Why does God offer the earth to us as a mirror?
It is so that we can contemplate in it his glory, his wisdom, his virtue, and his infinite power.
John Calvin, 148th sermon on Job
CH/TH 642: John Calvin and the Swiss Reformation

Dr. Gwenfair Walters Adams
Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary - Hamilton
Spring Semester, 2013, Tuesdays 2:00-5:00 p.m.
Office Hours: Mondays, 10:30-12:00 p.m., Wednesdays, 10:00-11:00 a.m., Thursdays, 3:00-4:00 p.m., and as posted outside my office.
Contact info: given in class

Objectives:
1. To study the life of John Calvin chronologically, with emphasis on the
development of his theological thought, pastoral practice, and spiritual formation.
2. To examine his theology structurally and thematically, with an emphasis on
exegeting primary source materials (The Institutes, sermons, commentaries) in light of
his medieval context and his interaction with the ideas of the devotio moderna,
humanism, Lutheranism, Augustine, Bernard of Clairvaux, Martin Bucer,
Melanchthon, Anabaptists, and others.
3. To discuss his relevance for leadership today, including an exploration of the
themes of Calvin’s emphasis on God’s sovereignty; his pedagogy and evangelism;
his ecclesiology and teachings on worship; his epistemology, hermeneutics, exegesis
and homiletics; the importance of integrity/integration, of passion for God and a
love for His people.
4. To allow opportunities for the improvement of research, writing, speaking, and
teaching skills for future ministry, and for spiritual formation.

Class Schedule (Subject to change if necessary):

January 29  Introduction
February 5  Calvin the Student (the Early Development of His Thought)
February 12 Calvin the Convert, Refugee, & Young Pastor (Paris & Geneva I)
Reading Week NO CLASS
February 26 Calvin the Exile & Shepherd (Strasbourg, Sadoletto, & Swiss
Reformers)
March 5  Calvin the Christian Life (Geneva II)
March 12  Calvin and the World (Evangelism and Missions)
March 19  Calvin the Theologian and Pastor: The Institutes in Context
Reading Week NO CLASS
April 2  Calvin the Theologian and Pastor: The Institutes in Context
April 9  Calvin the Theologian and Pastor: The Institutes in Context
April 16 Calvin the Theologian and Pastor: The Institutes in Context
April 22 Calvin and the Word (Exegesis, Hermeneutics, and Homiletics)
April 30  Class Presentations and/or Snow Make-up/Catch-up Day

Required Texts:

1. John Calvin, *Institutes* (1559 edition, unabridged) – You will be required to read the unabridged 1559 edition of the *Institutes*. Choose one of the following:
   a. Hendrickson edition (978-1598561685), which is a one-volume edition, translated by Henry Beveridge and significantly less expensive ($15.99 on gcts.christianbook.com. (Pages in this edition will each count as 1.5 pages for the required reading total for the course.)
   OR
   b. Westminster edition (978-0664220280 hardcover), which is a two-volume edition, translated by John Ford Battles and $50.49 at gcts.christianbook.com in paperback (9780664239114).

Scholars express a variety of opinions in reference to the strengths and weaknesses of the two versions. Roughly speaking, the Beveridge translation captures more of the emotion, and Battles more of the precision, of Calvin’s original work. The Westminster edition has extensive apparatus, which may be very helpful. If you are seeking to invest in your future library, the Westminster edition is probably the better choice. If you are trying to conserve money or you’d feel freer underlining and taking notes in a less expensive version, the Hendrickson version is the better choice.

• If you have already read the *Institutes*, you may substitute others of Calvin’s writings in its place.

2. *A Reformation Debate: Calvin and Sadoleto* (Baker Book House). 978-0801023903 – skim in preparation for February 26 class. – You are not required to read this text, just to bring it to class on the relevant day.

Course Requirements:
All senior work is due by the Registrar’s deadline for senior work, by 4:00 p.m.

1. **Reading** (20%) – Calvin’s *Institutes* (Due: Final day of written work)

Grading method for the reading: The research paper will determine the starting point for the final grade. If 100% of the reading (and the application below) has been completed, the research paper grade will be the grade for the course. Otherwise, the proportion of reading not done will be deducted from the grade at the following rate:

- 100 % = no change (ex: A to A)
- 75-99% = 1/3 grade drop (ex: A to A-)
- 50-74% = 2/3 grade drop (ex: A to B+)
- 25-49% = 1 grade drop (ex: A to B)
Below 25% = 1 1/3 grade drop (ex: A to B-)
For example, if your paper is an A, if you have completed only 72% of the reading,
your semi-final grade for the course will be a B+.

2. Research Paper (60%) - 15-18 pages double-spaced; include a bibliography in the
paper, but do not include it in the page count. (Due: Final day of written work);
Topic: An aspect of Calvin's theology dealt with contextually (i.e. in light of
historical / social / theological / biographical contexts). The paper needs to make a
strong argument. Paper will be graded on clarity of structure, style (grammar,
literary expression, proper format), strength of argument/thought, and quality of
research (should be grounded in primary sources but interact with secondary
sources). Guidelines for writing a church history paper will be supplied on-line.

3. Application (20%) – choose one of the following (Due: Final day of written work):
   a. Spiritual Formation – Spend 10 hours meditating on, contemplating, praising
      God for His providential care. Suggestions include meditating on Bible passages
      about God’s providence, journaling, composing lyrics/poetry,
      painting/drawing/photography, etc. You may focus on the book of Psalms and/or
      Calvin’s commentary on the Psalms
      (http://www.ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom08.titlepage.html), and incorporate
      sections of Calvin’s writings on Providence, etc. Or list examples of God’s
      providence in the Scriptures, in your life, in history. When you have concluded the
      10 hours, write a 2-3 page analysis of the experience and your findings. (In order to
      encourage you not to use the 10 hours simply reading towards the required reading
      total, pages read during this assignment will not count towards the reading
      requirement total.)
   OR
   b. Presentation - 7-10 carefully-crafted and polished minutes. You are encouraged to
      use the same topic as for your paper, but the focus will, of course, be different.
      Prepare and deliver a creative, ministry-oriented presentation in relation to a
      theological topic. Submit detailed outline and copies of all handouts/overheads, etc.
      to professor at time of presentation. Will be graded primarily on excellence,
      understanding of ministry situation, creativity, clarity of communication, and
      accuracy of description of Calvin’s theology. Presentations will take place during the
      exam slot scheduled for the course by the Registrar. If you plan to do a presentation,
      you need to inform the professor before April 18, via email.
   OR
   c. Cogitation - Choose a theme in Calvin’s life or writings that you would like to
      wrestle with or that raises a question you would like to answer, etc. Spend one hour
      per week, for 10 weeks, thinking and journaling about that theme. Write a 2-3 page
      reflection paper on the process and findings. (In order to encourage you not to use
      the 10 hours simply reading towards the required reading total, pages read during
      this assignment will not count towards the reading requirement total.)
If the application assignment is not fully completed, the final grade for the course (resulting from the combination of research paper and required reading above) will be (further) reduced proportionately, up to one full grade reduction (i.e. from A to B).

To bump up for Th.M.-level course:
- 600 extra pages of reading with annotated bibliography/notes
- 20-25 page paper (instead of 15-20)

- Grading scale is the one indicated in the Gordon-Conwell academic catalog guidelines:
  "Grade A is given for meeting with conspicuous excellence the demands which can fairly be made in relation to the requirements of the course. These demands would normally include unusual accuracy in fact, completeness in detail, perfection in form of work, independence of method, grasp of the subject as a whole and constructive imagination. Grade B is given for exceeding the minimum of satisfactory attainment and for meeting certain aspects of the course with excellence. Grade C is given for attaining satisfactory familiarity with the course and for demonstrating at least some ability to use this knowledge in a satisfactory manner. Grade D is a passing mark but indicates unsatisfactory control over the material. Grade F declares that the course has been failed."

- Class attendance may be taken into account, with one point per missed, unexcused absence being taken off of the final grade for the course. More than three unexcused absences may result in failure of the class.

- Plagiarism is considered a serious academic offense at GCTS. Please follow guidelines at [http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/wts/plagiarism.html](http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/wts/plagiarism.html).

- Extensions during term are given only by permission of instructor. If the instructor determines that the circumstances are extenuating (illness, death in family) an extension without penalty may be granted for a length of time equivalent to the time lost. Occasionally, in other circumstances, the instructor may grant an extension with penalty (one full grade per week of extension). If you need an extension beyond the final day for written work, you will need to request it from the Registrar in advance.

- **Internet/Game Usage:** Students are required to refrain from accessing the internet or playing computer/cell phone games, etc. at any point during class sessions, unless otherwise instructed by the professor. Surfing the web, checking email, and other internet-based activities are distracting to other students and to the professor, and
prevent the student from fully participating in the class sessions. This applies to auditors as well.

- **Intellectual Property / Privacy Rights:** To protect the professor’s intellectual property rights with regard to classroom content and to protect the privacy of the professor and other students, students are required to refrain from audio, photographic, and video recording of classes, as well as audio, video, photographic, and written publication (including internet posting and broadcasting) or live transmission of classroom proceedings. This applies to auditors as well.