

**HERMENEUTICS
ON5100
MINI-SYLLABUS
Fall 2026**

Note: This syllabus is the “mini-syllabus” and is not to be confused w/ the “mega-syllabus” that contains all the class-lecture notes, biblio, various articles, etc. The mega-syllabus will be posted on “Canvas” and is needed for all the class lectures. For the first day of class, the student should be prepared w/ either a hard-copy of the mega-syllabus or have it downloaded to his laptop.

Note: No prerequisites for this course.

Required Texts:

Trinity Psalter—words-only edition (Crown and Covenant). Use in class. (Note, this is *not* the *Trinity Psalter Hymnal*.)

R. L. Pratt. *He Gave Us Stories*.

M. Silva, ed. *Foundations of Contemporary Interpretation*.

S. Greidanus. *Preaching Christ from the OT*.

G. K. Beale. *Handbook on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament: Exegesis and Interpretation*.

S. R. Swain. *Trinity, Revelation, and Reading: A Theological Introduction to the Bible and its Interpretation*.

R. P. Belcher. *The Fulfillment of the Promises of God: An Explanation of Covenant Theology*. Pages 139–270.

R. J. Cara. “The Use of the Old Testament in the New Testament: Trusting the New Testament’s Hermeneutics.” Pages 595–602 in *A Biblical-Theological Introduction to the New Testament: A Gospel Realized*. Edited by Kruger. Wheaton: Crossway, 2016.

R. J. Cara, “Psalms Applied to both Christ and Christians: Psalms 8, 22, 34, 118, and Romans 15:3 // Psalm 69:9.” Pages 97–111 in *Redeeming the Life of the Mind: Essays in Honor of Vern Poythress*. Edited by Frame, Grudem, and Hughes. Wheaton; Crossway, 2017. (PDF of this article is included in Cara’s mega-syllabus.)

Professors

* Professors Dr. Cara and Dr. Belcher (technically, Dr. Robert J. Cara, Ph.D. and Richard P. Belcher, Jr., Ph.D.).

Class participation

* For both Cara and Belcher, bring and sing Psalter.

* Attend class and participate (intelligently!) when called on. Lose points for not being in class and/or not participating.

Course Objectives

- * The overarching purpose is for the student to interact with a variety 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.

Structure of the Course

- * Cara, first 6 weeks.
 - * Three units: (1) Post-modernism vs modernism w/in a Van Till framework. (2) Macro-hermeneutics per se. (3) Review of Cara's hermeneutical proverbs.
- * Belcher, second 6 weeks.
 - * Three units: (1) History of interpretation of the Bible: Philo through modern day. (2) NT use of OT, including NT writers' hermeneutical context. (3) Preaching X from the OT: Typology and Greidanus.
- * Cara, Belcher, and Kruger 13th week, Covenant Structure of Bible

Course Requirements and Grades

- * Final Test
 - * Test will be $\approx$ 85–90% verbatim of Lecture Review Questions. The remainder will be miscellaneous questions from the class lectures and readings.
 - * For answers to Lecture Review Questions, you may/should enquire of fellow students in this class.
 - * 40% of grade.
- * Pratt's *He Gave Us Stories*, pages 1-128, 306-402 and Swain's *Trinity, Revelation, and Reading*.
 - * Submit a fake (i.e., no or few footnotes) 7–10 page paper that includes:
 - * A statement that student read 100% of Pratt and Swain reading requirement.
 - * Self-consciously evaluate one or more aspects of the student's interaction w/in his covenant community (*both* heritage and present) that has (or will have) influenced the student's macro method of biblical interpretation (e.g., BT/R-H/ST, preaching theory) or a specific theological topic (e.g., elder roles, Trinity, inerrancy). This influence can be either positive, negative, or both.
 - * The paper should show knowledge of your covenantal community and at least

some categories from Cara's lectures and Pratt/Swain books.

- * 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 on last day of Cara's lectures ($\approx$ half-way through semester). Give to Cara. 32 f/s/s.

- * 25% of grade.

- * Silva, M., ed. *Foundations of Contemporary Interpretation*.

- * Read anyone of the books in this book, excepting Silva's *God, Language and Scripture* and Long's *The Art of Biblical History*.

- * Submit a (fake) 7–10 page paper that includes:

- * A statement that student read 100% of book w/in the book.

- * Summarize 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 on last day of Belcher's lectures. Give to Belcher. 32f/s/s.

- * 25% of grade.

- * Read all of Greidanus' *Preaching X from the OT*; all of Beale's *Handbook on the NT Use of the OT*; Belcher's *Fulfillment of the Promises of God*, pp. 139–270; and the two Cara articles.

- * On final test will be the question, "Did you read 100% of the assigned reading from Greidanus, Beale, Belcher, and Cara?"

- * 10% of grade.

- * Bring and sing *Trinity Psalter*.

- * No grade associated with this unless one does not do it!

Course Objectives Related to MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes

Course: Hermeneutics

Professor: Cara and Belcher

Campus: Charlotte

Date: Fall 2026

MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes <i>In order to measure the success of the MDiv curriculum, RTS has defined the following as the intended outcomes of the student learning process. Each course contributes to these overall outcomes. This rubric shows the contribution of this course to the MDiv outcomes.</i> <i>*As the MDiv is the core degree at RTS, the MDiv rubric will be used in this syllabus.</i>		Rubric • Strong • Moderate • Minimal • None	Mini-Justification
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. Also includes ability to preach and teach the meaning of Scripture to both heart and mind with clarity and enthusiasm.	Moderate	1. Submits one self-reflective paper and one critical book review. 2. Significant overview of the history of hermeneutics, both in the church and in philosophy.
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. Scripture's interpretation of Scripture is included. 2. Scripture's understanding of "meaning" is included. 3. Some original language included in OT-in-NT texts.
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. 4. Swain and Belcher books and Cara articles include historical Reformed views.
Sanctification	Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student's sanctification.	Minimal	1. Psalm singing in class. 2. Self-reflective paper.
Worldview	Burning desire to conform all of life to the Word of God. Includes ability to interact within a denominational context, within the broader worldwide church, and with significant public issues.	Strong	1. Is Bible the ultimate authority for hermeneutics? 2. Student's background affects hermeneutics. 3. Van Til discussions.
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 explicitly presented and evaluated as to effect on hermeneutics.
Pastoral Ministry	Ability to minister the Word of God to hearts and lives of both church and unchurched, to include preaching, teaching, leading in worship, leading and shepherding the local congregation, aiding in spiritual maturity, concern for non-Christians.	Moderate	1. Preaching is related to hermeneutics. 2. Creeds are related to shepherding.

RTS Charlotte Classroom Technology Usage

RTS Charlotte recognizes how essential it is for students to have reliable, campus-wide access to the internet. For that reason, we have made Wi-Fi available for our student body, not only in the library and student lounges, but also in the classrooms. We know that students need to use the internet to download class materials, access files on the Cloud, and locate other important information. However, we also recognize that internet access in the classroom provides opportunity for abuse and misuse. Some students have unfortunately used their internet access to engage in many activities that distract them from the classroom lectures (e.g., surfing the web, checking sports scores, playing games). Not only does such activity hamper a student's own seminary education, but it distracts other students who can easily view the screens of nearby students. In addition, donors and classroom guests (who often sit in the back) can see this inappropriate internet usage, which reflects poorly on RTS. Classroom etiquette includes leaving cell phones turned off, refraining from surfing the Internet or playing computer games or other distracting activities. In addition, students must respect standards set by individual professors regarding the use of technology during their class.

In order to address this issue, we must appeal to the integrity of the students as ones who are preparing for a lifetime of ministry to Christ and his church. We expect each student to take personal responsibility for proper classroom technology usage and to encourage others around them to do the same. All RTS-Charlotte students are accountable to the policies stated in the Student Handbook and Academic Catalog and are therefore expected to use technology in the classroom only for appropriate class-related activities. Student conduct is under the supervision of the Dean of Students.

RTS Charlotte

Student Instructions for Exams with LockDown Browser

1. Install the LockDown Browser application on the computer you intend to use for exams, prior to sitting for the exam, using this link:
<https://download.respondus.com/lockdown/download.php?id=998253613>
 - a. This link is ONLY for RTS students and covers Mac and Windows applications.
 - b. Be sure that you are able to log in to your Canvas account from the LockDown Browser before the day of the exam.
 - c. If you use internet filtering software (for example, Covenant Eyes) you may need to disable it before beginning an exam with LockDown Browser. Some types of filtering software can block your computer's connection to Canvas. Also, please be sure to add an exception for our Canvas URL: <https://rts.instructure.com>
2. The exam proctor should not be a current RTS student (current = taken a class within the past year but not yet graduated) or a member of the library staff.
3. The proctor must observe the student taking the exam and ensure that there are no devices or resources available other than the computer being used for the exam.
4. Access the exam during the date window specified for that exam.
 - a. Sign in with the proctor.
 - b. Start the LockDown Browser application using a wired or known reliable Wi-Fi connection. We do not recommend using restaurant or coffee shop Wi-Fi to take exams.
 - c. Have your student ID number and proctor details available to input into the exam.
 - d. Log in to your Canvas account.
 - e. Navigate to the exam. You will not be able to access the exam with a standard web browser. For additional details on using LockDown Browser, review this [Student Quick Start Guide \(PDF\)](#).
 - f. The time clock will begin once you open the exam.
 - g. The exam must be completed in one sitting. You may not exit and return to the exam later.
 - h. The exam will contain questions regarding an honor pledge, and certification that your proctor was present during the entire exam period.
 - i. Sign out with the proctor.
5. Proctors may be contacted to verify information regarding exam administration.
6. In the rare case of a technical issue (for example, if power goes out during exam) the proctor will document the date and time when the issue was reported. Once you open the exam using the LockDown Browser, you will not be able to access other programs on your computer.