a master of multitasking? You are not. No, I really mean it. Notes taken by hand are almost always more useful than typed notes, because more thoughtful selectivity goes into them; plus there are multiple cognitive benefits to writing by hand. And people who use laptops in class see their grades decline — and even contribute to lowering the grades of *other people*.

Plagiarism. Students submitting written material in courses are expected to provide full documentation for sources of both words and ideas in footnotes or endnotes. Direct quotations should be placed within quotation marks. (If small changes are made in the quotation, they should be indicated by appropriate punctuation such as brackets and ellipses, but the quotation still counts as a direct quotation.) Failure to document borrowed material constitutes plagiarism, which is a serious breach of academic, professional, and Christian ethics. An instructor who discovers evidence of student plagiarism is not permitted to deal with the situation individually but is required to report it to his or her head of college or delegate according to the TST *Basic Degree Handbook* and the Graduate program Handbooks linked from http://www.tst.edu/academic/resources-forms/handbooks and the University of Toronto *Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters* https://governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/secretariat/policies/code-behaviour-academic-matters-july-1-2019. A student who plagiarizes in this course will be assumed to have read the document "Avoidance of plagiarism in theological writing" published by the Graham Library of Trinity and Wycliffe Colleges:
https://www.trinity.utoronto.ca/library/research/theology/avoiding-plagiarism-in-theological-writing/

Other academic offences. TST students come under the jurisdiction of the University of Toronto *Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters* https://governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/secretariat/policies/code-behaviour-academic-matters-july-1-2019

Back-up copies. Please make back-up copies of essays before handing them in.

Obligation to check email. At times, the course instructor may decide to send out important course information by email. To that end, all students in conjoint programs are required to have a valid utoronto

email address. Students must have set up their utoronto email address which is entered in the ACORN system. Information is available at www.utorid.utoronto.ca. The course instructor will not be able to help you with this. 416-978-HELP and the Help Desk at the Information Commons can answer questions you may have about your UTORid and password. Students should check utoronto email regularly for messages about the course. **Forwarding** your utoronto.ca email to a Hotmail, Gmail, Yahoo or other type of email account is not advisable. In some cases, messages from utoronto.ca addresses sent to Hotmail, Gmail or Yahoo accounts are filtered as junk mail, which means that emails from your course instructor may end up in your spam or junk mail folder. Students in non-conjoint programs should contact the Registrar of their college of registration.

Email communication with the course instructor. The instructor aims to respond to email communications from students in a timely manner. *All email communications from students in conjoint programs must be sent from a utoronto email address.* Email communications from other email addresses are not secure, and also the instructor cannot readily identify them as being legitimate emails from students. The instructor is not obliged to respond to email from non-utoronto addresses for students in conjoint programs. Students in non-conjoint programs should only use the email address they have provided to their college of registration.

Course Schedule

Day 1: Tuesday, October 29

What is Theology?

Discuss Swain, *Trinity, Revelation, and Reading*, ch. 1

Covenant

Analysis of Covenant Theology: Analyze WCF 7 Together

Day 2: Wednesday, October 30

Scriptural Unity: The Relationship of the Old and New Testaments

Discuss Calvin, *Institutes*, II.x-xi

Sixteenth Century Hermeneutics and Ecclesiological Fault-lines

Application of Covenant Theology: Analyze WCF 8 and 19 Together

Day 3: Thursday, October 31

Word of God: Reflections from Psalm 145 and 1 Corinthians 2

Discuss Webster, *Culture of Theology*, ch. 2

Inspiration and Interpretation

Up-dated: June 2024

Application of the Scripture Principle: Analyze Ten Theses of Berne Together

Day 4: Friday, November 1

The Ways of Theological Attention

Discuss Allen, *The Fear of the Lord*, ch. 7

Reformed Catholicity: On Scripture and Tradition

Application of *Sola Scriptura*: Analyze WCF 1 Together