

Classics of Personal Devotion, PT5400
Reformed Theological Seminary, “Remote Residential”
Summer B 2020
Rev. Robert Arendale

Course Description

As our catechism states, man’s chief end is ‘to glorify God and to enjoy him forever.’ Simply put, the goal of the Christian life is to know God (John 17:3). And knowing Him, we are called to know Him more and more (Phil 3:10). That is, we are to live in union and communion with our Lord Jesus Christ. In this course, students are introduced to several classic works on the Christian life. Through readings, discussion, and Biblical exposition, by God’s grace and the power of His Spirit, we will grow in our love for and communion with the risen Christ.

Course Details

Location: zoom meetings

Time: 6:00pm – 8:00 pm

Dates: **Monday – Thursday, July 13-16 & Tuesday – Thursday, July 28-30**

Instructor: Rev. Robert S. Arendale

Contact: rarendale@rts.edu

Course Goals

- A. To glorify our Triune God who creates, sustains, and redeems his people.
- B. To grow in our love for and communion with our Savior Jesus Christ through the reading and discussion of great works from the Reformed tradition.

Course Philosophy

This course will consist of both discussion and lecture. Each author/figure will be introduced and their major theological contributions surveyed. However, much of our time will be spent in discussing the readings and reflecting on how they should grow and challenge us in the Christian life. Also, we will discuss how each work should aid us in our various ministries. Finally, we will consider several Biblical texts that serve as the basis and foundation of the works read and discussed.

Course Requirements

A. Unless providentially hindered, all registered students are expected to attend all class lectures via zoom.

B. Students are expected to read the following in full:

1. *Confessions* by St. Augustine (books 1-10)
2. *The Heidelberg Disputation* by Martin Luther
3. *The Golden Booklet of the True Christian Life* by John Calvin
4. *On the Mortification of Sin* by John Owen
5. “God Glorified in Man’s Dependence” by Jonathan Edwards
6. “The Wonderful Tree” from *Grace and Glory* by Geerhardus Vos
7. “The Fear of God” by John Murray
8. “The Usefulness of the Cross” by Richard Gaffin

**** It does not matter to the Instructor which version of the above works you read. Many of these works can be found on-line as they are sermons and selections from larger works. If you have trouble locating any of the readings, ask the Professor and he will be happy to assist****

****While it is not required that the reading be completed prior to class, the more of the reading that is completed prior to class the better the student will be able to engage in class discussion. So ... Start Reading!!****

C. Reading Reports. The student will respond to the professor what percentage of the reading has been accomplished. This report is due by August 28th, 2020.

D. Interactions. Each student is required to have 15 student to professor interactions and 5 student to student interactions. This is the standard requirement for all Distance Ed courses.

E. Essay. The student will write an 8 page essay arising from one of the assigned works. The students will select a major theme and summarize, critique, expand, and apply to his or her life and ministry. More information on the essay will be given in class. The essay is due by August 28th, 2020.

Grading

10% interactions

40% reading

50% essay

Outline:

Part I: Augustine and his “Confessions”

Part II: Luther and his “Theology of the Cross”

Part III: Calvin and his “Golden Booklet”

Part V: Owen and his “On Mortification”

Part VI: Edwards and his “God Glorified in Man’s Dependence

Part VII: Vos and his “The Wonderful Tree”

Part VIII: Gaffin and his “The Usefulness of the Cross”