

04HT6320 Theology of John Calvin Syllabus

Reformed Theological Seminary

Fall 2023—Atlanta Campus

Tuesdays 2pm to 4pm

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Course Description

This class will introduce Calvin's *Institutes* and will also help students to understand the nature of Calvin's theology. It will provide a context for theological analysis of both pre- and post-Reformation theology.

Much of this course will be conducted in a seminar fashion with heavy focus upon working through the *Institutes* in a discussion format during class time.

Course Objectives

To assist the student in developing an appreciation for the theology of Calvin in its historical and theological contexts and in analyzing Reformation and post-Reformation theology in general.

Course Requirements

I. Required Reading

John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (Westminster/John Knox, 1559 edition, Battles translation), as follows:

I.1.1 to I.18.4
II.12.1 to II.17.6
III.21.1 to III.24.17
IV.14.1 to IV.17.50

THL Parker, *Calvin's Preaching*, (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1992), only chapters 1-8 and 12-13.

Bruce Gordon, *Calvin* (New Haven and London: Yale University, 2009).

Derek W.H. Thomas and John W. Tweeddale, eds., *John Calvin: For a New Reformation* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2019).

II. Class Attendance

Class attendance is imperative for successful completion of this course.

III. Evaluation

1. Class participation (30%).
2. Reading journal (30%). Due Date:

Students will be responsible for keeping a journal as they complete the required reading for the course. This journal should include significant quotations from Calvin's *Institutes* or from the other works on Calvin; topics that you might want to study more in the future; passages, exegetical comments, or illustrations to help you in your preaching; and/or doctrines or ideas that minister to you, that you agree with, or that you disagree with. I do not want you to keep a journal on every book you read. One journal for all the reading will suffice. So be selective in the things you write down. The intent is to provide you with a resource book of sorts on things you have found helpful in Calvin that will serve you for years to come in ministry.

3. Research paper (40%). Due Date:

A 12-15 page theological paper (in Times New Roman 12pt font) is required for this course. Please use Kate Turabian, *A Manual for Writers* with footnotes instead of endnotes.

Possible paper topics:

Reformation vs. post-Reformation theology. Continuities and discontinuities.

Relations between Calvin and renaissance humanism.

Relations between Calvin and medieval scholasticism.

Relations between Calvin and Reformed scholasticism.

Calvin's theological method (relations of reason and authority in theology, epistemology, mode of expression, definition of theology, structure and organization of theology, etc).

Calvin's doctrine of Scripture.

Calvin's doctrine of religious or civil authority.

Calvin's doctrine of God (existence, attributes, works, providence, Trinity, etc).

Calvin's theological anthropology (creation, image of God, fall, etc).

Calvin's Christology (two natures, hypostatic union, *communicatio idiomatum*, *extra Calvinisticum*, etc).

Calvin's soteriology (propitiation, expiation, justification, predestination, etc). What did Calvin teach on justification? What are the relations between his doctrine and those of the late medieval theologians and church, between his, Augustine's, and Luther's? What are the

relations between his and Luther's doctrine of predestination? What was his doctrine of the atonement?

Calvin's view of law and gospel.

Calvin on union with Christ. Sources? Parallels with Luther? Augustine? Function in his theology? Relations to other parts of his theology?

Calvin's doctrine of covenant (covenant of works, grace, redemption?).

Calvin's doctrine of the third use of the law.

Calvin's ecclesiology (marks and nature of the church, visible vs. invisible church, offices, function, authority, etc).

Calvin's doctrine of the means of grace.

Calvin's doctrine of the Lord's Supper. To what degree was he dependent upon Luther? Where did they differ? Why? How?

Calvin's doctrine of baptism. Compare and contrast with Luther.

Relation between Calvin's theology and the theology of the Reformed confessions (pick a locus).

Calvin and natural law.

Calvin's ethics.

Calvin's doctrine of the state.

Calvin's eschatology.

Course Lecture Schedule

The following is the tentative schedule for the course:

August 22	Syllabus, Introduction, Introduction to Calvin
August 29	Introduction to Calvin
September 5	Introduction to Calvin
September 12	Introduction to the <i>Institutes</i>
September 19	Institutes I.1-10
September 26	Institutes I.1-10
October 3	Institutes I.11-18
October 10	No class—Spring Break
October 17	Institutes I.11-18
October 24	Institutes II.12-17

October 31	Institutes II.12-17
November 7	Institutes III.21-24
November 14	Institutes IV.14-17
November 21	Calvin's preaching

Assignments

The due dates for all assignments are listed above. Any assignments received after these dates will be considered late and will receive a 3-point grade reduction for every day past the deadline. Please be sure that everything you hand in has your full name on it.

Zoom Policy

Your professor may allow you to Zoom into class or watch Zoom recordings for excused absences based on the professor's discretion and subject to the availability of equipment. Students should contact their professor well in advance of the class meeting. For a third absence the Registrar should be consulted. Your professor may require additional interactive assignments to offset the absence of classroom interaction. Sync or Remote Live courses have priority for the limited Zoom equipment.

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 Registrar's Office. The request must be approved by the Professor and the Academic Dean. A grade penalty may be assessed. (RTS Catalog p. 46 and RTS Atlanta Student Handbook p. 18)

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. 49)

Course Objectives Related to MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes

Course: Theology of John Calvin HT6320

Professor: Guy M. Richard

Campus: Atlanta

Date: Fall 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. Also includes ability to preach and teach the meaning of Scripture to both heart and mind with clarity and enthusiasm.	Strong	The course strongly engages historical and theological concepts.
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.)	Moderate	The class will require students to engage with Scripture only through engaging with Calvin's treatment of it.
Reformed Theology	Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards.	Strong	This class is all about Reformed theology, especially as it was articulated by John Calvin.
Sanctification	Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student's sanctification.	Moderate	Students will be challenged to think through their own sanctification and to apply the things they learn.
Desire for Worldview	Burning desire to conform all of life to the Word of God.	Moderate	As this was Calvin's desire, students should grow in this area as well.
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	This class will be conducted in a winsome manner and will make application to our own contexts today.
Pastoral Ministry	Ability to minister the Word of God to hearts and lives of both church and unchurched, to include preaching, teaching, leading in worship, leading, and shepherding the local congregation, aiding in spiritual maturity, concern for non-Xns.	Moderate	Calvin's pastoral ministry and preaching will be examined in class. Moreover, topics will be applied to pastoral ministry.