Course Description

This course explores the life, thought, and ministry of Jonathan Edwards. Often hailed as a brilliant philosopher and astute theologian, Jonathan Edwards was first and foremost a pastor. The course will look at the broader contours of his life and thought, with a focus on his own pastoral ministry and his thoughts on the pastoral ministry. The course will pay close attention to his sermons and preaching.

Course Objectives

1. The student will gain an understanding of the life and thought of Jonathan Edwards, specifically relating to his pastoral ministry.

2. The student will explore ways Edwards serves as a model for pastoral ministry today.

3. The student will learn the skills of historiography that can be applied to interpreting and engaging historical figures appropriately and responsibly.

Textbooks


Additional Edwards reading: Read an additional 400-600 pages, beyond that of the sermons assigned, of Edwards’s writings. This may be one of his treatises, or parts of treatises, or sermons, or any combination of the above.

**Schedule**

Monday: overview of Edwards’s life and thought; Edwards as model for ministry  
Reading discussion: Nichols (Guided Tour)

Tuesday: Edwards’s spiritual life and family life and the pastoral ministry; workshop on historical research and on response papers  
Reading discussion: Haykin; Piper/Taylor, chaps 2-5, 7

Wednesday: Edwards’s theological reflection and the pastoral ministry  
Reading discussion: Lucas; Piper/Taylor, chaps 8-10

Thursday: Edwards’s understanding of the pastoral call/task and the pastoral ministry  
Reading discussion: Bailey/Wills; Piper/Taylor, chap 6

Friday: Edwards’s sermons, preaching, and the pastoral ministry  
Reading discussion: Kimnach/Minkema/Sweeney; Nichols (Heaven on Earth)

**Requirements**

20% Reading, including one-page report for each text, and class participation

80% Response papers. This is any combination of reading reports, assessments, and/or short papers. You will write on four of the items from the following list. These papers should all be in the 7 page range. Please select four:

- Review/Response of any of the required textbooks: keep your paper light on summary and heavy on response and interaction and critique. This is over and above the one-page summary of the reading due during the week of class. You may use this option for two of the required four papers.
- Analysis of an Edwards sermon: offer an outline of the sermon, a summary of his main point(s), and a critical response and assessment. You may use this option for two of the required four papers.

- Assessment of a major treatise of Edwards. If you read a treatise of his (such as Religious Affections or Life of Brainerd) to satisfy the 400-600 pages of reading in primary sources, you may write a summary/assessment of the treatise.

- Edwards in the church project. Design a Sunday school class, or some such course, on Edwards.

- What can we learn from Edwards regarding the pastor’s role in theological issues facing the church?

- What can we learn from Edwards’s preaching that can be reasonably applied to preaching today?

- What can we learn from Edwards’s departure from Northampton and the pastor’s relationship to his people?

**Due Date**

The reading is all due before the class. Be sure to have your one-page summaries for each textbook at the start of the class. Since the course will be a seminar format and heavy on discussion, you will greatly benefit, as will you colleagues, by working through the reading before we meet.

The due date for the four papers will be announced in class.