

Calvin & Calvinism

REL370 / 4 credits / Northwestern College / Fall 2009

Instructor: Dr. Michael Andres, andres@nwciowa.edu

Office/Hours: VPH115; Mon, Tue, Fri 3:30-5:00pm; ext. 7079

Class Time: MWF 10:40-11:40 **Class Location:** VPH119

Course Description:

A study of John Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, as well as a survey of other varieties of Reformed theology, including later Calvinism.

Course Objectives:

- To study the life, times, and context of John Calvin.
- To examine in detail the doctrines articulated by John Calvin especially as expressed in the *Institutes of the Christian Religion*.
- To explore various developments of Calvinist and Reformed theology subsequent to Calvin in their historical contexts.
- To cultivate a critical appreciation of the Calvinist theological tradition.
- To serve the people of God by introducing a local church, and our campus community, to the life and thought of Calvin, through teaching and drama.

Course Texts:

- Arthur Bennett, *The Valley of Vision: A Collection of Puritan Prayers and Devotions* (Banner of Truth Trust, 1975).
- Calvin, John, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John McNeill and tr. Ford Lewis Battles (Westminster Press, 1960).
- Robert Peterson and Michael Williams, *Why I Am Not An Arminian* (Intervarsity Press, 2004).
- John Piper, *The Legacy of Sovereign Joy: God's Triumphant Grace in the Lives of Augustine, Luther, and Calvin* (Crossway, 2000).
- Herman Selderhuis, *John Calvin: A Pilgrim's Life* (Intervarsity Press, 2009).
- Jerry Walls and Joseph Dongell, *Why I Am Not A Calvinist* (Intervarsity Press, 2004).

Recommended Texts:

- John Bunyan, *The Pilgrim's Progress* (any unabridged edition, but Barbour Books, 2005 a good one).
- Marilynne Robinson, *Gilead: A Novel* (Picador, 2006).

Course Requirements:

- *Class attendance/participation:* Participation highly encouraged. Attendance is mandatory; material covered in class sometimes is not found in readings. After three unexcused absences, students will be graded down one half letter grade for every subsequent unexcused absence. Students may not use laptop computers. Please turn off cell phones completely before class begins (not just on 'vibrate').
- *Readings:* Reading should be completed *before* class time listed. It is the responsibility of

the student to be aware of forthcoming reading assignments given in syllabus. *It is especially important that students regularly check the My Northwestern Calvin & Calvinism course page for links to required articles.* "Resource material" should be read for familiarity, not memorization.

- **Quizzes:** Seven quizzes will cover material mostly from Piper and *Institutes* reading. Quizzes can only be rescheduled with advance permission of instructor.
- **Comparison/Contrast Paper:** Read Walls/Dongell, *Why I Am Not A Calvinist* and Peterson/Williams, *Why I Am Not An Arminian*, then compare and contrast the main positions argued therein. One 1500 word comparison/contrast paper is due November 24 (at class time). Formatting guidelines can be found at [Writing and Submission Guidelines](#). Please note that a hard copy of written assignment should be submitted to instructor at class time and an electronic copy to *My Northwestern*.
- **Calvin Drama Project:** All students will be placed in one of four research groups which will write a fifteen minute mini-drama about one period in the life of John Calvin. Later students will be placed in one of three 'teams' that will teach about, write, and perform the whole four part play for one or two local churches and the campus community at the end of the semester.
- **Exams:** There will be two sectional exams.

Course Assessment:

- Quizzes (28%) = 70 points/10 points each
- Comparison Paper (16%) = 40 points
- Service Learning Project (16%) = 40 points
- Exams (40%) = 100 points/50 points each

Extra Credit:

- Attend Calvin Conference (all day) - Friday, Oct 16, Sioux Falls Seminary (5 points): ["Calvin and Current Calvinisms" Conference](#)
- Read Bunyan, *Pilgrim's Progress* or Robinson, *Gilead*. Write a 1500 word analysis of the Calvinist themes in the novel and explain the way the themes contribute to the overall narrative of the text. (5 points)

Grading Guidelines

Guidelines for Service Learning Project:

The year 2009 is the 500th anniversary of Calvin's birth. Virtually no drama has ever been made of Calvin's life. You have the opportunity to participate in a project that may, if the dramas are of sufficient quality, become something bigger.

Early in the semester each student will be placed in one of four drama research groups which will research and write a fifteen minute mini-drama about one period in the life of John Calvin. All students in the group must contribute to the research and writing of the drama. The four dramas include:

- [Calvin's Early Years Drama #1](#) - From Calvin's birth in 1509, to his education in Paris, to the first reformist influences.
- [Calvin's Transformation Drama #2](#) - From Calvin's conversion in 1533, to his escape from France and life in

Basel to his first brief experience in Geneva in 1538.

- Calvin's Geneva Drama #3 - From Calvin's life in Strasbourg, then back to Geneva to preach and lead 1541-1553.
- Calvin's Struggles and Last Days Drama #4 - From Calvin's conflict with Servetus in 1553, to the Academy and final edition of the *Institutes*, to his death in 1564.

First you must thoroughly research your era of Calvin's life. It is expected that you read the appropriate sections of at least 3-4 additional biographies of Calvin besides Selderhuis (a few notable biographies are listed below).

- Bouwsma, William. *John Calvin: A Sixteenth Century Portrait*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988.
- Cottret, Bernard. *Calvin: A Biography*. Translated by M. Wallace McDonald. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000.
- Ganoczy, Alexandre. *The Young Calvin*, Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1987.
- McGrath, Alister, *A Life of John Calvin*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1990.
- Parker, T.H.L., *John Calvin: a Biography*, Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1975.
- Wendel, François. *Calvin: Origins and Development of His Religious Thought*. Translated by Philip Mairet. Durham, NC: Labyrinth Press, 1987.
- Zachman, Randall C., *John Calvin as Teacher, Pastor, and Theologian: the Shape of his Writings and Thought*, Grand Rapids, MI : Baker Academic, 2006.

Later in the semester you will be divided into three different “teams”:

1. Writing Team (4 students) – these students would revise and combine the four mini-dramas into one cohesive full play on Calvin.
2. Acting Team (15 students) – these students would put on two showings of the play; one at First Reformed Church, one at Trinity Reformed, and one at NWC. They will be responsible to memorize lines and meet with the Jeff and Karen Barker for acting guidance. Drama to be performed at First Reformed Church Orange City on the evening of Dec 6, and at NWC sometime during Dec 1-12.
3. Teaching Team (6 students) – these students would be responsible to prepare and teach a three week adult education class on the life of Calvin. Classes to take place at First Reformed Church Orange City on the mornings of Nov 15, 22, and Dec 6.

The drama should reflect key events, relationships and ideas in given period of Calvin's life. Since Calvin is an intellectual and theologian, the drama should also clearly reflect his key theological beliefs. Emphasize his scholarly life, commitment to Scripture, and passion for God's majesty and grace. You are encouraged to interweave actual quotations from Calvin. But the drama should also be written creatively to be engaging to an audience. An audience should learn about Calvin, but also be captivated by his ideas, life, and personality. Do not overly glorify Calvin, nor engage in character assassination. Get as close as possible to the real flesh and bones Calvin; in his keen gifts, his struggles, conflicts, and flaws, his relationships, his deep tragedies and triumphs. Throughout, the actor playing Calvin will wear the 'Calvin hat'!

Wardrobe and props are encouraged. Attention to good quality dramatic performance is expected. On Nov 18 there will be a consultation to bring all four dramas together into one

coherent play. On Nov 20 there will be a full practice.

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism:

Northwestern College is a Christian academic community committed to integrity and honesty in all intellectual and academic matters. All students, faculty, and staff are expected to follow the highest standards of honesty and ethical behavior. In addition, as members of the campus community all students, faculty, and staff have a responsibility to help other members of the community to demonstrate integrity in their actions. Behavior that violates academic integrity can take a variety of forms including, but not limited to, cheating on tests, quizzes, papers, and projects; plagiarism using unauthorized material; willful misrepresentation of evidence and arguments.

Plagiarism is the unacknowledged use of someone else's words or ideas, with the intent of deceiving the reader concerning the origin of the words, ideas, or images. Plagiarism can also occur in the fine arts. It is the responsibility of the artist to acknowledge the work of others; the means of acknowledgment could be in the title or in some artistic reference within the work itself. (Excerpts from *NWC Student Handbook*, 11)

Course Assistance:

I have an open door policy. Please come by my office, preferably at office hours, if you have any questions or are having any problems with the reading, lectures, note taking, written project, etc. Or come by for a cup of tea and chat about life. For further assistance in academic matters help is available through Tom Truesdell at Academic Support (VPH 125B). Academic Support is there to help you so if you are having difficulties do not hesitate to ask.

Course Schedule:

Date	Topic	Readings/Assignments
Aug 26	Introduction	
	<i>Forerunners to Calvinism</i>	
Aug 28	Augustine and Pelagius	Reading: Piper, 17-76; <u>Augustine Quiz #1</u> Resource Material: <u>Confessions</u> ; <u>Augustine's Anti-Pelagian Writings</u> ; <u>Council of Orange (529)</u>
Aug 31	Late Medieval Period and Pre-Reformers	Reading: <u>Wyclif and Hus</u> ; : <u>William Tyndale</u> (read galleries 1-5); Resource Material: <u>Wycliffe Bible - Matthew / Romans</u> ; <u>John Wycliffe's Reply to Pope Gregory's Condemnation (1384)</u> ; <u>Tyndale New Testament - Romans</u>
	<i>Calvin and the Reformation</i>	

Sept 2	Martin Luther	Reading: Piper, 77-114; <u>Luther Quiz #2</u>
Sept 4	Martin Luther	Reading: <u>Luther's "Ninety-Five Theses" (1517)</u> ; Resource Material: <u>Luther's "Bondage of the Will" (Abridged)</u>
Sept 7	Ulrich Zwingli	Reading: <u>Ulrich Zwingli</u>
Sept 9	Calvin's Early Years and Transformation	Reading: Selderhuis, 7-50
Sept 11	Calvin the Pilgrim	Reading: Selderhuis, 50-109
Sept 14	Calvin the Preacher of Geneva	Reading: Selderhuis, 110-118; Piper, 114-148; <u>Calvin Quiz #3</u> Resource Material: <u>Geneva Bible - Matthew 1</u> ; <u>Calvin's Commentaries</u> ; <u>Calvin's Sermons</u>
Sept 16	Calvin the Reformer of Geneva	Reading: Selderhuis, 118-144; <i>Ecclesiastical Ordinances of 1541</i> (handout) Resource Material:; <u>Genevan Catechism</u> ; <u>Preface to the Psalter</u> ; <u>Genevan Book of Order</u>
Sept 18	Calvin's Struggles in Geneva	Reading: Selderhuis, 145-213
Sept 21	Calvin's Last Days	Reading: Selderhuis, 214-259
Sept 23	<u>Life of Calvin Exam #1</u>	<u>Calvin Study Guide Exam 1</u>
<i>Institutes of the Christian Religion (1559)</i>		
Sept 25	<i>Sensus Divinitatis</i>	Reading: Calvin, <i>Institutes</i> , 35-69
Sept 28	Scripture	Reading: Calvin, <i>Institutes</i> , 69-120
Sept 30	Original Humanity and Providence	Reading: Calvin, <i>Institutes</i> , 183-238
Oct 2	Sin and the Bondage of the Will	Reading: Calvin, <i>Institutes</i> , 241-309; <u>Institutes Quiz #4</u>
Oct 5	Sin and the Bondage of the Will	
Oct 7	Christ as Redeemer	Reading: Calvin, <i>Institutes</i> , 464-534;
Oct 9	Holy Spirit and Faith	Reading: Calvin, <i>Institutes</i> , 537-592
Oct 12	New Birth and Repentance	Reading: Calvin, <i>Institutes</i> , 592-621

Oct 14	The Christian Life	Reading: Calvin, <i>Institutes</i> , 684-725
Oct 15, Thur, 7:00 pm	Special Speaking Engagement: Dr. Scott Manetsch, “Moral Discipline and Pastoral Care in Calvin’s Geneva” (Christ Chapel)	
Oct 16	Class Cancelled / Extra Credit Opportunity: Attend Calvin Conference in Sioux Falls	“Calvin and Current Calvinisms” Conference
<u>Mid-Term Break – October 17-20</u>		
Oct 21	Justification by Faith	Reading: Calvin, <i>Institutes</i> , 725-797; Resource Material: Council of Trent on "Justification" (1547) ; Antidote to Trent - On Justification ; Institutes Quiz #5
Oct 23	Justification by Faith	
Oct 26	Prayer	Reading: Calvin, <i>Institutes</i> , 850-920;
Oct 28	Election	Reading: Calvin, <i>Institutes</i> , 920-986; Resource Material: On the Eternal Predestination of God ; Institutes Quiz #6
Oct 30	Church	Reading: Calvin, <i>Institutes</i> , 1011-1053; 1229-1240
Nov 2	Baptism	Reading: Calvin, <i>Institutes</i> , 1276-1289; 1303-1359; Calvin Mini-Dramas Due
Nov 4	Lord’s Supper	Reading: Calvin, <i>Institutes</i> , 1359-1425 Resource Material: Short Treatise on the Lord's Supper
Nov 6	<u>Calvin's <i>Institutes</i> Exam #2</u>	Calvin Study Guide Exam 2
<i>European Calvinism</i>		
Nov 9	Calvinism after Calvin: Counter-Reformation, Calvin’s Successor, and French Calvinism	Reading: Muller, “Theodore Beza” (handout); Lindberg, “Refuge in the Shadow of God’s Wings” (handout) Resource Material: Council of Trent on "Justification" (1547) ; Belgic Confession (1561) ; Heidelberg Catechism (1563) ;
Nov 11	Dutch Calvinism: Arminianism & The Synod	Reading: McNeill, “The Reformation in the

of Dort

Netherlands" (handout)

Resource Material: [Canons of Dort \(1618-1619\)](#)

Nov 13 **Sin and Freedom**

Nov 16 **Election**

Nov 18 **Calvin Drama Consultation**

Nov 20 **Practice Calvin Drama**

Nov 24 **Grace and Perseverance**

Comparison Paper Due (at class time)

Thanksgiving Holiday – November 25-29

English / American Calvinism

Nov 30 **English Calvinism: The Puritans**

Reading: Lindberg, "The Reformations in England and Scotland" (handout); Gleason and Kapic, "Who Were the Puritans?" (handout)

Resource Material: [Thirty-Nine Articles \(1571\)](#); [Westminster Confession of Faith \(1686\)](#); [John Owen - Mortification of Sin in Believers](#); [John Bunyan – Pilgrim's Progress](#); [Isaac Watts](#)

Dec 2 **American Calvinism: Edwards and New England Calvinism**

Reading: Nichols, "Jonathan Edwards: His Life and Legacy" (handout);

Resource Material: [Freedom of the Will](#); [Religious Affections](#); [Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God](#)

Dec 4 **Dutch Calvinism in America**

Reading: John Hesselink, "Some Distinctive Contributions of the Dutch-American Reformed Tradition" (handout); **[Dutch Calvinism Quiz #7](#)**

Resource Material: [Abraham Kuyper's Stone Lectures on Calvinism](#);

Contemporary Calvinism

Dec 7 **Princeton and Westminster**

Reading: Noll, 'The Princeton Theology' (handout)

Dec 9 **Neo-Orthodoxy and Karl Barth**

Reading: Voskuil, 'Neo-Orthodoxy' (handout)

Dec 11 **Young, Restless, and Reformed**

Hanson, ['Young, Reformed and Restless'](#)

No Final Exam – Calvin Drama Performances Dec 6, Dec 1-12

Calvin and Calvinism Links:

[Meeter Center for Calvin Studies](#) - one of the best available resources for Calvin scholarship

[Calvin Studies Society](#)

[Calvin 500](#)

[Center for Reformation and Renaissance Studies](#)

[European Reformation Research Group](#)

[St Andrews Reformation Studies Institute](#)

[International Museum of the Reformation](#)

[Institute for Reformed Theology](#) - associated with Union Seminary, VA (Presbyterian Church USA)

[Calvinism and the Reformed Faith](#) - many articles on various aspects of Calvinist theology and history

[Reformation Ink](#) - many articles on various aspects of Calvinist theology and history

[Center for Reformed Theology and Apologetics](#) - many articles on Calvinist theology and history

[Westminster Internet Resource Directory](#)

[Banner of Truth](#) - Calvinist publisher with relevant articles

[Reformed Church in America](#) - official denominational website

[World Alliance of Reformed Churches](#)

[Christian Classics Ethereal Library](#) - includes primary texts of Calvin and various Calvinists

[Reformed \(and other\) Creeds and Confessions](#) - includes the Heidelberg, Belgic, Dort, and Westminster

[Calvin Study Guide Exam 1](#) - Life of Calvin Exam

[Calvin Study Guide Exam 2](#) - Institutes Exam