Classics of Personal Devotion

HT508

Reformed Theological Seminary - Charlotte

Instructor: R. Carlton Wynne

January 27-31, 2014
"[I]t is absolutely essential for us that we should not only have our seasons of communion with God, but that all the time in some degree we should carry with us into the outward and public work a living sense of our nearness to God and of his nearness to us because in this way alone can we make our service in the Lord's kingdom truly fruitful and spiritual. If the savor of this is wanting in our work, if we do not bring to the world when we come to it the unction and peace acquired in prayer, we cannot hope to impart any permanent blessing or to achieve any lasting results. Let us endeavor to cultivate diligently the devotional spirit of Jesus himself for whom notwithstanding the busy scenes of a most public career no distractions existed, to whom every call upon his strength became an occasion for meeting with God, a real contact with God, because the fountains of his strength lay hidden in the recesses of his inner life where he and the Father always beheld each other's face."

- Geerhardus Vos, "Songs from the Soul – Psalm 25:14"

*Grace and Glory: Sermons Preached in the Chapel of Princeton Theological Seminary*

I. **Course Description**
   A. 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.

II. **Details of Course**
   A. Dates: January 27-31, 2014
   B. Times: Mon-Fri, 9:00 AM-12:00 AM
   C. Place: RTS-Charlotte campus
   D. Instructor: Carlton Wynne, Ph.D. Cand.
   E. Contact: carlton.wynne@gmail.com

III. **Goals**
   A. To exhibit a deeper love for the absolute and personal triune God, His word, and His church.
   B. To develop a biblical and theological framework for Christian devotion, both private and public.
   C. To become familiar with devotional writings and works on the topic of devotion from ages past and present.
   D. To aid students in developing the discipline of Christian devotion in their own lives.

IV. **Course Requirements**
   A. **Attendance and Class Participation**
      1. All registered students are expected to attend class lectures. Since this is a one-week course, to miss a single day’s material is to miss a major section of
the course.

2. Though the course will generally feature lecture format, class discussion and questions are welcomed and expected.

B. Reading Assignments

1. The total reading assignments for this class fall into one of two categories: (a) required readings for each class period (~180 pp over the week) and (b) required supplemental readings (~250 pp. prior to final exam).

2. Because the content of the course lectures will largely revolve around the required readings for each class period, it is critical that each student finish the reading material assigned for each day prior to that day's class period. (Please see the reading schedule under "V" below).

3. NB: A portion of your final exam grade (and thus your final course grade) will depend on your having completed all of the assigned reading, including the timely completion of the required reading for each class period.

C. Paper

1. One short paper is assigned for the course. Please double-check that you have fulfilled every requirement listed here for the paper (for both form and content).

2. The paper must be six to eight (6-8) pages in length, double-spaced (page numbers do not include the required bibliography).

3. Please format with 1-inch margins, use a 12 pt. font, and number the pages.

4. Please use a recognized scholarly style for all footnote citations (e.g., Turabian, SBL), which should to be in 10-pt. font.

5. In this paper you will have opportunity to interact with both the readings required for class periods as well as required supplemental readings.

6. Specifically, please choose (a) one reading discussed in class and (b) two works from the list of supplemental readings; and complete the following:
   i. Provide a short description of each of the three (3) works, identifying the main themes and concepts of each. [1/2 page to 3/4 page for each work]
   ii. Explain how these works have influenced your view of Christian devotion. How have they corrected or encouraged you? Challenged you?
   iii. Explore how each work should or might inform the practice of Christian devotion today. Draw your primary reasons from Scripture and its theology of devotion. Specifically, explore concretely how the content of these works might or should influence your own personal devotional life, both now in seminary and in your future ministry.

7. Finally, be sure to include in your paper's bibliography (a) citations of the three works explored in your paper and (b) citations of all the supplementary reading you have completed for this course (including the sections and page lengths read).

8. THE PAPER IS DUE no later than six (6) weeks from the last day of class (i.e., March 14, 2014). Please turn in a hard copy of your paper (by hand or by mail) to the RTS-Charlotte Registrar (RTS-Charlotte, Attn:...
9. A late paper will be docked one full grade for each day it is late. So, for example, any paper turned in (i.e., postmarked or by hand) a calendar date after the due date, if it is an ‘A’ paper, will receive a ‘B,’ a ‘B’ paper will receive a ‘C,’ etc.

D. Final Exam
1. A final 2-hour written exam will cover the content from all of the lectures.
2. NB: Because the lectures revolve around the required readings for each day, the exam will also include the relevant/required reading material for the lecture days.
3. The exam will feature identifications, short-answer questions, plus one or two longer essay questions.
4. The use of an unmarked English Bible is permitted (i.e., no study Bibles with notes, etc.).
5. You will be asked to indicate, on your honor, which of the required reading assignments you have completed.
6. The final exam will be scheduled, administered, and submitted according to the RTS-H policy.
7. STUDENT MUST COMPLETE THE FINAL EXAM no later than six (6) weeks from the last day of class (March 14, 2014).
   i. On-Campus Proctoring: Students living within a two-hour radius of Charlotte should take their exam on campus, within the 6-week window. They must email the Registrar to schedule a time to take the exam. Students are not allowed to take the exam on a computer. Blue books are preferable.
   ii. Special Exceptions for Students Travelling Long-Distances: Students living more than two hours away from Charlotte may choose to have their exam sent to a proctor. To do this, please contact the Registrar with the proctor's name and information. You could do this as soon as possible. Relatives and current RTS students are not allowed to be proctors.

E. Grading
1. Class attendance and participation – 10%
2. Completion of all required reading (including the timely reading of required materials for each class day) – 30%
3. Paper – 30%
4. Final Exam – 30%

V. Course Schedule (with assigned class readings)
A. Jan 27 – Biblical and Theological Foundations for Christian Devotion
   1. No reading required for class period.

B. Jan 28 – Devotion and the Early Church: Augustine and Athanasius
   1. Required for Class: Augustine, Confessions (Bks. I-II, VIII)

C. Jan 29 – Devotion and Reformation: Luther and Calvin
1. Required for Class: Calvin, *Institutes*, 1.1.1-1.2.2, 3.6.1-3.11.4 (pp. 35-43, 684-729 in Battles edition)
2. Also to be discussed: Martin Luther, "A Simple Way to Pray" (available online at http://www.ordinarypastor.com/files/A_Simple_Way_To_Pray-v1-Luther.pdf)

D. Jan 30 – Devotion and the Puritans
1. Required for Class: John Owen, *On the Mortification of Sin*, Ch. 10-14 (pp. 97-139 in Kapic/Taylor edition)
2. Also to be discussed: Matthew Henry, *A Method for Prayer* (available online at http://www.matthewhenry.org)

E. Jan 31 – Devotion in the Modern Period

VI. Total Required Reading (~430 pp.)

A. **Required for Class Periods (~180 pp.)**– You are to have completed the following readings prior to the class periods in which they will be discussed (cf. the "Course Schedule" above)

B. **Required Supplemental Reading** – Choose a total of 250 pp. (20 pages minimum/book choice) from at least three (3) of the following works (most of which are available online or in the RTS library)

**Puritan Works**
7. Brooks, Thomas. *Christ is the Life of Believers*.
17. Goodwin, Thomas. *The Vanity of Thoughts*.
18. Hooker, Thomas *Danger of Desertion or A Farewell Sermon of Mr. Thomas Hooker*
31. Sibbes, Richard. *Bruised Reed (Puritan Paperbacks)* by Richard Sibbes
32. Watson, Thomas. *A Test of Assurance*. 

6
34. Whitefield, George. *Sermons*.

**Other Works**

11. Law, William, *A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life*, 1728.


