HT508
CLASSICS OF PERSONAL DEVOTION
SYLLABUS

REFORMED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
CHARLOTTE

WINTER 2009

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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.

REQUIRED READING:

A. Required Textbooks: (143 pages)

B. Other Required Reading (350 pages)
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:

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.”
Flavel, John. *Christ Altogether Lovely.*
Goodwin, Thomas. *The Vanity of Thoughts.*
M’Cheyne, Robert Murray. *A Basket of Fragments.*
Watson, Thomas. *A Test of Assurance.*

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

2. Required Reading on Library Reserved List:

You are required to read a total of 250 pages (20 pages minimum/book choice) from at least four (4) of the following books on reserve in the library.

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

**Recommended:** [http://www.ccel.org/](http://www.ccel.org/)


**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 (25% 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 (25% 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.

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 13, 2008.

IV. Final Exam (35% 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 13, 2008

POLICY ON CHEATING AND PLAGIARISM: Cheating is the use of another person’s work on behalf of your own work, with the assumption being that it is your work. The MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers says, “To plagiarize is to give the impression that you have written or thought something that you have in fact borrowed from someone else.” Plagiarism is the use of ideas, information and content from a particular source without giving credit to that source by footnoting the source or accounting for it in a bibliography. Cheating will result in an automatic zero (0) grade for the assignment, paper or exam involved. Plagiarism, whether intentional or unintentional, is considered academic theft. The RTS academic consequences of plagiarism are as follows: 1) First offense: The student must rewrite the paper and receive no better than a passing “D” grade for it. 2) Second offense: The student fails the entire course.

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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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lecture</th>
<th>Topic(s)</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Introduction - Today’s Spirituality and Spiritual Formation</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>A Brief History of Early Spiritual Theology</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Some Significant Devotional Writers</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>The Puritans and Spirituality (Owen)</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>A Brief Study of Revival</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Revival and the Affective Domain (Edwards)</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Introduction to Mysticism</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>A.W. Tozer’s <em>Pursuit of God</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>“Disciplines for the Journey” (Which Assist in the Development of a Vital Devotional Walk with God)</td>
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**FINAL EXAM**