

Classics of Personal Devotions

Spring 2023—Reformed Theological Seminary Atlanta

Professor Aaron Menikoff

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Course Number: 04HT508/1

Class Dates, Tuesdays 3:50–4:55

January 31–May 9 (no class Mar 21, Apr 4, and May 2)

There is only one Physician—
Very flesh, yet Spirit too;
Uncreated, and yet born;
God-and-Man in One agreed,
Very-Life-in-Death indeed,
Fruit of God and Mary's seed;
At once impassible and torn
By pain and suffering here below:
Jesus Christ, whom as our Lord we know.

--Ignatius, *Ephesians*

Fear drives people out of their proper station, out of their place and duty into Satan's ground. The subtle enemy of our salvation knows that we are out of gunshot range when we abide with God in the way of our duty. The Lord is with us while we are with him.

--John Flavel, *A Practical Treatise of Fear*

A minister that watches for souls as one who expects to give an account will have none to please but God. When he studies his sermons, this will not be the enquiry, "How shall I form my discourse so as to please and gratify the humors of men and get their applause?" [Rather,] "How shall I preach so as to do honor to God, and meet with the approbation of my Judge?"

--Lemuel Haynes, "The Character and Work of a Spiritual Watchman"

Course Description

We will examine the context and content of Christian writings of the past with the goal of developing the habit of mining the classics of personal devotion for our own, spiritual good and, ultimately, the good of the churches we serve.

Course Objectives

- 1) To give each student a cursory understanding of the setting of important Christian authors
- 2) To help each student appreciate the value of devotional reading in addition to Scripture meditation.
- 3) To equip each student with the skills necessary to read the classics of personal devotion

Course Texts

- 1) J. I. Packer, *A Quest for Godliness: The Puritan Vision of the Christian Life* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1990).
- 2) Stephen J. Nichols, *Heaven On Earth: Capturing Jonathan Edwards's Vision of Living in Between* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2009).
- 3) Thabiti M. Anyabwile, ed., *May We Meet in the Heavenly World: The Piety of Lemuel Haynes* (Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 2009).

Course Requirements

- 1) Reading & Journal: Students will be expected to complete all assigned reading by 5pm on **May 9**. Journal should include insights from the reading and class conversations. **40%** of the final grade
- 2) Participation: Students are expected to attend class, and participate in class discussions. **40%** of the final grade
- 3) Reflection Paper: Students will write a paper reflecting on *Quest for Godliness*. The paper should be no more than 1200 words (Times New Roman, 12-pt font) and should describe how Puritan writers can affect the devotional lives of Christians today. The paper is due by 5pm on May 9. **20%** of final grade

Tentative Schedule

“The Church Fathers as Spiritual Mentors”

Reading and Discussion

“The Reformers as Spiritual Mentors”

Reading and Discussion

“The Puritans as Spiritual Mentors”

Reading and Discussion

“American Evangelicals as Spiritual Mentors”

Reading and Discussion

Standard RTS Extension Policy

All assignments and exams are to be completed by the deadlines announced in this syllabus or in class.

Extensions for assignments and exams due within the normal duration of the course must be approved beforehand by the Professor. Extensions of two weeks or less beyond the date of the last deadline for the course must be approved beforehand by the Professor. A grade penalty may be assessed.

Extensions of greater than two weeks but not more than six weeks beyond the last deadline for the course may be granted in extenuating circumstances (i.e. illness, family emergency). For an extension of more than two weeks the student must request an Extension Request Form from the Student Services Office. The request must be approved by the Professor and the Academic Dean. A grade penalty may be assessed. (RTS Catalog p. 42 and RTS Atlanta Student Handbook p. 14).

Any incompletes not cleared six weeks after the last published due date for course work will be converted to a failing grade. Professors may have the failing grade changed to a passing grade by request. (RTS Catalog p. 42)

RTS Grading Scale

A	97–100
A-	94–96
B+	91–93
B	88–90
B-	86–87
C+	83–85
C-	78–79
D+	75–77
D	72–74
D-	70–71
F	Below 70

Course Objectives Related to MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes

Course: Classics of Personal Devotions
 Professor: Aaron Menikoff
 Campus: Atlanta
 Date: Spring 2023

<u>MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes</u>		<u>Rubric</u>	<u>Mini-Justification</u>
<p><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></p> <p><i>*As the MDiv is the core degree at RTS, the MDiv rubric will be used in this syllabus.</i></p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Strong ➤ Moderate ➤ Minimal ➤ None 	
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.	Moderate	Students should be able to freely discuss Christian literature for personal and corporate edification
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.)	Strong	The quality of classics is dependent upon their fidelity to Scripture—students will practice assessing these works in accordance with biblical texts
Reformed Theology	Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards.	Moderate	Reformed theology, though not the topic of study, is crucial for the lived and shared Christian experience.
Sanctification	Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student’s sanctification.	Strong	Devotion is inextricably tied to personal sanctification
Desire for Worldview	Burning desire to conform all of life to the Word of God.	Minimal	
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	Discussion will focus on different streams in the Reformed tradition
Preach	Ability to preach and teach the meaning of Scripture to both heart and mind with clarity and enthusiasm.	Minimal	Some interaction with how classics can inform preaching
Worship	Knowledgeable of historic and modern Christian-worship forms; and ability to construct and skill to lead a worship service.	Minimal	

Shepherd	Ability to shepherd the local congregation: aiding in spiritual maturity; promoting use of gifts and callings; and encouraging a concern for non-Christians, both in America and worldwide.	Strong	Great emphasis on seeing how feeding from the wisdom of others can shape pastoral ministry
Church/World	Ability to interact within a denominational context, within the broader worldwide church, and with significant public issues.	Minimal	