HT508
CLASSICS OF PERSONAL DEVOTION
SYLLABUS

REFORMED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
CHARLOTTE

WINTER 2012

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.

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.

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Course Objectives Related to MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes
Course: HT508 Classics of Personal Devotion
Professor: Dr. Rod Culbertson
Campus: Charlotte
Date: Winter 2012
# MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes

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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rubric</th>
<th>Mini-Justification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>Christian history and theological concepts affecting the Christian life are briefly addressed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimal</td>
<td>Spiritual formation and devotion as well as the process of sanctification are addressed at length.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimal</td>
<td>Past traditions and practices are considered and appreciated for their contribution to the Christian life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>none</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Articulation (oral &amp; written)</th>
<th>Broadly understands and articulates knowledge, both oral and written, of essential biblical, theological, historical, and cultural/global information, including details, concepts, and frameworks.</th>
<th>Minimal</th>
<th>Christian history and theological concepts affecting the Christian life are briefly addressed.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scripture</td>
<td>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. (Incl udes appropriate use of original languages and hermeneutics; and integrates theological, historical, and cultural/global perspectives.)</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Nothing theological of significance is addressed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reformed Theology</td>
<td>Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards.</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanctification</td>
<td>Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student’s sanctification.</td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>Spiritual formation and devotion as well as the process of sanctification are addressed at length.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desire for Worldview</td>
<td>Burning desire to conform all of life to the Word of God.</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winsomely Reformed</td>
<td>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.)</td>
<td>Minimal</td>
<td>Past traditions and practices are considered and appreciated for their contribution to the Christian life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preach</td>
<td>Ability to preach and teach the meaning of Scripture to both heart and mind with clarity and enthusiasm.</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worship</td>
<td>Knowledgeable of historic and modern Christian-worship forms; and ability to construct and skill to lead a worship service.</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shepherd</td>
<td>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.</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church/World</td>
<td>Ability to interact within a denominational context, within the broader worldwide church, and with significant public issues.</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**REQUIRED READING:**

**A. Required Textbooks:** (143 pages)


Available online: [www.tms.edu/tmsj/tmsj6g.pdf](http://www.tms.edu/tmsj/tmsj6g.pdf)

**B. Other Required Reading** (350 pages)

**NOTE:** READING SHOULD BE DONE OVER A PERIOD OF AT LEAST 18 DAYS WITH A RECORD OF THE DATE OF THE READING AND THE SPECIFIC READINGS (This requirement is an attempt to assist the student to do the reading in devotional fashion).

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 250 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.

Ames, William, *The Marrow of Theology*.
Boston, Thomas. *The Beauties of Boston*.
Brainerd, David. *The Diary of David Brainerd*.
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*.
Goodwin, Thomas. *The Vanity of Thoughts*.
Hooker, Thomas *Danger of Desertion or A Farewell Sermon of Mr. Thomas Hooker* [Paperback] by Thomas Hooker (Author)
M’Cheyne, Robert Murray. *A Basket of Fragments*.
Shepard, Thomas
Watson, Thomas. *A Test of Assurance.*
Whitefield, George

**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/)

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

You are required to read a total of 100 pages (20 pages minimum/book choice) from at least four (4) of the following books (available online or on reserve in the RTS library).

10. Law, William.1728. *A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life*.
17. Spurgeon, Charles Haddon. *Morning and Evening: Daily Readings*

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

- Dillow, Linda. *Satisfy My Thirsty Soul: For I Am Desperate for Your Presence (Paperback)*, by *Linda Dillow*

**REQUIREMENTS AND EVALUATION:**

I. Class attendance and discussion (15% of course grade).

You will be expected to participate in the class discussion, especially as we interact with the lecture topics, textbooks and assigned reading.
II. Reading (30% 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 (30% 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. 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: February 3, 2012.**

IV. Final Exam (25% of course grade)

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

**Due: February 3, 2012.**

**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.
## Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lecture</th>
<th>Topic(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Introduction - Today’s Spirituality and Spiritual Formation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>A Brief History of Early Spiritual Theology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Some Significant Devotional Writers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>The Puritans and Spirituality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>A Brief Study of Revival; Revival and the Affective Domain (Edwards)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Introduction to Mysticism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Disciplines for Devotion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>A.W. Tozer’s <em>Pursuit of God</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**FINAL EXAM**