

"Reformed Theology"

Certification Course for Christian Educators

Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary,

On site, at Montreat, April 4-6, 2019

including pre- and post-work: March 25-May 15

- Cynthia L. Rigby, Austin Seminary, teaching -

Course Aim: To enable Christian educators better to reflect theologically.

Participants in this class will consider the relevance of theological doctrine to our lives of faith, making new discoveries about why and how theology *matters*. While the course serves primarily as an opportunity for Christian educators to develop their own skills as theologians, substantial attention will also be given (particularly in the final project) to considering how theological insights can best be communicated to others in the daily work of Christian educators.

Instructor: Cynthia L. Rigby, Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary, 100 E. 27th Street, Austin, TX 78705. (512) 404-4852. crigby@austinseminary.edu

Format: This is a blended course, meaning that some of the work will be done online before and after the on site sessions at Montreat, April 4-6. Online work will begin March 25 and will take approximately 8 hours (counting course reading) between March 25 and April 4. It will include watching a couple of videos and contributing to discussion boards about the themes in course readings. Sessions at Montreat on April 4, 5, and 6 will be intensive and include lectures, workshops, and discussions. Students must attend from beginning to end and be present at every session (please plan travel accordingly). A final project, which will be submitted in stages online, will be developed after the Montreat sessions (with a break for Easter, but completed by May 15). All online work will be asynchronistic, meaning that you can do it at your leisure and don't have to log in at any particular time to watch lectures or be part of the discussions.

Required Texts (two, plus some articles that will be posted online):

(1) John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (either the John T. McNeil translation or the Beveridge translation—just make sure you get the unabridged edition. The McNeil edition is more expensive and in two volumes, but it is the one used most commonly by Presbyterian ministers. Look on Amazon and you can see that you can buy these used or also for kindles—the Beveridge edition only costs \$.99 on kindle! Also consider looking in your church library for a used copy.)

(2) Cynthia L. Rigby, *Holding Faith*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2018.

–Assignments–

Between March 25th and March 29th: Session I (online)

(watch video posted online and engage on discussion board)

- Introductions & Overview
- Lecture #1: **What is Theology and Why Does it Matter?**
- Required Reading: *Holding Faith*, Introduction

- Assignment: memorize Calvin's statement of faith:

"Faith is the firm and certain knowledge of God's benevolence toward us, founded upon the truth of the freely-given promise in Christ, both revealed to our minds and sealed upon our hearts through the Holy Spirit." – *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, III.2.7.

Between March 29th and April 3rd: Session II (online)

- *Optional: Read & meditate on John 1:1-14*
- Required Reading: *Holding Faith*, ch. 1; excerpts from Calvin (TBA)
- Workshop #1: What Do I Believe? (Write Your Statement of Faith)
- Lecture #2: **Reading The Bible As The Word of God**

April 4th (on site @ Montreat!): Session III (morning and afternoon)

- *Optional: Read & Meditate on Ephesians 1:3-14*
- Required Reading: *Holding Faith*, chs. 3 & 4; excerpts from Calvin (TBA)
- Workshop #2: Incarnation and the Character of God
- Lecture #3: **Incarnation & Trinity**

April 4th (on site @ Montreat!): Session IV (evening)

- *Optional: Read & meditate on Genesis 1, Psalm 139, Proverbs 8*
- Required Reading: *Holding Faith*, ch. 5; excerpts from Calvin (TBA)
- Workshop #3: Teaching the Trinity
- Lecture #4: **Creation**
- Evening "Study Hall" (2 hours): prepare for workshop #4
- Draw from materials/readings Cindy distributes in preparation for debate
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April 5th (on site @ Montreat!): Session V (morning)

- *Optional: Read & meditate on Psalm 8, Romans 1:18ff*
- Workshop #4: Debate: Can We Call God 'Mother'?
- Lecture #5: **Humanity**

April 5th (on site @ Montreat!): Session VI (afternoon)

- *Optional: Read & meditate on Psalm 22, Psalm 44, and Psalm 51.*
- Required Reading: *Holding Faith*, ch. 6; excerpts from Calvin (TBA)
- Workshop #5: Valuing Life
- Lecture #6: **Sin, the Fall, and Theodicy**
- Workshop #6 (“Lament As Prayer”)

April 5th (on site @ Montreat!): Session VII (evening)

- *Optional: Read & meditate on Hebrews 10: 1-25*
- Required Reading: *Holding Faith*, ch. 6; excerpts from Calvin (TBA)
- Lecture #7: **Atonement**
- Workshop #7: Jesus Died for Me? Teaching the Meaning of the Cross
- Evening “Study Hall” (2 hours): work on final project proposal.

April 6th (on site @ Montreat!): Session VIII (morning)

- *Optional: Read & meditate on I Corinthians 11, John 15 & 17*
- Required Reading: *Holding Faith*, chs. 7 & 8; excerpts from Calvin (TBA)
- Lecture #8: **Spirit, Church, and Christian Life**
- Workshop #8: Teaching Love

April 6th (on site @ Montreat!): Session IX (afternoon)

- Lecture #9: **Christian Hope & Our Vocation**
- Required Reading: *Holding Faith*, chs. 9 & 10; excerpts from Calvin (TBA)
- Workshop #9: Sharing Chosen Topics with Class
- Wrap-Up by 5 pm (students are required to stay until 5)

Your final project must be postmarked by_____. Please mail it to Dr. Cynthia Rigby, Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary, 100 E. 27th Street, Austin, TX 78705. Thanks!!