

SYLLABUS

Historical Figures & Thoughts: John Calvin and *Institutes of the Christian Religion*

An introduction to his theology and piety

Prof. Franklin Ferreira, ThM

“Calvin is a cataract, a primeval forest, a demonic power, something directly down from Himalaya, absolutely Chinese, strange, mythological; I lack completely the means, the suction cups, even to assimilate this phenomenon, not to speak of presenting it adequately. What I receive is only a thin little stream and what I can then give out again is only a yet thinner extract of this little stream. I could gladly and profitably set myself down and spend all the rest of my life just with Calvin.”

(Karl Barth, *Revolutionary Theology in the Making: Barth-Thurneysen Correspondence 1914-1925*, Richmond: John Knox Press, 1964, p. 101)

1. Instructor Information: Franklin Ferreira. Seminário Martin Bucer, email: franklin.marilene@gmail.com. Office hours: tbd. Location: Martin Bucer Seminary Brasil; Time of class: tbd
2. Purpose of course: This course aims to offer the student an outline of the life of John Calvin (1509-1564) in his relationship with the political, social and religious context of his time, focusing on his hermeneutic, the main themes of *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (1559) and homiletic.
3. Course Description:
 - a. Understand John Calvin as man of the church in Geneva.
 - b. Examine in detail the main doctrines themes of *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (1559), seeking to critically understand how these doctrines adjust coherently to his thoughts.
 - c. Understand Calvin’s conception of crucial doctrines such as redemption, grace, bondage of the will, God’s glory reveled in sinners’ conversion and holy life, to assist student to deepen self-knowledge and spiritual experience.
 - d. Place Calvin’s theological comprehension in the broader context of the Protestant Reformation of the 16th Century.
 - e. Approach the pastoral sensitivity of the *Institutes*, and its connection with catechism, the commentaries and sermons produced by the French reformer.
 - f. Focus on the relationship between John Calvin and one of the main interpreters of the 20th Century, Karl Barth, one of the responsible for the resurgence of today’s Calvinists studies.
4. Course objectives:
 - a. Through reading McGraths’s biography of Calvin and the initial lecture, the student will be introduced to the life of John Calvin.
 - b. Through the reading of the *Institutes*, the student will develop a familiarity with the main themes of the theology of Calvin.
 - c. Through the lectures and discussion, the student will acquire knowledge of the historical context, theological impact, and pastoral application of Calvin’s theology.
 - d. Through the research paper, the student will explore a particular theme in Calvin’s theology and consider how that theme might be useful for contemporary life and ministry.
5. Readings: Selected and assigned readings include:
 - a. Assigned readings:

João Calvino, *A Instituição da Religião Cristã*. Edição integral (latina) de 1559. São Paulo: UNESP, 2007-09, 2 v.

John Calvin, *A Little Book on the Christian Life*. Sanford, FL: Reformation Trust, 2017.

Alister McGrath, *A vida de João Calvino*. São Paulo: Cultura Cristã, 2005.

b. Suggested readings:

Karl Barth, *The Theology of John Calvin*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995.

Ford Lewis Battles, *Analysis of the Institutes of Christian Religion by John Calvin*. Phillipsburg: P&R, 2001.

Joel R. Beeke, org., *Calvino para hoje*. São Paulo: Cultura Cristã, 2017.

André Biéler, *O pensamento econômico e social de João Calvino*. São Paulo: Cultura Cristã, 2012.

Jane Dempsey Douglass, *Mulheres, Liberdade e Calvino*. Manhumirim, MG: Didaquê, 1995.

Charles E. Edwards, ed., *Devocionais e orações de João Calvino*. São Paulo: Cultura Cristã, 2010.

Wulfert De Greef, *The Writings of John Calvin: An Introductory Guide*. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 2008.

Timothy George, *Teologia dos reformadores*. São Paulo: Vida Nova, 2017.

David Gibson, *Reading the Decree: Exegesis, Election and Christology in Calvin and Barth*. London/New York: T&T Clark, 2009.

F. Bruce Gordon, *Calvin*. New Haven: YUP, 2011.

F. Bruce Gordon, *John Calvin's 'Institutes of the Christian Religion': A Biography*. Princeton: PUP, 2016.

David W. Hall, *Calvino em praça pública*. São Paulo: Cultura Cristã, 2017.

David W. Hall e Matthew D. Burton, *Calvino e o comércio*. São Paulo: Cultura Cristã, 2017.

David W. Hall e Marvin Padgett, orgs., *Calvino e a cultura*. São Paulo: Cultura Cristã, 2017.

David W. Hall and Peter A. Lillback, *A Theological Guide to Calvin's Institutes: Essays and Analysis*. Phillipsburg: P&R, 2008.

Thea B. Van Halsema, *João Calvino era assim*. Recife: Clire, 2013.

Martin Ernst Hirzel and Martin Sallmann, eds., *John Calvin's Impact on Church and Society 1509-2009*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009.

Michael Horton, *Calvino e a vida cristã*. São Paulo: Cultura Cristã, 2017.

Anthony N. S. Lane, *John Calvin: Student of the Church Fathers*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999.

Carter Lindberg, *História da Reforma*. Rio de Janeiro: Thomas Nelson, 2017.

Scott M. Manetsch, *Calvin's Company of Pastors: Pastoral Care and the Emerging Reformed Church, 1536-1609*. New York: OUP, 2013.

Donald K. McKim, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to John Calvin*. New York: CUP, 2004.

Donald K. McKim, ed., *Calvin and the Bible*. New York: CUP, 2006.

William G. Naphy, *Calvin and the Consolidation of the Genevan Reformation*. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 2003.

Burk Parsons, ed., *João Calvino: amor à devoção, doutrina e glória de Deus*. São José dos Campos, SP: Fiel, 2010.

T.H.L. Parker, *Calvin: An introduction to His Thought*. Philadelphia: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1995.

T.H.L. Parker, *John Calvin – A Biography*. Philadelphia: Westminster/John Knox Press, 2006.

W. Stanford Reid, ed., *Calvino e sua influência no mundo ocidental*. São Paulo: Cultura Cristã, 2013.

Herman J. Selderhuis, *John Calvin: A Pilgrim's Life*. Downers Grove: IVP, 2009.

Herman J. Selderhuis, ed., *The Calvin Handbook*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009.

Henri Strohl, *O pensamento da reforma*. São Paulo: ASTE, 2004.

Marc Vial, *John Calvin: An Introduction to his Theological Thought*. Geneva: International Museum of the Reformation/Labor et Fides, 2009.

Ronald S. Wallace, *Calvino, Genebra e a Reforma*. São Paulo: Cultura Cristã, 2003.

François Wendel, *Calvin: Origins and Development of His Religious Thought*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1987.

6. Course outline:

Ideally, the *Institutes* should be read previously, but during the week of classes, to assist in its study in class. By the end of the week the student must submit an annotation of the *Institutes*, which reading of will be mandatory to finish the course.

Seminary 1: The Protestant Reformation of the 16th Century; the life and work of John Calvin; his hermeneutics principles

Seminary 2: *The Institutes* (v. 1 and 2)

Volume 1 The knowledge of God, the Creator

- The double knowledge of God
- Scripture
- Trinity
- Creation
- Providence

Volume 2: The knowledge of God, the redeemer
– the fall, the human sinfulness

Seminary 3: *The Institutes* (v. 2 and 3)

- The Law
- The New Testament and the Old Testament
- Christ Mediator: His Person (Prophet, Priest and King) His work (Atonement)

Volume 3: The way which we receive the grace of Christ, its benefits and effects

- Faith and Regeneration
- Repentance
- Christian Life
- Justification

Seminary 4: *The Institutes* (v. 3 and 4)

- Prayer
- Predestination
- Resurrection

Volume 4: The external means by which God invites us to join with Christ

- Church
- Sacraments
- Civil Government

Seminary 5: homiletic and sermons; piety and missions; Karl Barth as John Calvin's reader and interpreter

7. Course requirements:

- A. **Reading assignments** (see 6 above).
- B. **Book Report and Course paper** (see 9 below)
- C. **Seminar room request:** Switch-off cell phone, blackberry, etc. during seminar time.

8. **Policies: Academic Policies:** Students are expected to adhere to the Academic Policies of PRTS, as found at https://prts.edu/academics/academic-catalog-2/#Academic_Policies.

9. Course Assessment and Grading procedure

A. On time class attendance, and class participation: 10%

B. Reading assignments 10%: Reading assignments and due date at class time are listed in “7

Course Calendar.” A doctoral student will lead one session a sign-up sheet will be provided before class.

C. Book Report and Major Paper: 20% (book report) and 60% (major paper)

MDiv and MA students:

- a. Book report of ca. 500 words: A critical review of the following book:
Alister McGrath, *A vida de João Calvino*. São Paulo: Cultura Cristã, 2005.

The book report is due no later than June 28, 2019 at 12 noon, uploaded to Gennera. The book report will be graded in accordance to PRTS grading scale. *Failure to meet the due date and time of the course paper will result in a "F" grade.*

- b. Major paper: A major paper on Calvin's life and work. The course paper is due no later than June 28, 2019 at 12 noon, uploaded to Gennera. Course paper will be graded in accordance to PRTS grading scale. *Failure to meet the due date and time of the course paper will result in a "F" grade.*

Length: A 10 page, double space, font 12 Times New Roman. The paper should be properly footnoted, in accordance to *Turabian Style* most recent edition, include a bibliography, and make use of primary and secondary texts. Define a clear thesis statement, reason and ground for conclusion, demonstrate coherence etc. Optional: Make an appointment with the lecturer to discuss the paper topic.

ThM students

- c. Book report of ca. 1,700 words: A critical review of the following readings, linking the life and the devotion in the life of Calvin:
- i. Alister McGrath, *A vida de João Calvino*. São Paulo: Cultura Cristã, 2005, and
 - ii. John Calvin, *A Little Book on the Christian Life*. Sanford, FL: Reformation Trust, 2017.

The book report is due no later than June 28, 2019 at 12 noon, uploaded to Gennera. The book report will be graded in accordance to PRTS grading scale. *Failure to meet the due date and time of the course paper will result in a "F" grade.*

- d. Major paper: A major paper on Calvin's life and work. The course paper is due no later than June 28, 2019 at 12 noon, uploaded to Gennera. Course paper will be graded in accordance to PRTS grading scale. *Failure to meet the due date and time of the course paper will result in a "F" grade.*

Length: A 30-35 page, double space, font 12 Times New Roman. The paper should be properly footnoted, in accordance to *Turabian Style* most recent edition, include a bibliography, and make use of primary and secondary texts. Define a clear thesis statement, reason and ground for conclusion, demonstrate coherence etc. Optional: Make an appointment with the lecturer to discuss the paper topic.

PhD students

- e. Book report of ca. 2,500 words: A critical review of the following readings, linking the life and the devotion in the life of Calvin:
- i. Alister McGrath, *A vida de João Calvino*. São Paulo: Cultura Cristã, 2005, and
 - ii. John Calvin, *A Little Book on the Christian Life*. Sanford, FL: Reformation Trust, 2017.

The book report is due no later than June 28, 2019 at 12 noon, uploaded to Gennera. The book report will be graded in accordance to PRTS grading scale. *Failure to meet the due date and time of the course paper will result in a "F" grade.*

- f. Major paper: A major paper of *original research* on Calvin's life and work. The course paper is due June 28, 2019, uploaded to Gennera. Course paper will be graded in accordance to PRTS grading scale. *Failure to meet the due date and time of the course paper will result in a "F" grade.*

Length: A 30-35 page, double space, font 12 Times New Roman. The paper should be properly footnoted, in accordance to *Turabian Style* most recent edition, include a bibliography, and make use of primary and secondary texts. Define a clear thesis statement, reason and ground for conclusion, demonstrate coherence etc. Make an appointment with the lecturer to discuss the paper topic.

10. Requirements and Grading:

1. *Regular attendance and class participation (20%).*
2. *Reading & Book report (40%).*
3. *Paper (40%).*
4. *Grading scale (standard PRTS scale).*

11. Possible paper topics (according to the suggestions of Dr. Sean Michael Lucas)

The nature of Calvin's conversion: sudden or gradual?

Calvin's theological method (relations of reason and authority in theology, epistemology, mode of expression, definition of theology; structure and organization of theology).

Calvin's doctrine of Scripture and revelation.

Calvin's doctrine of (religious or civil) authority; did Calvin teach "two kingdoms" theory? If so, how?

Calvin's doctrine of God (existence, attributes, decrees, providence, Trinity)

Calvin's doctrine of creation (common grace).

Calvin's theological anthropology (creation, image, fall)

Calvin's Christology (two natures, *communication idiomatum*, *extra Calvinisticum*)

Calvin's soteriology (propitiation, expiation, justification, predestination). What did he teach on justification? What are the relations between his doctrine and those of the church fathers?

Medieval theologians? Lutherans? What was his view of the atonement (intent, extent)?

Calvin's contrast between Law and Gospel. How did it affect his hermeneutic, his doctrines of justification and sanctification?

Calvin on union with Christ. Function in his theology? Relations to the other parts of his theology?

Calvin's doctrine of the covenant (covenant of works, covenant of grace; *pactum salutis*)

Calvin's doctrine of the third use of the law and sanctification.

Calvin's ecclesiology (marks and nature of the church, visible/invisible distinction, offices, function, authority)

Calvin on the means of grace (baptism, Lord's Supper). Reformation and Post-Reformation discussions of Lord's Supper vis-à-vis Calvin; infant baptism; arguments with Anabaptists.

Calvin and natural law.

Calvin's ethics.

Calvin and his understanding of matrimony

Calvin's theology of prayer

The influence of John Calvin in the arise of modern democracies and the capitalist economy.

Calvin's eschatology. Relate to his theology of the cross.

How did Karl Barth read John Calvin?