



HIST6302 Christian Devotional Classics
New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary
Division of Theological and Historical Studies
Spring 2017

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Mission Statement

The mission of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary is to equip leaders to fulfill the Great Commission and the Great Commandments through the local church and its ministries.

Core Value Focus

New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary has five core values: Doctrinal Integrity, Spiritual Vitality, Mission Focus, Characteristic Excellence, and Servant Leadership. These values shape both the context and manner in which all curricula are taught, with “doctrinal integrity” and “mission focus” especially highlighted in this course. The core value focus for the 2016-17 year is ***Characteristic Excellence***: “*What we do, we do to the utmost of our abilities and resources as a testimony to the glory of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.*”

Curriculum Competencies

All graduates of NOBTS are expected to have at least a minimum level of competency in each of the following areas: Biblical Exposition, Christian Theological Heritage, Disciple Making, Interpersonal Skills, Servant Leadership, Spiritual and Character Formation, and Worship Leadership. It could be argued that a solid and comprehensive exposure to the devotional classics contributes to the development of all these competencies. Fundamentally, however, the curriculum competencies addressed in this course are: ***Christian Theological Heritage*** and ***Spiritual and Character Formation***.

Course Description

Devotion and worship are wellsprings of Christian experience, the inspirational and motivational forces of pilgrimage and ministry. The history of Christian devotion is rich and diverse. It encompasses a wide variety of communions and perspectives and is preserved in an extensive body of literature. This course is an introduction to the heritage of Christian mystical and devotional literature. Works such as Augustine’s *Confessions*, Bernard’s *The Love of God*, Thomas à Kempis’ *Imitation of Christ*, Pascal’s *Pensees*, Brother Lawrence’s *The Practice of the Presence of God*, Jeremy Taylor’s *Holy Living and Holy Dying*, Kierkegaard’s *Purity of Heart*, and Bonhoeffer’s *The Cost of Discipleship* are studied in their historical context and analyzed for their spiritual content and influence.

Student Learning Outcomes

Students successfully completing the seminar will demonstrate:

- General knowledge of the history of Christian devotion and of selected devotional classics;
- Understanding of central insights and emphases of the devotional classics and their impact on the heritage of Christian spirituality;
- Capacity to evaluate contemporary popular religion in the light of fundamental accents of the devotional classics;
- Knowledge of the spiritual disciples of Christian faith and their contemporary applications;
- Disciplined commitment to course assignments and faithful participation in class discussions;
- Intention to use devotional classics for personal nurture and church ministry.

Textbooks

The textbook for the course is E. Glenn Hinson, *Seekers After Mature Faith* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1968). Photocopies of the text are provided without charge to students.

Students should read the pertinent text materials in preparation for lectures and class discussions. The class schedule indicates the reading assignments.

Textbooks should be read in their entirety by the end of the semester. A statement indicating completion of this requirement will be submitted by each student at the time of the final examination.

Course Teaching Methodology

This course is an introduction to the heritage of Christian mystical and devotional literature. The course will involve assigned readings, lectures, participation in class discussions, a book review and group report, and a mid-term and final exam. This course is delivered as an on-campus, classroom course.

Course Requirements

Readings. Additional readings are provided in *Foundations*, a volume prepared by the instructor as a resource for seminar discussions. All reading assignments are indicated in the seminar schedule and should be completed by **May 10, 2017**.

Group Reports. Study groups will be formed. Each will be assigned a devotional classic to read and discuss with the class. Each group member will present an oral report with accompanying written outline on the salient information in the assigned section of the book. The reports will be followed by class discussion. In light of the discussion and further reading, the reports will be developed into more detailed and written summaries and critiques and submitted no later than **May 10, 2017**.

Book Review. Read and review a book listed in the course syllabus. Indicate your choice to the instructor before proceeding with the assignment. The text of the review should be composed of 10-12 double-spaced typewritten pages. It should be written in an acceptable style, reflect serious

study and analysis, and include the following sections: 1) biographical sketch of the author, 2) historical context of the work, 3) author's purpose, 4) basic insights or teachings, 5) quotable passages, 6) relevancy of the book for the seminar, 7) concluding evaluation. As you develop your review you will have opportunity to share your findings and insights with the class. The completed review is due **April 26, 2017**.

Examinations. The mid-semester and final exams are take home projects consisting of questions on the textbook, readings, lectures, and class discussion. The mid-semester exam is due no later than **April 5, 2017**. The final examination should be submitted on **May 10, 2017**.

Class Attendance. Students are expected to attend class regularly and participate in class discussions. According to Seminary regulations, the maximum number of absences without failure for a three hour course is nine classroom hours. Please consult the current graduate catalog for information about absences, late arrivals, and early departures.

Evaluation of Grade

The student's grade will be computed as follows:		
Book Review	20%	A: 93-100
Group Reports	20%	B: 85-92
Mid-semester Exam	20%	C: 77-84
Final Exam	25%	D: 70-76
Reading Assignments/Class Discussions	15%	F: 69 or below

Technical Assistance

For assistance regarding technology, consult ITC (504-816-8180) or the following websites:

1. Selfserve@nobts.edu - Email for technical questions/support requests with the Selfserve.nobts.edu site (Access to online registration, financial account, online transcript, etc.)
2. BlackboardHelpDesk@nobts.edu - Email for technical questions/support requests with the NOBTS Blackboard Learning Management System NOBTS.Blackboard.com.
3. ITCSupport@nobts.edu - Email for general technical questions/support requests.
4. www.NOBTS.edu/itc/ - General NOBTS technical help information is provided on this website.

Help for Writing Papers at “The Write Stuff”

NOBTS maintains a Writing Center designed to improve English writing at the graduate level. Students can receive writing guides, tips, and valuable information to help in becoming a better writer.

Plagiarism on Written Assignments

NOBTS has a no tolerance policy for plagiarism. Plagiarism in certain cases may result in expulsion from the seminary. See the NOBTS Student Handbook for definition, penalties, and policies associated with plagiarism.

Course Schedule

<i>Date</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Reading Assignment</i>
		F = Foundations S = Seekers
	INTRODUCTION	
1/25	Orientation and Assignments Discovering the Devotional Classics The Spiritual Legacy of the Classics A Guide to Devotional Reading	S: 15-22
	THE CLASSICS OF CHRISTIAN DEVOTION IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE	
2/1	The Age of the Fathers (A.D. 100-600) Athanasius, <i>Life of Anthony</i> Augustine, <i>Confessions</i>	F: 1-21 S: 25-51
	The Middle Ages (A.D. 600-1300) The Budding of Mysticism Bernard of Clairvaux, <i>On the Steps of Humility</i> Francis of Assisi, <i>Mirror of Perfection; Little Flowers</i>	S: 55-82
2/8	The Renaissance (A.D. 1300-1600) German and Dutch Mysticism Anon., <i>The German Theology</i> Thomas a Kempis, <i>Imitation of Christ</i> The English Mystics Richard Rolle, <i>The Fire of Love</i> Anon., <i>The Cloud of Unknowing</i> Julian of Norwich, <i>Revelations of Divine Love</i>	F: 22-31 S: 85-108
2/15	The Reformation (A.D. 1500-1648) Catholic Piety Ignatius Loyola, <i>Spiritual Exercises</i> Teresa of Avila, <i>Life; Interior Castle; Way of Perfection</i> John of the Cross, <i>The Dark Night of the Soul</i> Protestant Piety Martin Luther, <i>Table Talk, A Simple Way to Pray</i> John Calvin, "How Men Should Pray" Johann Arndt, <i>True Christianity</i>	F: 32-70 S: 111-131
2/22	Deism and the Enlightenment (A.D. 1648-1789) Roman Catholic Classics	S: 135-162

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