

SYLLABUS

1HT728: Life and Thought of Jonathan Edwards**Dr. Sean Michael Lucas**

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An introduction to the life and thought of Jonathan Edwards, utilizing both primary and secondary sources.

Goals:

1. The student will be *introduced* to the life and thought of Jonathan Edwards. Disclaimer: this class is not an exhaustive survey of his thought nor will you read all of Edwards in a semester.
2. Through the lectures, the student will be *exposed* to the context of Edwards' thought and *develop* a greater critical appreciation for theology in America in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and for Edwards' contribution to that theology.
3. Through the reading, the student will be *oriented* to the wealth of secondary literature and perspective on Edwards.
4. Through engagement with Edwards' *Religious Affections*, the student will consider how Edwards' writings might be relevant for the continuing life of the church and pastoral ministry.

Required texts:

George M. Marsden, *A Short Life of Jonathan Edwards* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008); paperback, 978-0802802200; [JE: Life]

John E. Smith, Harry S. Stout, and Kenneth P. Minkema, eds., *A Jonathan Edwards Reader* (Yale University Press, 2003). Paperback, 0300098383, \$16.95 [JE: Reader]

Wilson H. Kimnach, et al eds., *The Sermons of Jonathan Edwards: A Reader* (Yale UP, 1999). Paperback, 0300077688; \$20.00 [JE: Sermons]

Sean Michael Lucas, *God's Grand Design: The Theological Vision of Jonathan Edwards* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2011). Paperback, 978-1433514456 [GGD]

Jonathan Edwards, *The Works of Jonathan Edwards, vol. 2: Religious Affections*, ed. John E. Smith (Yale UP, 1959). Paperback, 978-0300158410

Recommended texts:

If you entered this class desiring to read George Marsden's magisterial (and lengthy) biography, *Jonathan Edwards: A Life* (Yale UP, 2003; 978-0300105967), you may substitute it for the shorter Marsden biography. However, you *must* read it in its entirety and you will *not* receive extra credit for it.

For those who are interested in a lengthier account of Edwards' theology, see Michael J. McClymond and Gerald R. McDermott, *The Theology of Jonathan Edwards* (Oxford UP, 2012). Also useful is Stephen J. Stein, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Jonathan Edwards* (Cambridge UP, 2007). Neither of these books may substitute for the assigned texts.

Requirements and Grading:

1. *Regular attendance and class participation* (20%). Since we have only 13 meeting times, you will only be allowed to miss one class without it adversely affecting your grade.
2. *Reading* (40%). You will be required to read 100% of the five required texts. On the last day of class, you will be asked how much of the assigned readings you have read.
3. *Engagement paper* (40%). You will read Edwards' *Religious Affections* and write a 10-page paper in line with the instructions given below.

Instructions on particular assignments:

1. *Engagement paper (8-10 pages)*
 - a. You will need to read Jonathan Edwards' *Religious Affections*.
 - b. As you read, have in mind the two engagement questions below.
 - c. In writing your engagement paper, you will divide the paper in the following manner:
 - 1) Introduction, summarizing the editor's information and the two questions which are (1/2 page):
 - a. *What were the most significant signs that Edwards offers that would help someone determine whether he or she was in fact a genuine believer in Christ?*
 - b. *How does Edwards help pastors think through the problems of spiritual deception and provide answers for assisting struggling believers?*
 - 2) Summary, answering question a (3-5 pages)
 - 3) Response, answering question b (3-5 pages)
 - 4) Conclusion, stating how you personally have been helped (or not helped) by Edwards' perspective in *Religious Affections*
 - d. Do not write less than 8 pages; do not exceed 10 pages.
 - e. The first grade (approximately 65%) will be for content and cogency. The second grade (approximately 35%) will be for style, coherence, clarity, and form. These two grades will combine for this portion of your overall grade.
 - f. **This paper will be due on May 2, 2014. No late papers will be accepted.**

SCHEDULE OF ASSIGNMENTS AND PROBABLE LECTURE SCHEDULE

27 January 2014: Why Bother With Jonathan Edwards?

3 February 2014: Edwards in Context: Intellectual, Cultural, Theological

Assignments: Should Edwards' spiritual development inform our own approach to piety? If so, how? If not, why not?

JE: Life, pp. 1-14

JE: Reader, pp. 266-95 (*Diary, Resolutions, Apostrophe, Personal Narrative*)

GGD, pp. 207-18.

10 February 2014: Is there a Center to Edwards' Theology?

Assignments: How can Edwards' "new approach to divinity" inform our understanding of Scripture, theology, and history?

JE: Life, pp. 15-26

JE: Reader, pp. 124-36, 321-25 (*History of Work of Redemption, Letter to Princeton Trustees*)

JE: Sermons, pp. 66-82 ("*God glorified in the work of redemption*")

GGD: pp. 11-73.

17 February 2014: Edwards and the Trinity

Assignments: Does Edwards' Trinitarian approach provide untapped resources for theological reflection? If so, how? If not, why not?

JE: Sermons, pp. 161-96 ("*The Excellency of Christ*")

Edwards, "Miscellany 94" in *Yale, Works*, 13:256-63.

24 February 2014: "The Nature of True Religion": Religious Affections, the Great Awakening, and Visible Saints

Assignments: How does Edwards' understanding of true religion, summarized in religious affections, inform his actions in the aftermath of the Great Awakening and during the communion controversy? Was Edwards right?

JE: Life, pp. 27-59

JE: Reader, pp. 57-88, 105-23, 137-71, 179-91 (*Faithful Narrative, Divine Light, Religious Affections, Humble Inquiry*)

JE: Sermons, pp. 83-104, 111-20 ("*Reality of Conversion*"; "*He That Believeth Shall Be Saved*")

GGD, pp. 77-116.

For further reading:

Ava Chamberlain, "Self-Deception as a Theological Problem in Jonathan Edwards's 'Treatise Concerning Religious Affections,'" *Church History* 63 (1994): 541-56.

3 March 2014: A Theology of Revival: Affections, Awakening, Eschatology, and Missions

Assignments: How does Edwards' view of eschatology and religious affections fire his enthusiasm for mission?

JE: Life, pp. 60-79

JE: Reader, pp. 49-56, 89-104 (*Notes on Apocalypse, Sinners*)

JE: Sermons, pp. 105-110, 242-72 ("*To the Mohawks*"; "*Heaven is a World of Love*")

10 March 2014: SPRING BREAK (NO CLASS)**17 March 2014: The Philosophical and Apologetic Jonathan Edwards**

Assignments: How did Edwards respond to the challenge of deism? Does his apologetic method provide any insight for contemporary approaches? Does Edwards provide a convincing approach to virtue? How can Edwards' approach inform contemporary discussions of ethics?

JE: Life, pp. 80-95

JE: Reader, pp. 1-34, 244-65 (*Spider Letter, Of Being, Beauty, Nature of True Virtue*)

JE: Sermons, pp. 13-48 ("*The Pleasantness of Religion*"; "*The Importance and Advantage of...Divine Truth*")

GGD, pp. 117-32

For further reading:

Gerald McDermott, "The Deist Connection: Jonathan Edwards and Islam," in *Jonathan Edwards's Writings: Text, Context, Interpretation*, ed. Stephen J. Stein (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996), 39-51.

24 March 2014: Edwards, the Bible and the Challenge of the New Historical Consciousness

Assignments: Consider how the rising historical consciousness, which was connected to deism as we saw last week, challenged and/or informed Edwards approach to biblical interpretation. What can we learn from the way Edwards interpreted the Bible?

JE: Life, pp. 96-114

JE: Sermons, pp. 1-12 (*"The Way of Holiness"*)

31 March 2014: Original Sin and Freedom of the Will

Assignments: Is Edwards faithful to the Reformed tradition with his discussions of original sin and freedom of the will? Are there other ways to formulate these issues that may be more faithful to the biblical material?

JE: Life. pp. 115-42

JE: Reader, pp. 192-243 (*Original Sin, Freedom of the Will*)

7 April 2014: Edwards and Social Issues

Assignments: How do Edwards' views on social issues such as economics, politics, slavery, and justice for Native Americans complicate our vision of him as a man and minister? Can we relativize his contribution through comparison to southern Presbyterians (such as Dabney) who defended slavery?

JE: Reader, pp. 296-7 (*Receipt for Venus*)

JE: Sermons, pp. 197-211 (*"Much in Deeds of Charity"*)

For further reading:

Kenneth P. Minkema, "Jonathan Edwards's Defense of Slavery," *Massachusetts Historical Review* 4 (2002): 23-59.

Mark Valeri, "The Economic Thought of Jonathan Edwards," *Church History* 60 (1991): 37-54.

Gerald McDermott, "Jonathan Edwards and American Indians: The Devil Sucks Their Blood," *New England Quarterly* 72 (1999): 539-57.

14 April 2014: Edwards as Pastor and Preacher

Assignments: Was Edwards a good pastor? What did he see as his chief ministry responsibility? Drawing upon this as well as other reading (esp. Marsden), would Edwards serve as a good model for ministry?

JE: Reader, pp. 172-9 (*Bad Book Case*)

JE: Sermons, pp. ix-xlvi; 212-41 (*"Editor's Introduction"; "A Farewell Sermon"*)

GGD, pp. 133-72

21 April 2014: EASTER MONDAY (NO CLASS)**28 April 2014: "Who are Edwards' Heirs?": Tylerites, Taylorites, Finneyites, Princetonians, and Southerners**

Assignments: Is it possible for those who contradict a theologian's positions to be his heirs? What does the conflicted legacy of the Edwardsian tradition tell us about the larger Reformed tradition? What do you see as contemporary application of these things?

GGD, pp. 173-90.

For further reading:

Lucas, "'He Cuts Up Edwardsism by the Roots': Robert Lewis Dabney and the Edwardsian Legacy in the Nineteenth Century South," in *The Legacy of Jonathan Edwards: American Religion and the Evangelical Tradition*, ed. D. G. Hart et al (Baker, 2003), 200-14.

2 May 2014

- **PAPERS DUE**