

**Baptist Heritage**  
**Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary**  
**Syllabus**  
**Spring 2010**

\*Final versions of the syllabus will be distributed on the first day of class.

Instructor: Johnny B. Hill

Description

The purpose of this course is to introduce students to the major historical and theological strands of the Baptist tradition. While the course will emphasize the Baptist tradition in North America, attention will also be given to the origins Baptist beliefs situated within the radicals of the English Reformation of the sixteenth century, and in conversation with the Dutch Anabaptists (Mennonites). Primary themes that will be explored in the Baptist tradition are the autonomous interpretation and centrality of scripture, religious experience, ecclesiastical polity, and chiefly the sacraments of believer's baptism and the Lord's Supper. Students will explore such questions as "who are Baptists?," "what do Baptists believe?," and the nature of the Baptist heritage as "movement, denomination, and tradition." The course recognizes the multi-racial, ethnic, religious, socio-economic, and denominational character of Baptist life. The task is to identify the trends and theological particularities that continue to shape Baptist life in North America and the world.

Assignments

- (1) Complete all reading assignments and make informed contributions to group discussions; attendance to all meetings, sessions, small groups, or general conversations (10%)
- (2) Write (three) 2-page reflection papers on assigned readings to be either delivered or emailed to the instructor. Papers should not simply be an exposition of the reading materials. Rather, they should demonstrate a critical engagement with the readings (40%)
- (3) 10-12 page final writing project. In the final paper, students will draw from a particular strand of the Baptist tradition in order to reflect on a contemporary issue related to course discussions and readings (50%)

Readings

William H. Brackney, *Baptists In North America: An Historical Perspective* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2006).  
William H. Brackney (ed), *Baptist Life and Thought: A Source Book*, (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1998).  
Curtis W. Freeman, James William McClendon, Velloso da Silva, C. Rosalee (eds), *Baptist Roots: A Reader in the Theology of a Christian People* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1999).  
Lora-Ellen McKinney, *Total Praise: An Orientation to Black Baptist Belief and Worship* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 2003).

Supplemental Reading

Everett C. Goodwin, *Down By The Riverside: A Brief History of Baptist Faith* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 2002).