



Theology of the Major Reformers

THEO/HIST 9405

New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary

Fall 2020

Thursday, 2:00-4:30 PM

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I. Mission Statement

New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary and Leavell College prepare servants to walk with Christ, proclaim His truth, and fulfill His mission.

II. Core Values Focus

New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary has five core values—Doctrinal Integrity, Spiritual Vitality, Mission Focus, Characteristic Excellence, and Servant Leadership.

Doctrinal Integrity is the primary core value addressed in this seminar. The Core Value Focus for 2020-2021 is Mission Focus: “We are not here merely to get an education or to give one. We are here to change the world by fulfilling the Great Commission and the Great Commandments through the local church and its ministries.”

III. Curriculum Competencies Addressed

NOBTS services seven key competencies in its academic programs—Biblical Exposition, Christian Theological Heritage, Discipleship Making, Interpersonal Skills, Servant Leadership, Spiritual and Character Formation, and Worship Leadership. Christian Theological Heritage is the key competency addressed in this course.

IV. Course Description

Beginning with an overview of late medieval theology, especially of those flashpoints that elicited increasing debate and dissent, the seminar addresses significant features of Reformation thought on the European continent during the sixteenth century.

V. Student Learning Objectives

By the end of this seminar, the students will be able to:

- understand the varied historical contexts and theological perspectives of the major Reformers.
- articulate a well-informed, biblically-based, historically-informed, and confessionally Baptist description of the theology of the major Reformers.
- communicate through a seminar paper of original research as well as a peer critique of a research paper a historical or theological issue related to the major Reformers.

VI. Textbooks

Required Text:

McGrath, Alister. *Reformation Thought: An Introduction*. 4th edition. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012.

Additional required reading will be assigned from primary sources that are available on the Internet.

Review Texts:

Students will sign up to read and review one book from **each list** below—one of the Martin Luther texts and one of the John Calvin texts. Or, you may choose an unlisted text with the professors' approval.

Martin Luther texts

Althaus, Paul. *The Theology of Martin Luther*.
 Bayer, Oswald. *Martin Luther's Theology: A Contemporary Interpretation*.
 Bornkamm, Heinrich. *Luther's World of Thought*.
 Hendrix, Scott H. *Martin Luther: Visionary Reformer*.
 Lohse, Bernhard. *Martin Luther: An Introduction to His Life and Work*.
 Marius, Richard. *Martin Luther: The Christian between God and Death*.
 Oberman, Heiko. *Luther: Man between God and the Devil*.
 Roper, Lyndal. *Martin Luther: Renegade and Prophet*.
 Selderhuis, Herman. *Martin Luther: A Spiritual Biography*.

John Calvin texts

- Bratt, John. *The Heritage of John Calvin*.
 Boulton, Matthew. *Life in God: John Calvin, Practical Formation and the Future of Protestant Theology*.
 Gordon, Bruce. *Calvin*.
 Hoogstra, Jacob. *John Calvin: Contemporary Prophet*.
 McNeill, John. *The History and Character of Calvinism*.
 Muller, Richard. *The Unaccommodated Calvin: Studies in the Foundation of a Theological Tradition*.
 Parker, T. H. L. *John Calvin: A Biography*.
 Selderhuis, Herman J. *John Calvin: A Pilgrim's Life*.
 Wendel, Francois. *Calvin: Origins and Development of His Religious Thought*.

VII. Requirements

- A. **Pre-work**: Each student will read Alister McGrath, *Reformation Thought: An Introduction*, 4th ed. (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012).
- a. Each student will submit a Book Review on the first day of the seminar. For instructions on this book review, see the next section (VII.B.a).
 - b. Each student will be assigned responsibility for one or two chapters to facilitate during the early meetings of the seminar.
- B. **Two Book Reviews on Martin Luther/John Calvin Texts**: Each student will prepare Book Reviews of two texts—each text will focus on the life and/or theology of Martin Luther or John Calvin.

Each student must choose from the two lists above one book on Martin Luther and another on John Calvin to review and present to the seminar. Submit your choice on Google Docs. Books will be assigned on a first come first serve basis, though the professors reserve the right to recommend a particular book to an individual student.

- a. **Review**: The student responsible for a given reading assignment must prepare and provide for each seminar participant a written response based on the following criteria:
 - i. **Six to eight (6-8) double-spaced pages**
 - ii. The following should be addressed (use 3-7 to formulate subheadings):
 1. bibliographical information should appear at the top of page 1
 2. a brief (2-3 sentences) biographical sketch of the author
 3. a brief (2-3 pages) summary of the contents of the book
 4. a statement of the book's purpose and the extent to which the purpose was realized
 5. important concepts and applications to carry from the reading, highlight any changes or challenges to your thinking

- 6. a statement regarding the book's uniqueness, including ideas that are interesting, novel, or problematic
 - 7. a concluding evaluation
 - iii. If external sources are important for an appropriate response to the book, fully cite those sources.
 - b. Presentation: The student responsible for a book review and presentation must prepare to lead discussion for the seminar on the scheduled day. The following tips will help the student to prepare:
 - i. Know the content of the book
 - ii. Prepare questions to promote dialogue about the Reformer's life and/or theology
 - iii. Relate the reading to previously learned material
 - iv. Bring to the forefront any critical concerns and biblical or theological responses
 - v. Other sources or positions on the issues addressed in an assigned book are welcomed and encouraged
 - vi. As a good segue for seminar discussion, think of important questions to raise and answer regarding the content of the book
 - vii. Electronic copies should be provided for every member of the seminar
- C. **Major Research Paper**: Each student will consult with the professors to select a topic that relates to one or more of the emphases of this course. **Twenty-five to thirty pages** in length, double spaced, the paper should demonstrate the student's ability to think clearly and critically, engage in responsible research, dialogue objectively with differing viewpoints, reach defensible conclusions, and write in an acceptable style. A selected bibliography should accompany the paper. This assignment is framed in this way so that the student can write this paper with scholarly presentation in mind.
- a. The Research Paper will be evaluated as follows:
 - i. Grammar and style: Spelling, sentence and paragraph development; punctuation; and conformity to the 7th or 8th edition of Turabian. (20 points)
 - ii. Clarity and Coherence: Balance; thoroughness; organization; logical development; overall sense of the paper. (20 points)
 - iii. Research: Bibliography; type and variety of sources (primary, secondary, monographs, journal articles, etc.); most bibliographic entries should be accompanied by footnote citations. (20 points)
 - iv. Historical Awareness and Insight: Factual accuracy; awareness of historical connections (continuity/discontinuity, cause/effect, contrasts/comparisons); sensitivity to historical context; awareness of the historical impact of a person. (20 points)
 - v. Analysis and Evaluation: Going beyond the mere reporting of facts to include explanation, interpretation, analysis of material; evaluation of strengths and weakness of a person; demonstration that you have

thought about the material that you have researched. Give strong and insightful introduction and conclusion. (20 points)

b. Further Research Paper Guidelines

- i. The official style and form guide is Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers*, official edition.
- ii. Use footnotes, not endnotes.
- iii. Use Times New Roman 12-point font for the body of the text and 10-point font for footnotes.
- iv. Staple the paper; do not put it in a folder/binder.
- v. Include a title page
- vi. Include a table of contents that shows at least two levels of subheadings (functioning as an outline).
- vii. The use of first person (I or we) and second person (you) is not allowed. Arguments should be presented in such a manner so as to eliminate the need for all but third person references.
- viii. Use correct grammar and spelling.
- ix. The uses of past tense and present tense must be consistent. Generally, past tense is used to refer to historical events and persons, including writers of published materials. Present tense is utilized to present arguments, interact with opinions and viewpoints, and cite extant texts.
- x. Do not use split infinitives.
- xi. Avoid one-sentence paragraphs.
- xii. Do not overuse indefinite pronouns (such as “it” or “there” without an antecedent).
- xiii. Avoid “widows” and “orphans.”
- xiv. Sentences should have only one space between them, not two.

D. **Formal Response to Research Paper:** Each seminar participant will choose a research paper to evaluate critically.

- a. The evaluation will be prepared for and presented on the day the research paper is presented in class. The evaluator will lead discussion after a paper is presented
- b. Written evaluations should be no more than **two single-spaced pages**. A copy of the written evaluation will be provided for the professors and for the student whose paper is being evaluated.
- c. Evaluate for form and style, content, communication of important concepts, and critical engagement of materials.
- d. Each evaluation should include a separate log of form and style errors or concerns.
- e. Beyond the written evaluation, the formal response is graded on the quality of in-seminar participation, engagement, and interlocution.

- E. **Primary Source Readings**: Each seminar participant will read selected primary sources from Martin Luther and John Calvin.
- Students will read the sources to prepare for discussion in scheduled class meetings.
 - Each student will prepare two 5-page, single-spaced, informal reports of the primary source readings—one report for Luther and another report for Calvin.
 - Primary Sources:

Luther

“95 Theses”

“An Open Letter to the Christian Nobility of the German Nation”

“The Babylonian Captivity of the Church”

“The Freedom of a Christian”

“Preface to Romans”

“Preface to Galatians”

Calvin

“Reply to Sadoleto”

“Ecclesiastical Ordinances”

Institutes, Book 1, Chs. 6-8, 15-16

Institutes, Book 2, Chs. 1-4, 12-15

Institutes, Book 3, Chs. 2-3, 11-16, 21-24

Institutes, Book 4, Chs. 1-3, 12, 15-16

VIII. Grade Distribution by Assignment

Book Review – Reformation Thought	15%
Book Review – Martin Luther text	15%
Book Review – John Calvin text	15%
Summaries of Primary Sources	10%
Major Research Paper	30%
Critique	10%
Class Participation	5%

IX. Adjustments to the Syllabus

If necessary or appropriate, your professors will feel free to make adjustments to the syllabus and the course schedule during the semester.

X. Attendance Policy & Class Schedule

Attendance is required for the seminars, which are scheduled to meet on Thursdays from 2:00–4:30 PM. A detailed class schedule will be provided by early July.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

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- Brecht, Martin. *Martin Luther: His Road to Reformation, 1483-1521*. Trans. James L. Schaaf. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1985.
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- Chadwick, Owen. *The Early Reformation on the Continent*. Oxford History of the Early Christian Church, ed. Henry and Owen Chadwick. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001.
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_____. *Martin Luther: A Spiritual Biography*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2017.

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Steinmetz, David C. *Reformers in the Wings: From Geiler von Kaysersberg to Theodore Beza*. 2d ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 2001.

Stephens, W. P. *Zwingli: An Introduction to His Thought*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1994.