PURPOSE OF THE COURSE:

This course will examine the life and ministry of Jonathan Edwards. Though his reputation has often suffered at the hands of religion’s “cultured despisers,” a recent Library of Congress exhibition spoke of Jonathan Edwards as “a world-class theologian, writing some of the most original and important treatises ever produced by an American.” In part, it is Edwards’ sheer genius draws one to his thought. He has been called “the most perfect specimen of the intellectual athlete the world has ever seen.” Far more than genius, however, draws one to Edwards, for he lived his life as a spiritual athlete, heeding the Apostle’s call in Christ to train yourself for godliness. Edwards was a faithful Christian, pastor, preacher, missionary, religious psychologist, polemician, theologian, and philosopher. With respect to the last, Paul Ramsey of Princeton held that Edwards is “the greatest philosopher-theologian yet to grace the American scene.” This course will expose the student to Edwards’ genius as expressed in the riches of his private notebooks, letters, sermons, and treatises. Here the student will find a “model of Christian faith, thought and ministry.”

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

1. Required Texts:


2. Class Format: seminar. If possible, the required texts should be read before class meeting. Students should be prepared to engage in discussion.

3. Writing Assignment: Students, in consultation with the instructor, will select a topic related to the subject of the course. This is not a research paper, nor merely a report of the opinions of others. The paper should demonstrate the student’s ability thoughtfully engage the subject using primary sources. Secondary sources should only be used to help frame the subject or as setting forth a position to be engaged. The paper should be 10 pages in length (excluding bibliography), printed on 8 ½ x 11 inch paper with 1 inch margins on all sides, in no smaller than 10 point type, lines double spaced.

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4. Due Dates: exam and paper due dates will be agreed upon at first class meeting.

5. Grades: grades for the course will be based upon the student’s performance in:
   Paper, 40%
   Exam, 40%
   Class participation, 20%

6. Topics and Readings:
   JE’s sermons will be provided in class as handouts. However published versions are listed below so that the student may read in preparation for the class, if desired. Sources for the readings are noted as follows:
   
   **JEMW**  

   **JER**  

   **SLJE**  

   **SOS**  

   **WJE (Banner)**  

   **WJE (Yale)**  

Student: A Son of the Manse  
   **JEMW**, 21-53.  
   **SLJE**, 1-39.  
   Editors’ Introduction, **JER**, vii-xl  
   Letter: to Timothy Edwards (1721), **JER**, 298  
   Diary (1722), **JER**, 266-274  
   Resolutions (1722), **JER**, 274-281  
   Miscellanies (1722), **JER**, 35-48  
   The Spider Letter (1723), **JER**, 1-8  
   Apostrophe to Sarah Pierpont (c. 1723), **JER**, 281  
   Personal Narrative (c. 1739), **JER**, 281-296
Philosopher-Theologian: Central Themes of JE’s Thought

*JEMW*, 83-106
Of Being (1721), *JER*, 8-13
The Mind (1723), *JER*, 22-34
Beauty of the World (1725), *JER*, 14-15
Images of Divine Things (1728), *JER*, 16-21
“A Divine and Supernatural Light.” Sermon on Matt. 16:17, “That there is such a thing as a spiritual and divine light, immediately imparted to the soul by God, of a different nature from any that is obtained by natural means.” Aug. 1733. *WJE (Banner)*, II:41-50; *WJE (Yale)*, 17:405-26, *JER*, 105-124
“True Grace Distinguished From the Experience of Devils.” Sermon on James 2:19 [c]. *WJE (Banner)*, II:41-50; *WJE (Yale)*, 25:605-640

Preacher of the Word: Speaking to Head & Heart

*JEMW*, 55-82.
“The Excellency of Christ.” Sermon on Rev. 5:5-6. “There is an admirable conjunction of diverse excellencies in Jesus Christ.” Aug. 1736. Sacrament. Published as , in Discourses on Various Important Subjects (Boston, 1738); *WJE (Yale)*, 19, 560-94. , handout
“Great Guilt No Obstacle to the Pardon of the Returning Sinner.” Sermon on Ps. 25:11. “If we truly come to God for mercy, the greatness of our sin will be no impediment to pardon.” *WJE (Banner)*, II:110-113
“God the Best Portion of the Christian.” Sermon on Ps. 73:25, “’Tis the spirit of a truly godly man to prefer God before all other things either in heaven or earth.” Apr. 1736. *WJE (Banner)*, II:104-107
“Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God.” Sermon on Deut. 32:35(c), “There is nothing that keeps wicked men at each moment out of hell but the mere pleasure of God.” June 1741. *WJE (Banner)*, II:7-12; *WJE (Yale)*, 22:400-35; *JER*, 89-105
“The Great Concern of a Watchman for Souls.” Sermon on Heb. 13:17, “1. That the ministers of the gospel have the souls of men committed to their care by the Lord Jesus Christ. . . .” June 8, 1743. *WJE (Yale)*, 25:62-81
“Ministers to Preach Not Their Own Wisdom but the Word of God.” Sermon on I Cor. 2:11-13. “Ministers are not to preach those things which their own wisdom or reason suggests, but the things that are already dictated to them by the superior wisdom and knowledge of God.” May 7, 1740. *SOS*, 111-32.

Futurist: Eschatology, Heaven & Hell

Notes on the Apocalypse (begun 1723), *JER*, 49-56
“The Christian Pilgrim.” Sermon on Heb. 11:13-14, “This life ought so to be spent by us as to be only a journey towards heaven.” Sept. 1733. WJE (Banner), II:243-246; WJE (Yale), 17:427-46
“Wrath to the Uttermost.” Sermon on I Thess. 2:16, “When those that continue in sin have filled up the measure of their sin, then wrath will come upon them to the uttermost.” May 1735. WJE (Banner), II:122-125
“The Final Judgment.” Sermon on Acts 17:31, “God hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness by Jesus Christ.” c. Dec. 1729. WJE (Banner), II:190-201; WJE (Yale), 14:506-42
“The Portion of the Wicked.” Sermon on Rom. 2:8-9, “Indignation, wrath, and misery and anguish of soul is the portion that God has allotted to wicked men.” Nov. 1735. WJE (Banner), II:878-888
“The Portion of the Righteous.” Sermon on Rom. 2:10. “Glory, honor, and peace is the portion that God has given to all the godly.” Dec. 1735. WJE (Banner), II:888-905
“Heaven, a World of Charity or Love.” Sermon on I Cor. 13:8-10, “Heaven is a world of love.” October 1738. WJE (Yale), 8:366-397

Revivalist: Defender & Critic

JEMW, 107-144.
SLJE, 40-79.
A Faithful Narrative of the Surprising Work of God (1737), JER, 57-87
Letter: to George Whitefield (1739/40), JER, 300
Letter: to Moses Lyman (1742), JER, 302
Letter: to Joseph Bellamy (1746/47), JER, 304
Letter: to Sarah Edwards (1748), JER, 306
The Distinguishing Marks of a Work of the Spirit of God. (1741) WJE (Banner), II:257-277; WJE (Yale), 4:213-288

Psychologist of Religious Experience

A Treatise Concerning Religious Affections (1746), JER, 137-171

Pastor Rejected: The Qualifications Controversy

SLJE, 80-114.
The Bad Book Case (1744), JER, 172-178
An Humble Inquiry . . . Concerning Qualifications. . . (1749), JER, 179-191
Letter: to Thomas Foxcroft (1749), JER, 307
“Farewell Sermon.” Sermon on II Cor. 1:14, “Ministers, and people that are under their care, must meet one another before Christ’s tribunal at the day of judgment.” July 2, 1750. WJE (Banner), I:cxiii-cxiv; WJE (Yale), 25:457-493
Letter from Joseph Hawley, May 9, 1760. WJE (Banner), I:cxv-cxvii

Missionary: The Stockbridge Years

JEMW, 165-186.
SLJE, 115-126.
Letter: to Esther Edwards Burr (1753), JER, 311
Letter: to Thomas Prince (1754), *JER*, 314


The Call of Jonathan Edwards to Virginia in 1751

**Polemist: A Literary Superdreadnaught**

*JEMW*, 145-164.

*SLJE*, 126-133.

*Freedom of the Will* (1754), *JER*, 193-222

*Original Sin* (1758), *JER*, 223-243

*The Nature of True Virtue* (1765), *JER*, 244-265

College President: JE’s Death & Legacy

*JEMW*, 187-201.

*SLJE*, 134-145.

Letter: to the Trustees of the College of New Jersey (1757), *JER*, 321

### COURSE OBJECTIVES RELATED TO MDIV STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

**Course:** HT628 The Life And Ministry Of Jonathan Edwards  
**Professor:** Dr. Coffin  
**Campus:** Washington

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MDiv Student Learning Outcomes</th>
<th>Rubric</th>
<th>Mini-Justification</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Articulation (oral &amp; written)</strong></td>
<td>Broadly understands and articulates knowledge, both oral and written, of essential biblical, theological, historical, and cultural/global information, including details, concepts, and frameworks.</td>
<td>Strong</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Scripture</strong></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. (Includes appropriate use of original languages and hermeneutics; and integrates theological, historical, and cultural/global perspectives.)</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reformed Theology</strong></td>
<td>Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards.</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sanctification</strong></td>
<td>Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student’s sanctification.</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
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Desire for Worldview

Burning desire to conform all of life to the Word of God.

Strong

Detailed analysis of when and how Edwards shaped American culture according to Scripture and when he failed to do so.

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

Fair yet appropriate evaluation of positions differing from historic Reformed Theology.

Preach

Ability to preach and teach the meaning of Scripture to both heart and mind with clarity and enthusiasm.

N/A

Evaluation of various colonial worship forms as they developed.

Worship

Knowledgeable of historic and modern Christian-worship forms; and ability to construct and skill to lead a worship service.

Minimal

Discussion of effective ministry efforts in colonial period.

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

Detailed attention to historical backgrounds and trans-Atlantic influences that shaped American theology in the Eighteenth Century and beyond.

Church/World

Ability to interact within a denominational context, within the broader worldwide church, and with significant public issues.

Strong

SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

JE Website:


Biographies

Hopkins, Samuel. The Life and Character of the Late Reverend Mr. Jonathan Edwards, President of the College of New Jersey. . . . Boston, 1765.


JE’S Works:


  

Sermons


**Comprehensive Studies**


**Bibliographical Guides**

