HT508
CLASSICS OF PERSONAL DEVOTION
SYLLABUS

REFORMED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
CHARLOTTE

SPRING 2016

Dr. Rod Culbertson, Jr.
Associate Professor of Practical Theology

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COURSE DESCRIPTION: Devotional writings from the history of the church, as well as from more contemporary Christians, are read and discussed to deepen the student’s knowledge of and love for God. This course exposes students to some of the most famous books in the Christian tradition authored by people on a quest for holiness. By discussing a cluster of popular texts and authors on the subject of godliness, students learn to read with discernment as they set their own devotion to God on a firm foundation.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

COGNITIVE (KNOW/UNDERSTAND):
1. The student will gain a greater exposure to, understanding of and appreciation for the great classical devotional writings of the church.
2. The student will learn how to balance the Christian life, in regard to propositional truth, personal religious experience and the practice of faith.
3. The student will grow in his or her understanding of the historical developments and expressions in the area of spiritual formation.
4. The student will learn about various personal disciplines that will assist him or her in growing in his or her personal love for and devotion to God.

AFFECTIVE (FEEL/MOTIVATION):
1. The student will grow in his or her love for God.
2. The student will gain a greater appreciation for the spiritual journeys of earlier generations of believers.
3. The student will build a stronger conviction regarding the necessity of personal time of devotion with God.
4. The student will develop a deeper desire to maintain a private devotional life as a foundation for personal Christian living and particularly for ministry.

VOLITIONAL (DO/COMPETENCIES):
1. The student will read a number of various Christian authors who have written works which express and inspire personal devotion to God.
2. The student will write a summation of his or her view on the need for both the reading and writing of works of personal devotion and will provide a plan or strategy for maintaining personal devotion to Christ while in seminary and future ministry.
Course Objectives Related to MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes

**Course:** HT508 Classics of Personal Devotion  
**Professor:** Dr. Rod Culbertson  
**Campus:** Charlotte  
**Date:** Spring 2016

<table>
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<tr>
<th>MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes</th>
<th>Rubric</th>
<th>Mini-Justification</th>
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| 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.  
*As the MDiv is the core degree at RTS, the MDiv rubric will be used in this syllabus. |        |                    |
| 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. | Minimal | Christian history and theological concepts affecting the Christian life are briefly addressed. |
| 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.) | None | Nothing theological of significance is addressed. |
| Reformed Theology                |        |                    |
| Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards. | None | Spiritual formation and devotion as well as the process of sanctification are addressed at length. |
| Sanctification                   |        |                    |
| Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student’s sanctification. | Strong |                    |
| Desire for Worldview             |        |                    |
| Burning desire to conform all of life to the Word of God. | None | Past traditions and practices are considered and appreciated for their contribution to the Christian life. |
| 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.) | Minimal |                    |
| Preach                           |        |                    |
| Ability to preach and teach the meaning of Scripture to both heart and mind with clarity and enthusiasm. | None |                    |
| Worship                          |        |                    |
| Knowledgeable of historic and modern Christian-worship forms; and ability to construct and skill to lead a worship service. | None |                    |
| 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. | None |                    |
| Church/World                     |        |                    |
| Ability to interact within a denominational context, within the broader worldwide church, and with significant public issues. | None |                    |
REQUIRED READING:

A. Required Textbooks: (264 pages)


B. Other Required Reading (240 pages)

See this website for a list of and access to various classic works: [http://www.ccel.org/](http://www.ccel.org/)

1. Reading of the Puritans:

You are required to read at least 100 pages of Puritan authors and selections (writings, sermons, prayers) of your choice. Below are some possible Puritan authors and books. You are allowed to choose from any acknowledged Puritan writer. Highly recommended Puritan works are highlighted.

Ames, William. *The Marrow of Theology*.
Boston, Thomas. *The Beauties of Boston*.
Brooks, Thomas. *Christ is the Life of Believers*.
Burroughs, Jeremiah. *The Saints Treasury*, “Christ is All in All.”
Edwards, Jonathan. *Charity and Its Fruits*.
Flavel, John. *Christ Altogether Lovely*.
Flavel, John. *Characteristics of the Complete Evangelical Pastor* (Vol 6 ?),
Flavel, John. *Mystery of Providence*
Flavel, John. *Keeping the Heart*
Goodwin, Thomas. *The Vanity of Thoughts*. 
Hooker, Thomas *Danger of Desertion or A Farewell Sermon of Mr. Thomas Hooker* [Paperback] Thomas Hooker (Author)


M’Cheyne, Robert Murray. *A Basket of Fragments*.


Watson, Thomas. *A Test of Assurance*.


Whitefield, George. *Sermons*.

Also, see [www.puritansermons.com](http://www.puritansermons.com) for Puritan sermons and topics.

And, there are downloadable books available; here is a great library for puritan authors for books that are free for download: [http://www.puritanlibrary.com/](http://www.puritanlibrary.com/)

Finally, to learn more about significant Puritan leaders and writers, see this book, *Meet the Puritans*, Beeke and Pederson.

### 2. Required Reading on Library Reserved List:

You are required to read a total of 140 pages (20 pages minimum/book choice) from at least four (4) of the following books (available online or on reserve in the RTS library).

12. Law, William. *A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life*. 1728.
15. Luther, Martin, *Faith Alone*.
16. Luther, Martin, *Table Talk*.
17. Murray, Andrew, *Humility*.

**Recommended Reading (Classic writings or books that address the topic of Spiritual Theology):**


**Suggested Reading (Books that the professor does not necessarily recommend, but that touch upon the topic of devotional history and practice):**

- Foster, Richard, *Celebration of Discipline*.
• Willard, Dallas, *Spirit of the Disciplines*.
• Whitney, Donald S. *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*.

Also, visit this website for a list of and access to various classic works: [http://www.ccel.org/](http://www.ccel.org/)

**REQUIREMENTS AND EVALUATION:**

I. Class attendance and discussion.

You will be expected to participate in the class discussion, especially as we interact with the lecture topics, textbooks and assigned reading.

II. Reading (34% of course grade):

Reading is required and the student will be graded through an honor system report provided in the paper assignment below.

III. Paper (33% of course grade):

One short paper is required for the course. *The paper must be double-spaced, 12 point/Times Roman typeset with standard margins. Failure in this requirement will mean loss of points.*

You will write a five-page paper interacting with both the required and reserved reading books you have read for the course. NOTE: Please list the works read and pages you have read in all books (use the Devotional Reading Record if you would like). Explain in the paper why you chose the particular works you read.

Answer the following questions: 1. How do the various authors reflect their individual devotion to God? 2. Are there any meaningful quotes or concepts you can state? What have they taught you? 3. How have you been encouraged personally by these writings? 4. What is the impact on your own views of personal devotion(s)? 5. What type of plan or structure will you attempt to create in order to strengthen and maintain your personal devotional life, both now in seminary and in your future ministry? 6. Any other thoughts you might wish to write, including the value of the course and its readings and/or suggestions for helpful improvement.

**Due:** May 3, 2015.

IV. Final Exam (33% of course grade)

The final exam will be a proctored comprehensive, written exam that will cover content primarily from all of the lectures.

**POLICY ON CHEATING AND PLAGIARISM:**

Research papers require borrowing other people's ideas and words. However, the source of such borrowing must be acknowledged properly so that your ideas are clearly distinguished from
ideas that you borrowed. If the source is not acknowledged properly, your work is plagiarism. For an excellent summary on what constitutes plagiarism, see Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations* (rev. by Wayne C. Booth, etc.; 7th ed.; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), pp. 77-80 (section 7.9).

Plagiarism includes word-for-word copying, lifting terms, restatement of someone's argument or line of thought, etc. – all without acknowledgment of source. Plagiarism also includes giving a source partial credit when more is taken from that source than indicated. Plagiarism, whether intentional or unintentional, is very serious. All plagiarism cases are referred to the Academic Dean for resolution. Consequences may include some of the following:

- repeat the assignment and receive a maximum of a D on the assignment
- receive an F on the assignment
- receive an F in the course
- expulsion from the seminary

**POLICY ON LATE WORK:** Any work turned in late and without either a written excuse or previous permission granted by the professor will be docked one point/day for that assignment.

**POLICY ON GRAMMAR AND SPELL CHECK:** Any work turned in which appears to lack “proofing” or displays poor grammar will receive a small penalty affecting the grade.
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<tr>
<th>Lecture/Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2/2 Introduction - Today’s Spirituality and Spiritual Growth</td>
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<td>2/9 Introduction - Today’s Spirituality and Spiritual Growth</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>2/16 Introduction - Today’s Spirituality and Spiritual Growth</td>
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<td>2/23 Some Significant Devotional Writers</td>
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<td>7</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>3/22 The Puritans and Spirituality</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>3/29 A Brief Study of Revival; Revival and the Affective Domain</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>4/5 A Brief Study of Revival; Revival and the Affective Domain</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>4/12 Introduction to True Christian Mysticism</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>4/19 Introduction to True Christian Mysticism and Fundamentalist Reactions and Imbalances</td>
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<td>4/26 The Biblical Practice of and Disciplines for Christian Devotion</td>
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# Classics of Personal Devotion

## Reading Record

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  Day Three
  Day Four
  Day Five

Week Eight
  Day One
  Day Two
  Day Three
  Day Four
  Day Five

Week Nine
  Day One
  Day Two
  Day Three
  Day Four
  Day Five

Week Ten
  Day One
  Day Two
  Day Three
  Day Four
  Day Five

Week Eleven
  Day One
  Day Two
  Day Three
  Day Four
  Day Five

Week Twelve
  Day One
  Day Two
  Day Three
  Day Four
  Day Five

Week Thirteen
  Day One
  Day Two
  Day Three
  Day Four
  Day Five
RTS Charlotte Classroom Internet Usage

RTS Charlotte recognizes how essential it is for students to have reliable, campus-wide access to the internet. For that reason, we have made wi-fi available for our student body, not only in the library and student lounges, but also in the classrooms. We know that students need to use the internet to download class materials, access files on the Cloud, and to access other important information.

However, we also recognize that internet access in the classroom provides opportunity for abuse and misuse. Some students have unfortunately used their internet access to engage in many activities that distract them from the classroom lectures (e.g., surfing the web, checking sports scores, playing games). Not only does such activity hamper a student’s own seminary education, but it distracts other students who can see their computer screens. In addition, donors and classroom guests (who often sit in the back) can see this inappropriate internet usage, which reflects poorly on RTS.

So, how can these challenges be addressed? One option is to turn off the internet entirely. But, we recognize that this creates problems for students who use it for legitimate reasons. Thus, we prefer to address this problem by appealing to the integrity of the students as ones who are preparing for a lifetime of ministry to Christ and his church. We are asking each student to take personal responsibility for their behavior in this area and to encourage others around them to do the same.

In order to encourage this accountability, and to change the culture of the campus as it pertains to the internet, we are asking each student to sign the pledge below at the beginning of each term. As a pledge, we ask you to sign with integrity and with an honest desire to keep it.

“On my honor as a student at Reformed Theological Seminary, and as a one preparing for the gospel ministry, I pledge that I will use the internet in the classroom only for appropriate class-related activities.”

Signed: ____________________________________________________________

Date: ________________________________