The Theology of John Calvin / Fall 2015

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

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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. This course satisfies the theology core course requirement for Area B.

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

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:

 Calvin, John. *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Ed. John T. McNeill. Trans. Ford Lewis Battles. 2 vols. Library of Christian Classics vol. 20 and 21. Louisville: WJK, 1960. ISBN-10: 0664220282 ISBN-13: 978-0664220280

Recommended Texts:

[Students who would like to make use of a secondary source as a guide to the reading of Calvin's Institutes may want to invest in one of the following.]

- Parker, T.H.L. *Calvin: An Introduction to his Thought*. Louisville: WJK, 1995. ISBN-10: 0664256023 ISBN-13: 978-0664256029
- Wendel, François. *Calvin: Origins and Development of His Religious Thought*. Trans. Philip Mairet. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1997. ISBN-13: 978-0801020629

On Library Reserve:

[*N.B. All <u>required</u> 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.
 - _. Calvin for Armchair Theologians. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002.

______. "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.
- McKee, Elsie Anne, ed. John Calvin: Writings on Pastoral Piety. Mahway, NJ: Paulist Press, 2002.
- 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 and active, thoughtful participation in discussion is a basic 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 theological journal (see 3, 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; $B = \text{completed 85\%} \dots$; $C = \text{completed 75\%} \dots$ 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 10%)

2. *Essays*: three short essays (1500-1900 words, double spaced, Times New Roman 12-pt font) on Calvin's theological thought (see descriptions and due dates below). Save your essay as a Word document and name it in this way: "**Yourlastname Calvin essay 1**," with the essay number corresponding to the number given in the syllabus. (about 60%)

3. *A dialogical exercise: How Calvin Changed My Mind.* 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 strongly encouraged to form small groups for occasional theological conversations outside of class time. Your journals and your oral reflection on them will be the basis for a concluding conversation ("final exam") held December 16 or 17. Completed journals are due December 15. (about 30%)

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

Short Essay Assignments:

You are given six opportunities to write and submit **three** theological essays interpreting and assessing Calvin's theology. Please note the due dates for each assignment. Essays may be submitted any time prior to the end of the day on which they are due.

Essay 1: Biblical authority. Institutes 1.6-9 contains Calvin's argument regarding theological sources and authority, focusing on the prime authority of scripture. In your essay, explain and assess Calvin's argument and account. Focus on how and why he understands scripture to be authoritative, in what way scripture can be said to be the word of God, and how he construes the relation between scripture and other possible authorities (such as church traditions or official ecclesiastical interpretation, or revelatory experience). What, in your view, is the practical significance of Calvin's interpretation of the relation between God's word in scripture and the Holy Spirit? Is Calvin's account a contribution to the development of biblical fundamentalism, or does it lead in a different direction? **Due October 13.**

<u>Essay 2</u>: *Calvin's interpretation of providence*, and his depiction of the relation between power and goodness in God. Does Calvin's version of the doctrine of providence entail a denial of human freedom? Why or why not? Does it assign to God culpability for evil or make God responsible for sin? Why or why not? Offer your critical assessment of Calvin's account. **Due October 13.**

<u>Essay 3</u>: *The two testaments*. Explain Calvin's account of covenantal history as expressed in his account of the two testaments and the continuities and discontinuities between them. Is this account one that could accurately be labeled supersessionist? Why or why not? Due **November 10**.

Essay 4: *The work of Christ*. Outline Calvin's account of atonement and assess its theological usefulness. What does this position illuminate? What does it overlook or fail to adequately represent? Due **November 10**.

<u>Essay 5</u>: *Prayer*. Write an essay on Calvin's practical-theological interpretation of prayer, focusing on his four rules for right prayer and the setting he gives this. How does Calvin's account of prayer relate to key aspects of his theological perspective? Due **December 10**.

<u>Essay 6</u>: *The Sacraments of the church*. Explain Calvin's interpretation of the Christian sacraments and give a basic account of his understanding of <u>one</u> of the sacraments. Critically assess his interpretation. Due **December 10**.

These essays will observe conventions of academic writing. Students needing help with citation, voice, development of argument, or other aspects of writing style, should consult with the Academic Support Center within the first two weeks of the semester.

Evaluation of written work: Your instructor will read your essay and return it with comments and a letter grade. The grading policy of Louisville Seminary will be followed. Evaluation will focus on the student's progress toward developing the understanding and capacities given in the course objectives and will assess the relative degree of success in meeting the following goals:

- Correct formatting: the essay should have a title (on page one; no title page); it should be formatted according to the supplied directions, submitted in the form required, and should be the required length.
- Strong writing: the essay should observe correct grammatical forms, correct use of punctuation, and avoid syntactical and other errors of writing; the writing should be clear and comprehensible, employing a structure that aids in communication, and should utilize effective transitions; sources should be clearly and correctly cited, following approved methods and forms.

- Addressing the topic as a historical theologian: the essay should successfully address the essay prompt; it should focus on the identified theological issues and discuss them with attention to appropriate elements of context: time, place, culture, social and/or political location.
- Concentrating on primary sources: the essay should focus on the text or texts identified as a primary source for the engagement of the essay topic and should avoid unnecessary distractions or detours.
- Achieving clarity of theological or ethical understanding: the essay should focus on a theological or ethical issue, give adequate voice to the theological or ethical position of the author or authors central to the essay topic (invariably, in this class, John Calvin), and show that the student understands the issues and can interpret the pertinent ideas thoughtfully with attention to their coherence and their ramifications.
- Growth in one's capacity for theological engagement: the essay should demonstrate the student's developing capacity for theological interpretation and assessment, supplying a framework for theological engagement that is supported by evidence and argument, and displaying the student's own emerging, distinctive theological and ethical voice.

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

Citation Policy:

Citations in your papers should follow the Seminary standard, which is based on these guides:

- Kate Turabian, A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations, 7th ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007.
- The Chicago Manual of Style, 15th ed. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2003.

Copies of these guides are available at the library and in the Academic Support Center. Please contact

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 (kmapes@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.

Introduction to the course
Required reading:
• T.H.L. Parker, Calvin: An Introduction to his Thought, 1-11
Recommended background:
• Richard Rex, "Humanism," in Andrew Pettegree, ed., <i>The Reformation World</i> , pp. 51-70
Seeing Calvin in context(s)
Required reading:
• Catechism of the Church of Geneva (1542/1545), in Dillenberger, 245-265, or online (for example:
http://www.reformed.org/documents/index.html?mainframe=http://www.reform
ed.org/documents/calvin/geneva_catachism/geneva_catachism.html), read
selections
• William Naphy, "Calvin and Geneva," in Andrew Pettegree, ed., <i>The</i>
Reformation World, pp. 309-322

	Recommended background:
	• Robert M. Kingdon, ed., <i>Registers of the Consistory of Geneva in the Time of Calvin</i> , vol. 1, 103-113
Sep 17	Introducing the "Institutes"
Th	Required reading:
	 Commentary on Psalms, "Author's Preface," in Dillenberger, 21-33, or online at <u>http://www.ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom08.vi.html</u>
	 Institutes: Table of Contents, "John Calvin to the Reader," "Subject Matter," "Prefatory Address to King Francis I"
	Recommended background:
	• John T. McNeill, "Introduction," to <i>Calvin: Institutes</i>
	• Edward Dowey, <i>The Knowledge of God in Calvin's Theology</i> , 3-40
Sep 22	The Knowledge of God and of Ourselves
Т	Required reading:
	Institutes 1.1-7 Recommended background:
	Edward Dowey, <i>The Knowledge of God in Calvin's Theology</i> , 41-86
Sep 24	The Knowledge of God and of Ourselves continued
Th	Required reading:
	• Institutes 1.1-7
Sep 29	The Knowledge of God the Creator: Scripture and the Worship of God
Т	Required reading:
	Institutes 1.8-12 Recommended background:
	Edward Dowey, <i>The Knowledge of God in Calvin's Theology</i> , 86-147
	 Carlos M. N. Eire, War Against the Idols, 195-223
Oct 1	The Trinity and the Case of Michael Servetus
Th	Required reading:
	• Institutes 1.13.1-6; 1.13.16-29
	 Recommended background: Roland Bainton, <i>Hunted Heretic</i>, ch. 10-11
Oct 6	Creation and Providence
Т	Required reading:
	 Institutes 1.14.1-2, 1.14.13-22; 1.15 Institutes 1.16-18
	• Institutes 1.10-18 Recommended background:
	• Susan Schreiner, <i>The Theater of His Glory</i> , 7-37, 55-72
Oct 8	Providentia continuanda
Th	Required reading:
	• Institutes 1.14.1-2, 1.14.13-22; 1.15
	• Institutes 1.16-18
	• Cooper and McClure, <i>Claiming Theology in the Pulpit</i> , 37-41

Oct 13	Grawemeyer Celebration—No class
T	Essays 1 and 2 due
<i>Oct 15</i>	 Sin, Law, Gospel, and the Two Testaments
Th	Required reading: Institutes 2.1.1-11; 2.2.10-17, 26-27; 2.3.1-2, 5; 2.6; 2.7.1-13; 2.9; 2.10.1-14, 23; 2.11.1-12 Recommended background: John Hesselink, Calvin's Concept of the Law, esp. 7-38 T.H.L. Parker, Calvin's Old Testament Commentaries, 42-82
Oct 20	 Christ the Mediator
T	Required reading: Institutes 2.12.1-3; 2.13; 2.14.1-4; 2.15-17.4 Recommended background: Paul van Buren, "The Incarnation: Christ's Union With Us," in Donald McKim, ed., <i>Readings in Calvin's Theology</i> Stephen Edmondson, <i>Calvin's Christology</i>, ch. 2
Oct 22	 The Holy Spirit and Participation in the Grace of Christ
Th	Required reading: Institutes 3.1; 3.2.6-7, 14-18, 33-36; 3.3.1, 5-11, 20 Recommended background: Edward Dowey, <i>The Knowledge of God in Calvin's Theology</i>, ch. 4
Research a	and Study Week: October 26-30
<i>Nov 3</i> Т	 The Christian Life Required reading: Institutes 3.6-10 Recommended background: Ronald S. Wallace, Calvin's Doctrine of the Christian Life
<i>Nov 5</i>	 The Christian Life continues
Th	Required reading: Institutes 3.6-10 Recommended background: Ronald S. Wallace, Calvin's Doctrine of the Christian Life
<i>Nov 10</i> T	 Justification and Prayer <i>Essays 3 and 4 due</i> Required reading: Institutes 3.11.1-4, 23; 3.13; 3.14.17-21; 3.19; 3.20.1-20, 28-41, 50-52 Acts of the Council of Trent with the Antidote(1547), Dillenberger, 193-210, or online at <u>http://www.lgmarshall.org/Calvin/calvin trentantidote.html</u> (note: the online text is unabridged) Recommended background: Steven Ozment, <i>The Age of Reform</i>, 22-42 Charles Partee, "Prayer as the Practice of Predestination," in Gamble, ed., <i>An Elaboration of the Theology of Calvin</i> Charles Garside, <i>The Origins of Calvin's Theology of Music</i>
<i>Nov 12</i>	Continuing Prayer

Th

Required reading:

	• Institutes 3.20.1-20, 28-41, 50-52
<i>Nov 17</i> T	 Election Required reading: Institutes 3.21; 3.22.1-4, 7-8; 3.23; 3.24.1-8 Recommended background: Richard Muller, Christ and the Decree, 17-38 J. Wayne Baker, Heinrich Bullinger and the Covenant, 27-54
<i>Nov 19</i> Th	 The Church: Authority, Nature, and Function Required reading: Institutes 4.1.1-22; 4.2.1-6,11-12; 4.3.1-9, 15-16 Recommended background: John T. McNeill, "The Church in Sixteenth-Century Reformed Theology," Journal of Religion 22 (1942): 251-269
<i>Nov 24</i> T [Thanksg	 Church Discipline and the Public Regulation of Morality Required reading: Calvin, "Draft Ecclesiastical Ordinances," (1541) Dillenberger, pp. 229-244 <i>Institutes</i> 2.7.12; 4.12 Robert M. Kingdon, ed., <i>Registers of the Consistory of Geneva in the Time of Calvin</i>, vol. 1 (selections) Recommended background: Robert M. Kingdon, <i>Adultery and Divorce in Calvin's Geneva</i>, ch. 1 Robert M. Kingdon, "The Genevan Consistory in the Time of Calvin," Pettegree, Duke, and Lewis, ed., <i>Calvinism in Europe</i>, <i>1540-1620</i>, 21-3 Ernst Troeltsch, <i>The Social Teachings of the Christian Churches</i>, 2:590-628
Dec 1 T	 The Sacraments Required reading: Calvin, "Short Treatise on the Holy Supper," (1541) Dillenberger, 507-541, or http://www.hornes.org/theologia/john-calvin/short-treatise-on-the-holy-supper-of-our-lord-jesus-christ Form of Church Prayers (1542): "The Manner of Celebrating the Lord's Supper," in Beveridge, ed., Calvin's Tracts and Treatises 2:119-122 Institutes 4.14.1-17; 4.15.1-6; 4.16.1-9; 4.17.1-7, 31-33. Recommended background: C. Elwood, The Body Broken, 61-76 Karen Spierling, Infant Baptism In Reformation Geneva
Dec 3 Th	 The Sacraments continued Required reading: Form of Church Prayers (1542): "The Manner of Celebrating the Lord's Supper," in Beveridge, ed., Calvin's Tracts and Treatises 2:119-122 Institutes 4.14.1-17; 4.15.1-6; 4.16.1-9; 4.17.1-7, 31-33.
Dec 8 Т	 Civil Government: Christians and Society Required reading: Institutes 4.20 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

• C. Elwood, *The Body Broken*, 145-162

Dec 10 Th	 Considering Calvin's Legacy, and conclusions <i>Essays 5 and 6 due</i> Required reading: Elwood, <i>Calvin for Armchair Theologians</i>, chapter 5 Recommended background: Alister, McGrath, <i>A Life of John Calvin</i>, 219-261 B. A. Gerrish, "The Place of Calvin in Christian Theology," in McKim, ed. <i>The Cambridge Companion to John Calvin</i>, 289-304
?	 Power, the powers, and ends [<i>optional topic: IF TIME ALLOWS</i>] Required reading: Institutes 3.25.1-3, 6, 10-12 "To All the Pious Worshippers of God Who Desire the Kingdom of Christ to be Rightly Constituted in France," Dedicatory Epistle to the <i>Commentaries on Daniel</i> (<u>http://www.ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom24.iv.html</u>) C. Elwood, "Regarding the Powers: Assessing Calvin's Legacy for Political Theology"

Dec 16 or 17 Final exam: Dialogical exercise conversation

W or Th To be scheduled in consultation with the Registrar