

The Theology of John Calvin / Spring 2019

Gardencourt 206
Tuesday/Thursday, 1:30-2:50 p.m.

Instructor: Christopher Elwood
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Course Description:

This course examines the thought of John Calvin in the context of his life and work on behalf of the movements for reform of the church in sixteenth-century Europe. We will read from Calvin's *Institutes* and selected other writings in order to grasp the main outlines and principal themes of his theology, to assess his influence upon the debates of his time, and to interpret his continuing theological legacy.

Students taking this course should have completed Introduction to Theology and Ethics (ITE) and at least one semester of the History of Christian Experience (exceptions granted at instructor's discretion).

Goals and Objectives:

The goal of the course is to help students develop their capacity for faithful and coherent theological expression in pastoral practice.

Students will

- gain a basic understanding of the theology of Calvin in the context of his times and in relation to theological traditions and debates that preceded and followed his lifetime,
- sharpen their skills of theological interpretation through the close reading and discussion of primary sources, orally and in writing,
- develop an ability to make responsible and relevant use of historic theological writing,
- clarify their own theological and ethical positions.

Required Text:

- John Calvin. *Institutes of the Christian Religion: 1541 French Edition*. Trans. Elsie Anne McKee. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 2009. ISBN-10: 0802807747
- Christopher Elwood. *A Brief Introduction to John Calvin*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2017. ISBN-10: 0664262244 **OR:** Elwood. *Calvin for Armchair Theologians*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002. ISBN-10: 0664223036

Recommended Text:

- John Calvin. *John Calvin: Writings on Pastoral Piety*. Ed. Elsie Anne McKee. Mahwah, New Jersey: Paulist, 2001. ISBN-10: 0809140462

On Library Reserve:

[N.B. All required reading not taken from the required text for the course, should be posted on the CAMS system.]

Bainton, Roland. *Hunted Heretic: The Life and Death of Michael Servetus, 1511-1553*. Blackstone Editions, 2005.

Baker, J. Wayne. *Heinrich Bullinger and the Covenant*. Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 1981.

Beveridge, Henry, ed. *Calvin's Tracts and Treatises* vol 2. Eugene OR: Wipf & Stock, 2004.

Cooper, Burton Z and John S. McClure. *Claiming Theology in the Pulpit*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2003.

Dillenberger, John, ed. *John Calvin: Selections from His Writings*. AAR, 1982.

Dowey, Edward. *The Knowledge of God in Calvin's Theology, 3rd edition*. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdsman, 1994.

Edmondson, Stephen. *Calvin's Christology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.

Eire, Carlos M. N. *War Against the Idols: The Reformation of Worship from Erasmus to Calvin*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989

Elwood, Christopher. *The Body Broken: The Calvinist Doctrine of the Eucharist and the Symbolization of Power in Sixteenth-Century France*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1999.

_____. "Regarding the Powers: Assessing Calvin's Legacy for Political Theology." *Register of the Company of Pastors* 10 (2009), 73-91.

- Gamble, Richard, ed. *An Elaboration of the Theology of Calvin (Articles on Calvin and Calvinism, vol. 8)*. New York, Routledge, 1992.
- Garside, Charles. *The Origins of Calvin's Theology of Music 1536-1543* (Transactions of the American Philosophical Society ; v. 69, pt. 4). American Philosophical Society, 1979.
- Hesselink, John. *Calvin's Concept of the Law*. Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 1992.
- Kingdon, Robert M., ed. *Registers of the Consistory of Geneva in the Time of Calvin: Volume 1: 1542-1544*. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdsman, 2002.
- _____. *Adultery and Divorce in Calvin's Geneva*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995.
- McGrath, Alister. *A Life of John Calvin: A Study in the Shaping of Western Culture*. Maiden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 1993.
- McKim, Donald, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to John Calvin*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.
- McKim, Donald, ed. *Readings in Calvin's Theology*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 1998.
- McNeill, John T. "The Church in Sixteenth-Century Reformed Theology," *Journal of Religion* 22 (1942): 251-269.
- Muller, Richard. *Christ and the Decree: Christology and Predestination in Reformed Theology from Calvin to Perkins*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008.
- Ozment, Steven. *The Age of Reform, 1250-1550: An Intellectual and Religious History of Late Medieval and Reformation Europe*. Princeton: Yale University Press, 1982.
- Parker, T.H.L. *Calvin: An Introduction to his Thought*. Louisville: WJK, 1995.
- Parker, T.H.L. *Calvin's Old Testament Commentaries*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1993.
- Pettegree, Andrew, Duke, and Lewis, ed., *Calvinism in Europe, 1540-1620*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.
- Pettegree, Andrew, ed. *The Reformation World*. New York: Routledge, 2001.
- Schreiner, Susan. *The Theater of His Glory: Nature & the Natural Order in the Thought of John Calvin*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2001.
- Spierling, Karen. *Infant Baptism in Reformation Geneva: Shaping of a Community, 1536-1564*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2009.
- Troeltsch, Ernst. *The Social Teachings of the Christian Churches* vol. 2. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1992.
- Wallace, Ronald S. *Calvin's Doctrine of the Christian Life*. Eugene, Oregon: Wipf & Stock, 1999.
- Wendel, François. *Calvin: Origins and Development of His Religious Thought*. Trans. Philip Mairet. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1997.

Requirements:

1. *Course engagement:* Thorough preparation for class, thoughtfully active participation in discussion, and appropriate note-taking together constitute a basic expectation and requirement of the course. Attendance is mandatory. Students will submit a one-paragraph self-assessment of their course engagement, including a grade, in the conclusion of their dialogical exercise/theological journal (see 4, below). The following is a rough guide to letter grade assignment: A = completed 95-100% of the reading prior to class discussion, with critical reflection, and engaged thoughtfully and with respect for others in class exchanges; B = completed 85% ...; C = completed 75% ... Grades should be lowered appropriately for unexcused absences, tardiness, leaving class early, in-class texting or other forms of non-participation. The instructor reserves the right to adjust the reported grade when necessary. (about 15%)
2. *Outlines:* As an aid to processing reading, students should prepare daily outlines of the assigned reading from the *Institutes* and submit them to the instructor's email inbox prior to the class session on which the reading is to be discussed (beginning Feb. 19). Thus, by the end of the semester, the student should have a complete outline of the work for ready reference. No late submissions please. (about 15%)
3. *Oral conversation:* A one-hour face-to-face conference with the instructor will be scheduled during the final two weeks of class. Student preparation for the conversation will include reading a specialized-scholarly book on Calvin's theology and/or his contributions in his historical setting (see text options below*) as well as reviewing your class notes, reading notes, and outlines. This is an opportunity for checking in regarding your developing understanding as well as reporting on and processing areas of challenge or difficulty, and it also supplies an opportunity for communicating initial assessments of your course work prior to the final wrap-up of the course. (about 35%)

* Select Books on Calvin and Calvin's Theology

- Carlos M. N. Eire. *War Against the Idols: The Reformation of Worship from Erasmus to Calvin*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1986.
- B. A. Gerrish. *Grace and Gratitude: The Eucharistic Theology of John Calvin*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993.
- Serene Jones. *Calvin and the Rhetoric of Piety*. Louisville: WJK, 1995.
- Robert M. Kingdon. *Adultery and Divorce in Calvin's Geneva*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1995.
- Elsie Anne McKee. *John Calvin on the Diaconate and Liturgical Almsgiving*. Geneva: Droz, 1984.
- Jeanine Olson, *Calvin and Social Welfare: Deacons and the Bourse Français*. Selinsgrove PA: Susquehanna UP, 1989.
- G. Sujin Pak. *The Judaizing Calvin: Sixteenth-Century Debates over the Messianic Psalms*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2010.
- David L. Puckett. *John Calvin's Exegesis of the Old Testament*. Louisville: WJK, 1995.
- Karen Spierling. *Infant Baptism in Reformation Geneva: The Shaping of a Community, 1536-1964*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005. (Also: Louisville, WJK, 2009.)
- David Steinmetz. *Calvin in Context*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1995.
- Dennis Tamburello. *Union with Christ: John Calvin and the Mysticism of St. Bernard*. Louisville: WJK, 1994.
- John L. Thompson. *John Calvin and the Daughters of Sarah: Women in Regular and Exceptional Roles in the Exegesis of Calvin, his Predecessors and his Contemporaries*. Geneva: Droz, 1992.

4. *A dialogical exercise: How My Engagement with Calvin Changed/Deepened/Expanded/Complicated/Clarified My Theological Thinking*. Keep a theological "journal" throughout the semester to document your critical and contextual engagement with Calvin's theology, your conversations with classmates and others about theological issues raised in the course, and your reflections on your own developing theological and ethical understanding. In order to facilitate this, students are (1) asked to identify a theological problem, issue, or area of special concern or interest within the first two weeks of the semester and to communicate this in writing to the instructor, so as to help focus their dialogical processing; and they are (2) strongly encouraged, if possible, to form small groups for occasional theological conversations outside of class time. The shape, style, content, length, and format of this project is to be determined by you, as it is an exercise intended for your own growth and development. So use freedom and creativity here in a way that serves that intention. Your journals and your oral reflection on them will be the basis for a concluding conversation ("final exam") held May 16. Completed journals are due May 14. (about 35%)

All required written work should be submitted, electronically, to the instructor's email inbox.

N.B. In order to pass the course, students must complete and submit all assigned work.

Academic Honesty:

All work turned in to the instructor is expected to be the work of the student whose name appears on the assignment. Any borrowing of the ideas or the words of others must be acknowledged by quotation marks (where appropriate) and by citation of author and source. Use of another's language or ideas from online resources is included in this policy, and must be attributed to author and source of the work being cited. Failure to do so constitutes plagiarism, and may result in failure of the course. Two occurrences of plagiarism may result in dismissal from the Seminary. Students unfamiliar with issues related to academic honesty can find help from the staff in the Academic Support Center. For the Seminary policy, see the Policy for Academic Honesty in the Student Handbook.

Accessibility and Accommodation:

Students requiring accommodations for a documented physical or learning disability should be in contact with the Director of the Academic Support Center (bherrintonhodge@lpts.edu) during the first two weeks of a semester (or before the semester begins) and should speak with the instructor as soon as possible to arrange appropriate adjustments. Students with environmental or other sensitivities that may affect their learning are also encouraged to speak with the instructor.

Inclusive Language:

In accordance with seminary policy, students are to use inclusive language in class discussions and in written and oral communication by using language representative of the whole human community in respect to gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, age, and physical and intellectual capacities. Direct quotations from theological texts and translations of the Bible do not have to be altered to conform to this policy. In your own writing, however, when referring to God, you are encouraged to use a variety of images and metaphors, reflecting the richness of the Bible's images for God. For more information, see <http://www.lpts.edu/academics/academic-resources/academic-support-center/online-writing-lab/avoiding-gender-bias>.

Policy on late work:

All written assignments are due, unless indicated otherwise, by 11:59 pm on the date given in the syllabus. Students who encounter unusual obstacles to getting an assignment in may ask for an extension of the due date. They should contact the instructor to request an extension before the work comes due. They may speak to the instructor directly, but they are required to communicate by email so as to provide a record of the request. Extensions are granted solely at the discretion of the instructor. Assignments submitted late, when no extension has been granted, will be penalized in the grading by one letter grade increment for every day (a B+ paper becomes a B if one day late, a B- if two days, a C+ if three days, etc.). Assignments submitted more than ten days after the due date will not be accepted.

Use of electronic devices in class:

Do not send or read text messages during class. Cell phones should be turned off. In the event that you have a legitimate need to be accessible during class, you may ask the instructor for an exception to this rule. Laptops should not be used if you cannot trust yourself to restrict your use to note-taking and referring to the assigned primary source readings for the day. You may not access the Internet during class time unless specifically for purposes directly relevant to the course. Any misuse of electronic devices during class time, including checking of email or social networking sites will negatively affect the course grade.

Attendance Policy:

According to the Seminary catalog, students are expected to attend class meetings regularly. In case of illness or emergency, students are asked to notify the instructor of their planned absence from class, either prior to the session or within 24 hours of the class session. Six or more absences (1/4 of the course) may result in a low or failing grade in the course.

Contacting the instructor:

While students are always welcome to speak to the instructor at any time about questions or issues that arise, the most reliable and efficient means of setting up an opportunity to meet and talk over important matters is through email. Students are strongly encouraged to contact the professor when they feel they need clarification on topics and questions that arise in the class, or when they are confronting significant challenges in their learning.

Calendar of Topics and Assignments:

A note on the calendar: What is given here is a very rough estimate of dates for the topics we will be taking up. It is aspirational rather than a mandatory schedule. The class will not be bound by this schedule, as we will seek to give each topic its due, in relation to the needs of teaching and learning that arise in the classroom.

Feb 7**Introduction to the course**

Th

Required reading:

- Elwood, *Brief Introduction*, Introduction, ch. 1, 2, 4 (*Armchair*, Introduction, ch. 1, 2, 4)

Recommended background:

- Richard Rex, "Humanism," in Andrew Pettegree, ed., *The Reformation World*, pp. 51-70

- Elsie Anne McKee, “A Brief Biographical Sketch of Calvin and his Ministry,” in *John Calvin: Writings on Pastoral Piety*, 6-19

Feb 12

T

Seeing Calvin in context(s)

Required reading:

- Letter to Farel, 1540; Letters about his Wife's Death, 1540, *John Calvin: Writings on Pastoral Piety*, 50-54
- *Brief Introduction*, ch. 3 (*Armchair*, ch. 3)

Recommended background:

- William Naphy, “Calvin and Geneva,” in Andrew Pettegree, ed., *The Reformation World*, pp. 309-322
- Robert M. Kingdon, ed., *Registers of the Consistory of Geneva in the Time of Calvin*, vol. 1, 103-113

Feb 14

Th

Introducing Calvin's *Institutes*

Required reading:

- *Institutes*: Introduction, vii-xviii; Argument, 3-4; Dedication to Francis I, 5-22
- Preface to the Commentary on the Psalms (selecions), in *John Calvin: Writings on Pastoral Piety*, 55-63

Recommended background:

- *Brief Introduction*, 16-18 (*Armchair*, 30-35)
- Edward Dowey, *The Knowledge of God in Calvin's Theology*, 3-40

Feb 19

T

Beginnings: The Knowledge of God (and of Ourselves)

Required reading:

- *Institutes* 1. Of the Knowledge of God, 23-46

Recommended background:

- *Brief Introduction*, 19-28 (*Armchair*, 37-54)
- Edward Dowey, *The Knowledge of God in Calvin's Theology*, 41-86

Feb 21

Th

The Knowledge of Ourselves

Required reading:

- *Institutes* 2. Of the Knowledge of Man and of Free Will, 47-83

Recommended background:

- *Brief Introduction*, 29, 32-35 (*Armchair*, 56-57, 62-68)

Feb 26

T

The Knowledge of Ourselves (continued)

Required reading:

- *Institutes* 2. Of the Knowledge of Man and of Free Will, 83-114

Feb 28

Th

Law

Required reading:

- *Institutes* 3. Of the Law, 115-145

Recommended background:

- *Brief Introduction*, 35-37 (*Armchair*, 68-72)

Mar 5

T

Law (continued)

Required reading:

- *Institutes* 3. Of the Law, 145-175

Recommended background:

- *Brief Introduction*, 35-37 (*Armchair*, 68-72)
- John Hesselink, *Calvin's Concept of the Law*, esp. 7-38

Mar 7
Th Faith—and Trinity
Required reading:
• *Institutes* 4. Of Faith, Where the Apostles' Creed is Explained, 176-215
Recommended background:
• *Brief Introduction*, 28-29, 40-43 (*Armchair*, 54-55, 79-86)

Mar 12
T Faith—Creator, Christ, Spirit, Church
Required reading:
• *Institutes* 4. Of Faith, Where the Apostles' Creed is Explained, 215-254
Recommended background:
• *Brief Introduction*, 37-41 (*Armchair*, 72-81)

Mar 14
Th Faith—Church, Forgiveness, Resurrection, Eternal Life
Required reading:
• *Institutes* 4. Of Faith, Where the Apostles' Creed is Explained, 254-270
Recommended background:
• *Brief Introduction*, 49-52 (*Armchair*, 99-105)

Research and Study Week: March 18-22

Mar 26
T Regeneration: Repentance
Required reading:
• *Institutes* 5. Of Penitence 271-317
Recommended background:
• *Brief Introduction*, 40-45 (*Armchair*, 79-89)

Mar 28
Th Reconciliation: Justification
Required reading:
• *Institutes* 6. Of Justification, 318-359, (359-384)
Recommended background:
• *Brief Introduction*, 40-45 (*Armchair*, 79-89)
• Steven Ozment, *The Age of Reform*, 22-42

Apr 2
T Scripture: The Two Testaments
Required reading:
• *Institutes* 7. Of the Similarities and Differences between the Old and New Testaments 385-413
Recommended background:
• *Brief Introduction*, 22-28, 35-37 (*Armchair*, 44-54, 68-72)
• T.H.L. Parker, *Calvin's Old Testament Commentaries*, 42-82

Apr 4
Th Predestination
Required reading:
• *Institutes* 8. Of God's Predestination and Providence, 414-444
Recommended background:
• *Brief Introduction*, 45-49 (*Armchair*, 90-98)
• Richard Muller, *Christ and the Decree*, 17-38
• J. Wayne Baker, *Heinrich Bullinger and the Covenant*, 27-54

Apr 9
T Providence
Required reading:
• *Institutes* 8. Of God's Predestination and Providence, 444-457
• Cooper and McClure, *Claiming Theology in the Pulpit*, 37-41

Recommended background:

- *Brief Introduction*, 30-32 (*Armchair*, 57-62)

Apr 11

Th

Prayer

Required reading:

- *Institutes* 9. Of Prayer, 458-494

Recommended background:

- Charles Garside, *The Origins of Calvin's Theology of Music*
- Charles Partee, "Prayer as the Practice of Predestination," in Gamble, ed., *An Elaboration of the Theology of Calvin*

Apr 16

T

Sacraments: Baptism

Required reading:

- *Institutes* 10. Of the Sacraments 495-509; 11. Of Baptism 510-545

Recommended background:

- *Brief Introduction*, 54-57 (*Armchair*, 108-115)
- Karen Spierling, *Infant Baptism In Reformation Geneva*, ch. 2
- Calvin, *Form of Church Prayers: Baptismal Liturgy* in *John Calvin: Writings on Pastoral Piety*, 153-157

Apr 18

Holy Week Recess

Apr 23

T

Sacraments: Lord's Supper (and other ceremonies)

Required reading:

- *Institutes* 12. Of the Lord's Supper, 546-583; 13. Of the Five Other Ceremonies 584-616

Recommended background:

- Calvin, *Short Treatise on the Holy Supper; Form of Church Prayers*; catechetical fragments (selections) in *John Calvin: Writings on Pastoral Piety*, 101-112, 131-134
- *Brief Introduction*, 54-57 (*Armchair*, 108-115)
- C. Elwood, *The Body Broken*, 61-76

Apr 25

Th

Christian Freedom and the Governance of the Church

Required reading:

- *Institutes* 14. Of Christian Liberty 617-627; 15. Of the Power of the Church 628-655

Recommended background:

- *Brief Introduction*, 49-54 (*Armchair*, 99-108)
- C. Elwood, *The Body Broken*, 61-76

Apr 30

T

Civil Government: Christians and Society

Required reading:

- *Institutes* 16. Of Civil Government, 656-680

Recommended background:

- "To All the Pious Worshippers of God Who Desire the Kingdom of Christ to be Rightly Constituted in France," Dedicatory Epistle to the *Commentaries on Daniel* (<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom24.iv.html>)
- C. Elwood, "Regarding the Powers: Assessing Calvin's Legacy for Political Theology"
- *Brief Introduction*, 57-61 (*Armchair*, 115-123)

May 2

Th

Living as a Christian

Required reading:

- *Institutes* 17. Of the Christian Life, 681-712

Recommended background:

- Carlos M.N. Eire, *War Against the Idols*, 276-310
- John T. McNeill, "Calvin and Civil Government," in Donald McKim, ed., *Readings in Calvin's Theology*
- Elwood, *The Body Broken*, 145-162

May 7

T

TBA

Required reading: TBA

May 9

Th

Legacies

Required reading:

- *Brief Introduction*, ch. 5 (*Calvin for Armchair Theologians*, chapter 5)

Recommended background:

- B. A. Gerrish, "The Place of Calvin in Christian Theology," in McKim, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to John Calvin*, 289-304

May 16

Th

Final exam: Dialogical exercise conversation

Tentatively scheduled for 10 am – 11:20 am