

Classics of Personal Devotions

January 2019: Reformed Theological Seminary, Atlanta

Professor: Ken Stewart, Ph.D.

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Course number: 04HT508/1

Class Dates: Wed. January 2, Thurs. January 3, 9:00am to 4:30 p.m.

Catalog 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

Course Objectives:

- To grasp the place and role of devotional reading in relation to our recognized 'means of grace': the Word, the Church, Prayer, and the Sacraments
- To become familiar with a select range of fine devotional writers drawn from the four divisions of Christian history: Patristic, Medieval, Reformation & Modern
- To develop a clear standard of what are the marks of excellence (biblical, doctrinal, and devotional) such that we will be able to set aside the 'chaff' and concentrate on the very best.
- To acquire a method or framework for the beneficial interpretation of and appropriation from devotional writings, so that our personal 'gain' will eventually benefit others also.

Course Texts (2):

(Should be read in their entirety prior to January 2nd 2019)

James M. Houston, *A Guide to Devotional Reading* (available on Kindle through Amazon), or from the Canvas class folder as a pdf. in its earlier form from the now out-of-print book, J.I. Packer, ed. *The Best of Theology* Vol. 1 (Christianity Today: 1987). In either version, this is quite brief.

James M. Goggin & Kyle Strobel, eds. *Reading the Christian Spiritual Classics: A Guide for Evangelicals* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2013)

(The particular devotional works to be discussed in the two-day course are listed in digital form on the last page of this syllabus as well as in the Canvas class folder)

Course Requirements:

- 1. Reading & Reflection.** Students will write reflection papers on one devotional item drawn from each of the *four* chronological divisions of our material: 1) Patristic, 2) Medieval, 3) Reformation, & 4) Modern eras. Here we are aiming to instill the habit of thoughtful reading. The reflection papers must not be more than 350 words. Two reflections due each evening [i.e. Patristic-Medieval/Reformation -Modern] Worth 30% of your final grade.

Due: evening of each class day

Worth: 7.5% each/30% combined
- 2. Oral Interaction.** There is no intention that this class will consist of 2 days of straight lecture. Your arriving with reading done and a readiness to enter into discussion is worth 10% of your grade

Worth: 10%

3. **Book Review.** You will read the major text edited by Goggin and Strobel, *Reading the Christian Spiritual Classics: A Guide for Evangelicals* and write an evaluative review of 1,000 words maximum. Your review will provide full publication data (year/publisher/pages) for the book. Due Jan. 10th and worth 20% of the final grade.

Due: January 10th
Worth: 20%

4. **Essay.** Employing the reading you have done about an evaluative 'framework' for devotional reading, apply this framework to the evaluation of a *single* devotional work drawn from one of the four chronological periods surveyed in the course (Patristic, Medieval, Reformation, or Modern). You are expected to read the devotional work taken as a whole, rather than any mere digest of it that we may have used in the lectures. This short essay of 2,000 words should utilize a bibliography of at least two works *in addition* to the devotional classic. Here you add to your personal reflections on the book some further considerations on the place of this work in the history and devotion of the church. Due Feb. 6th. Worth 40% of your final grade

Due: Feb. 6th
Worth: 40%

Expectation for book review. A review will combine 1) a description of the book as a whole, and its author, 2) select two or three items from the contents for discussion, and 3) endorse or express concern about the book

Expectation for the essay. The short essay will focus on a single devotional work *in its entirety*, and discuss its value paying attention to 1) the writer and his times/circumstances, 2) its reliance on and relation to biblical teaching and 3) contemporary relevance. In addition to the devotional book itself, you will utilize a reference tool (dictionary/ encyclopedia of church history or spirituality) and some other work surveying the history of Christian devotion.

Electronic sources Almost everything needing to be read for this two-day course is available in digital (and often abbreviated form) in the class folder established for this class. This format both saves you a fantastic outlay for a variety of devotional works and ensures that we all read the same edition with the same pagination.

Class Schedule: (Each session is of 50 minutes duration)

Wed. Jan. 2

9:00 am Introductions

Framework Questions

Theme: Locating spiritual reading/devotional reading in a biblical and theological framework. What is the warrant? What makes for excellence?

Patristic Era

10:00 am Theme: Spiritual reading in the Age of the Church Fathers/Patristic Age.

1. Light on Early Christian Practice: *The Didache*

2. Martyrdom stories: *The Martyrdom of Polycarp*

11:00 am Church Fathers/Patristics cont'd

3. Apologetic treatises: *The First Apology of Tertullian*
4. Monastic champions: *Life of St. Antony* by Athanasius

12 noon -1:00 p.m. Lunch Break

Medieval Period

1:00 p.m. Theme: Spiritual Reading in the Age of Roman Decline in the West

1. Monastic life adapted to the west: *Benedict's Rule*
2. Mission in the far west: *St. Patrick's Confession*

2:00 p.m Spiritual Reading in the Age of Roman Decline in the West cont'd

1. St. Anselm of Canterbury, *Cur Deus Homo?* (Why the God-Man?)
2. Thomas á Kempis, *The Imitation of Christ*

3:00 p.m. Theme: The Difference Print Made for Spiritual Reading: Before & After

1. From 'Books of Hours' [video] (hand-copied devotional manuals) to the Printed Book (Gutenberg video shown). The dawn of the 'personal' bible.
2. Discussion: What did print do for piety? What has the decline of print meant for piety and devotion?

Reformation Era

3:30 p.m. Theme: 'Ad Fontes' (to the Sources!) and Spiritual Reading

1. Literature in the service of devotion: Erasmus's *Handbook of the Christian Soldier*
2. Luther's *The Freedom of a Christian Man*

Thurs. Jan. 3

9:00 a.m. Theme: The Reformation Age

1. The *Treatise against Relics* from John Calvin's *Tracts and Treatises*
2. "The Martyrdom of Thomas Cranmer" from John Foxe's *Acts & Monuments* (popularly known as the 'Book of Martyrs')

10: 00 a.m. Theme: Devotion in the Age of Restoration of Monarchy

1. Richard Baxter, *The Saints Everlasting Rest*
2. Henry Scougall, *The Life of God in the Soul of Man*

11: 00 a.m. Theme: The Struggle to Maintain Evangelical Religion after Strife

1. Philipp Spener, *Pia Desideria*
2. Philip Doddridge, *The Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul*

12 noon to 1:00 Lunch Break

Modern Era

1:00pm Theme: Evangelical Faith in an Age of Improvement

1. William Willberforce *A Practical View of the Prevailing Religious System of Professing Christians.*
2. John Newton, *Letters* (selected)

2:00 pm Theme: The Old Princeton Theology

1. Charles Hodge, *The Way of Life*
2. B.B. Warfield, *The Religious Life of Theological Students*

3:00 pm Theme: Mid-Twentieth Century Evangelical Devotion

1. Robert Boyd Munger, *My Heart Christ's Home*
2. A. W. Tozer, *The Knowledge of the Holy*

Concluding Questions

4:00 pm. Theme: Contemporary Devotional Writers/Writing. Some Pressing Questions

- Which writer of today will you nominate as “outstanding” and why?
- Is the decline of the printed word the death-knell of devotional writing & reading?
- Can devotional writing of sustained length survive the era of tweets?

A Topical Bibliography

Dictionaries/ Encyclopedias of Church History/Spirituality

Robert Benedetto, *The New Westminster Dictionary of Church History*

J.D. Douglas, ed. *New International Dictionary of the Christian Church*

Hans Hillerbrand, ed. *Oxford Encyclopedia of the Reformation*

Timothy Larsen, ed. *Dictionary of Evangelical Biography*

Donald M. Lewis, ed. *Blackwell Dictionary of Evangelical Biography*

E.A. Livingstone, ed. *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*

Glen Scorgie, ed. *Zondervan Dictionary of Christian Spirituality*

Gordon Wakefield, *Westminster Dictionary of Christian Spirituality*

Surveys of the History of Christian Devotion /Christian Spirituality

Louis Bouyer, ed. *History of Christian Spirituality* 3 vols. (Roman Catholic)

Richard Foster, ed. *Spiritual Classics: Selected Readings on the Spiritual Disciplines* (Protestant)

Bernard McGinn and others, *Christian Spirituality* 3 vols. (note especially vol. 2 edited by Jill Raitt on *High Middle Ages and the Reformation*). The series combines Protestant, Orthodox and Roman Catholic perspectives.

Gerald Sittser, *Water from a Deep Well: Christian Spirituality from Christian Martyrs to Modern Missionaries* (Protestant) **Recommended.**

Steven Weaver and Ian Clary, eds. *The Pure Flame of Devotion: A History of Christian Spirituality*

Works Focusing on the Devotion/Spirituality of Particular Eras

1. Early Church/Patristic Era

Michael Haykin, *Rediscovering the Church Fathers*; Brian Litfin, *Getting to Know the Church Fathers*;
Boniface Ramsay, *Beginning to Read the Fathers*

2. Celtic Church/ St. Patrick

Ian Bradley, *Celtic Christianity: Making Myths and Chasing Dreams*; R.P.C. Hanson, *St. Patrick*; John T. McNeill, *The Celtic Church*, Donald E. Meek, *The Quest for Celtic Christianity*; Edward Smither, *Missionary Monks*

3. Early Monasticism from Desert Fathers to Benedict

Derwas Chitty, *The Desert a City*; David Knowles, *Christian Monasticism*; Jean LeClerq, *A Love of Learning and the Desire for God*; C.H. Lawrence, *The Friars*; C.H. Lawrence, *Medieval Monasticism*.

4. Reformation and Puritan Spirituality

Irvonwy Morgan, *Puritan Spirituality*; Alister McGrath, *Spirituality in an Age of Change: Rediscovering the spirit of the Reformers*; Joey Pipa, *Reformed Spirituality: Communing with our Glorious God*; Gordon Wakefield, *Puritan Devotion*;

5. Pietism

Dale Brown, *Understanding Pietism*; Peter Erb, *Pietists: Selected Writings*; John T. McNeill, *Modern Christian Movements*; Douglas Shantz, *An Introduction to German Pietism*

6. Spirituality in the Eighteenth Century Era of Awakening

Tom Schwanda, *The Emergence of Evangelical Spirituality*; Jonathan Yeager, *Early Evangelicalism: A Reader*

7. Nineteenth Century Evangelical Spirituality

Mark A. Noll, *The Way of Life* (excerpts from the writing of Charles Hodge); Mark Noll, *The Princeton Theology*; Lefferts Loetscher, *Facing the Enlightenment and Pietism: Archibald Alexander and the Founding of Princeton*

8. Twentieth Century Evangelical Spirituality

Richard Foster, *Celebration of Discipline*; Richard Foster, *Streams of Living Water*;

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 Student Services Office. The request must be approved by the Professor and the Academic Dean. A grade penalty may be assessed. (RTS Catalog p. 42 and RTS Atlanta Student Handbook p. 14)

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. 42)


REFORMED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
 SYSTEM

Course Objectives Related to MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes

Course: 04HT508/1

Professor: Ken Stewart

Campus: Atlanta

Date: Jan 2&3, 2019

<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.	Strong	Devotional reading is not only for one's own benefit, but for the benefit of those to whom we minister. We must relay what we learn
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.)	Strong	Devotional reading is to be judged edifying <i>or</i> unhelpful depending on whether it is consistent with biblical revelation.
Reformed Theology	Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards.	Moderate	We will read material from all four eras of Christian history. We will honor the supremacy of Scripture, though this principle was not uniformly upheld in all periods.
Sanctification	Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student's sanctification.	Strong	Devotional reading is meant to help us to slow down and to reflect; in this it is an auxiliary activity to disciplined bible reading
Desire for Worldview	Burning desire to conform all of life to the Word of God.	Moderate	It should help further worldview thinking inasmuch as it confronts us with the outlook of the saints of all ages.
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	We will find lovers of Christ and of His Word in all centuries.
Preach	Ability to preach and teach the meaning of Scripture to both heart and mind with clarity and enthusiasm.	Strong	Devotional reading will provide illustrations and suitable quotations for preaching and teaching. Class members should also be able to teach their own Bible class on

			devotional writers
Worship	Knowledgeable of historic and modern Christian-worship forms; and ability to construct and skill to lead a worship service.	Moderate	One's personal worship of God will be enhanced. The carry-over to corporate worship is unclear
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.	Moderate	One will certainly find pitfalls and extremes to avoid and good courses and practices to emulate.
Church/World	Ability to interact within a denominational context, within the broader worldwide church, and with significant public issues.	Moderate	Private devotion should have public usefulness as one of its outcomes.

Schedule of Readings for 'Classics of Personal Devotions'

Tuesday, Jan. 2nd 2019	
9am	See James Houston <i>A Guide to Devotional Reading</i> (available either as a Kindle book from Amazon, or elsewhere in Canvas as a pdf)
10am	https://christianhistoryinstitute.org/study/module/didache https://christianhistoryinstitute.org/study/module/polycarp
11am	https://christianhistoryinstitute.org/study/module/tertullian https://christianhistoryinstitute.org/study/module/antony
Break	
1pm	https://christianhistoryinstitute.org/study/module/benedicts-rule https://christianhistoryinstitute.org/study/module/patrick
2pm	https://christianhistoryinstitute.org/study/module/anselm https://christianhistoryinstitute.org/study/module/kempis
3pm Video & Discussion	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pXISnFgFnp4
3:30 pm	https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/mod/luther-freedomchristian.asp http://oll.libertyfund.org/titles/erasmus-the-manual-of-a-christian-knight Scroll down to read Chapters I&II
Wed. Jan. 3, 2019	
9am	https://www.ccel.org/ccel/calvin/treatise_relics (choose 'read online' option). Chap. I https://christianhistoryinstitute.org/study/module/cranmer
10am	https://www.ccel.org/ccel/baxter/saints_rest.html Chap. I http://www.ccel.org/ccel/scougal/life.html Part I
11am	https://christianhistoryinstitute.org/magazine/article/pietist-archives-pia-desideria https://www.ccel.org/ccel/doddridge/rise.pdf Chap. II
Break	
1pm	http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/25709 Chap. 1 http://www.reformedreader.org/rbb/newton/lettersofnewton.htm read the section beginning with "The Proper Attitude for Preaching"
2pm	https://archive.org/details/wayoflife00hodg/page/n11 Chap. IX https://www.tms.edu/m/tmsj6g.pdf
3pm	http://navigatorsdetroit.com/MHCH.pdf http://www.ntcg-aylesbury.org.uk/books/knowledge_of_the_holy.pdf Chaps I&II
4pm Discussion	