

NEW ORLEANS BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

HIST 6302 CHRISTIAN DEVOTIONAL CLASSICS

Dr. Daniel Holcomb

Office: Dodd 211

SPRING SEMESTER 2016

Wednesday – 12:30-3:20 PM

B107

SEMINARY MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary is to equip leaders to fulfill the Great Commission and Great Commandments through the local church and its ministries.

SEMINARY CORE VALUES

New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary has five core values: Doctrinal Integrity, Spiritual Vitality, Mission Focus, Characteristic Excellence, and Servant Leadership. The course supports the core values of Spiritual Vitality and Doctrinal Integrity by introducing students to authors whose lives and writing convey a vital and contagious devotion to God. Connecting with such a company of disciples enlarges and enriches our understanding of the doctrine of the communion of saints and requires that our theological reflections engage the light drenched environment of the Spirit of God where abundant life is generated and nurtured. *Mission Focus* is the core value focus for NOBTS this year.

SEMINARY BASIC COMEPETENCIES

The seven basic competencies that guide the NOBTS curriculum are Biblical Exposition, Christian Theological Heritage, Disciple Making, Interpersonal Skills, Servant Leadership, Spiritual and Character Formation, and Worship Leadership. It could be argued that a solid and comprehensive exposure to the devotional classics contributes to the development of all these competencies. Fundamentally, however, the seminar supports Christian Theological Heritage and Spiritual and Character Formation. The rudiments of spiritual formation are identified and elucidated as they are perceived and practiced across the broad range of Christian history. The seminar could be described as an exercise in heritage based praxis: learning from spiritual mentors past and present how to walk with God and why this is the most crucial task of the church.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Devotion and worship are wellsprings of Christian experience, the inspirational and motivational forces of pilgrimage and ministry. The history of Christian devotion is rich and diverse. It encompasses a wide variety of communions and perspectives and is preserved in an extensive body of literature. This course is an introduction to the heritage of Christian mystical and devotional literature. Works such as Augustine's *Confessions*, Bernard's *The Love of God*, Thomas à Kempis' *Imitation of Christ*, Pascal's *Pensees*, Brother Lawrence's *The Practice of the Presence of God*, Jeremy Taylor's *Holy Living and Holy Dying*, Kierkegaard's *Purity of Heart*, and Bonhoeffer's *The Cost of Discipleship* are studied in their historical context and analyzed for their spiritual content and influence.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students successfully completing the seminar will demonstrate:

- General knowledge of the history of Christian devotion and of selected devotional classics;
- Understanding of central insights and emphases of the devotional classics and their impact on the heritage of Christian spirituality;
- Capacity to evaluate contemporary popular religion in the light of fundamental accents of the devotional classics;
- Knowledge of the spiritual disciplines of Christian faith and their contemporary applications;
- Disciplined commitment to course assignments and faithful participation in class discussions;
- Intention to use devotional classics for personal nurture and church ministry.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Textbook. The textbook for the course is E. Glenn Hinson, *Seekers After Mature Faith* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1968). Photocopies of the text are provided without charge to students.

Readings. Additional readings are provided in *Foundations*, a volume prepared by the instructor as a resource for seminar discussions. All reading assignments are indicated in the seminar schedule and should be completed by **May 11, 2016**.

Group Reports. Study groups will be formed. Each will be assigned a devotional classic to read and discuss with the class. Each group member will present an oral report with accompanying written outline on the salient information in the assigned section of the book. The reports will be followed by class discussion. In light of the discussion and further reading, the reports will be developed into more detailed and written summaries and critiques and submitted no later than **May 11, 2016.**

Book Review. Read and review a book listed in the course syllabus. Indicate your choice to the instructor before proceeding with the assignment. The text of the review should be composed of 10-12 double-spaced typewritten pages. It should be written in an acceptable style, reflect serious study and analysis, and include the following sections: 1) biographical sketch of the author, 2) historical context of the work, 3) author's purpose, 4) basic insights or teachings, 5) quotable passages, 6) relevancy of the book for the seminar, 7) concluding evaluation. As you develop your review you will have opportunity to share your findings and insights with the class. The completed review is due **April 27, 2016.**

Examinations. The mid-semester and final exams are take home projects consisting of questions on the textbook, readings, lectures, and class discussion. The mid-semester exam is due no later than **April 6, 2016.** The final examination should be submitted on **May 11, 2016.**

Class Attendance. Students are expected to attend class regularly and participate in class discussions. According to Seminary regulations, the maximum number of absences without failure for a three hour course is nine classroom hours. Please consult the current graduate catalog for information about absences, late arrivals, and early departures.

COURSE EVALUATION

The final grade will be calculated as follows:

• Book Review.....	20%	A: 93-100
• Group Reports.....	20%	B: 85-92
• Reading Assignments/ Class Discussions.....	15%	C: 77-84
• Mid-semester Exam.....	20%	D: 70-76
• Final Exam.....	25%	F: 69 or below

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