

“The mission of Tyndale Seminary is to provide Christ-centred graduate theological education for leaders in the church and society whose lives are marked by intellectual maturity, spiritual vigour and moral integrity, and whose witness will faithfully engage culture with the Gospel.”

Course	THEOLOGY OF JOHN CALVIN (SEMINARY) THEO 0636 1S MAJOR THEOLOGICALS – JOHN CALVIN (UNDERGRADUATE STUDIES) BSTH 3693 1S
Date and Time	SEPTEMBER 13 – DECEMBER 6, 2023 WEDNESDAYS 6:45 – 9:35 PM SYNCHRONOUS ONLINE
Instructor	VICTOR SHEPHERD, ThD Telephone: 905 821 0587 Email: vshepherd@tyndale.ca or victor.shepherd@sympatico.ca
Class Information	The classes will be livestreamed on Wednesdays at 6:45 – 9:35 PM. Office hours: arranged by appointment.
Course Material	Access course material at classes.tyndale.ca or other services at Tyndale One . Course emails will be sent to your @MyTyndale.ca e-mail account only.

Tyndale Undergraduate students may enroll in this course under the following course code:

BSTH 3693

NOTE: This course is joint-listed between Undergraduate Studies and Seminary. It is a graduate level course and operates on the Seminary schedule related to reading days, start and end of semester, exam schedule and according to the Seminary Academic Calendar.

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

Examines closely Calvin’s Institutes of the Christian Religion. Topics such as the knowledge of God, Trinity, Scriptures, providence, the three-fold office of Christ, justification, faith sanctification, predestination, church, sacraments and the Christian life are addressed.

II. LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the end of the course, students will be able to:

1. probe in detail the doctrines that are commonly recognized as major "building blocks" of the Christian faith;
2. relate Calvin's expositions of major doctrines to each other and apprehend how their relationship illustrates the unity and coherence of Calvin's thought;
3. situate Calvin's theological understanding in the history of the Church, in the sixteenth century Reformation, and in Reformed developments subsequent to the Reformation;
4. grasp the variegated background (social, political, ecclesiastical) of Calvin in particular and the Reformation in general;
5. assess critically the adequacy and consistency of Calvin's theological expression;
6. perceive the pastoral sensitivity of the *Institutes*;
7. examine Calvin as pastor, churchman and civic official, all with a view to informing the student's own life, ministry and witness.

For consideration:

"...that the poor flocks may not be destitute of pastors....inasmuch as the schools contain the seeds of the ministry, there is much need to keep them pure and thoroughly free from ill weeds." Calvin, Letter to the King of England [Edward VI] (January 1551)

III. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A. REQUIRED READING

Calvin, John. *Institutes of the Christian Religion (1559)*. Ed. by John T. McNeill. Trans. by Ford Lewis Battles. Library of Christian Classics. Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1960. ISBN-13: 9780664239114 (Please note that this specific translation will be referenced in class, so it is imperative that students obtain this version for the course.)

Calvin, John. and Jacopo Sadoleto. [*A Reformation Debate: Sadoleto's Letter to the Genevans and Calvin's Reply*](#). Ed. by John C. Olin. New York: Fordham University Press, 1966/2000.

B. SUPPLEMENTARY / RECOMMENDED READING AND TOOLS

Wendel, Francois. *Calvin: The Origins and Development of his Religious Thought*. Scholar's Choice, 2015. (Originally published by New York: Harper & Row, 1963.)

Tyndale recommends www.stepbible.org – a free and reputable online resource developed by Tyndale House (Cambridge, England) – for word searches of original-language texts, as well as for topical searches, interlinear texts, dictionaries, etc. Refer to the library for other [online resources for Biblical Studies](#).

C. INTERACTIVE LIVESTREAM AND/OR HYBRID COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- Livestream attendance for the entire duration of the class at announced times
- Headphones (preferred), built-in microphone, and web-camera
- Well-lit and quiet room
- Stable high-speed internet connection, preferably using an Ethernet cable over Wi-Fi
- Full name displayed on Zoom and Microsoft Teams for attendance purposes*
- A commitment to having the camera on to foster community building*

*exceptions with permission from professor

D. GUIDELINES FOR INTERACTIONS

Tyndale University prides itself in being a trans-denominational community. We anticipate our students to have varied viewpoints which will enrich the discussions in our learning community. Therefore, we ask our students to be charitable and respectful in their interactions with each other, and to remain focused on the topic of discussion, out of respect to others who have committed to being a part of this learning community. Please refer to “Guidelines for Interactions” on your course resource page at classes.tyndale.ca.

E. ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

1. Essay: (50% of final grade), due on the same day as the examination.

A **theologically** critical exposition of and commentary upon *Sadoletto's Letter to the Genevans* and *Calvin's Reply to Sadoletto*. (2500 – 3000 words, or 7 – 8.5 pages)

2. Examination (50% of the final grade; the date to be confirmed by the Office of the Registrar)

F. EQUITY OF ACCESS

Students with permanent or temporary disabilities who need academic accommodations must [contact](#) the [Accessibility Services](#) at the [Centre for Academic Excellence](#) to [register](#) and discuss their specific needs. *New students* must self-identify and register with the Accessibility Office at the beginning of the semester or as early as possible to access appropriate services. Current students must renew their plans as early as possible to have active accommodations in place.

G. SUMMARY OF ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Evaluation is based upon the completion of the following assignments:

Essay	50 %
Examination	50 %
Total Grade	100 %

H. GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR THE SUBMISSION OF WRITTEN WORK

For proper citation style, consult the [tip sheet, “Documenting Chicago Style”](#) (Tyndale e-resource) or the full edition of the [Chicago Manual of Style Online](#), especially ch. 14. For citing scripture texts, refer to sections 10.44 to 10.48 and 14.238 to 14.241 from the *Chicago Manual of Style* or reference the [tip sheet, “How to Cite Sources in Theology”](#).

Academic Integrity

Integrity in academic work is required of all our students. Academic dishonesty is any breach of this integrity, and includes such practices as cheating (the use of unauthorized material on tests and examinations), submitting the same work for different classes without permission of the instructors; using false information (including false references to secondary sources) in an assignment; improper or unacknowledged collaboration with other students, and plagiarism (including improper use of artificial intelligence programs). Tyndale University takes seriously its responsibility to uphold academic integrity, and to penalize academic dishonesty.

Students are encouraged to consult [Writing Services](#). Citation and other [tip sheets](#).

Students should also consult the current [Academic Calendar](#) for academic policies on Academic Honesty, Gender Inclusive Language in Written Assignments, Late Papers and Extensions, Return of Assignments, and Grading System.

Research Ethics

All course-based assignments involving human participants requires ethical review and may require approval by the [Tyndale Research Ethics Board \(REB\)](#). Check with the Seminary Dean’s Office (aa@tyndale.ca) before proceeding.

I. COURSE EVALUATION

Tyndale Seminary values quality in the courses it offers its students. End-of-course evaluations provide valuable student feedback and are one of the ways that Tyndale Seminary works towards maintaining and improving the quality of courses and the student’s learning

experience. Student involvement in this process is critical to enhance the general quality of teaching and learning.

Before the end of the course, students will receive a MyTyndale email with a link to the online course evaluation. The link can also be found in the left column on the course page. The evaluation period is 2 weeks; after the evaluation period has ended, it cannot be reopened.

Course Evaluation results will not be disclosed to the instructor before final grades in the course have been submitted and processed. Student names will be kept confidential, and the instructor will only see the aggregated results of the class.

IV. COURSE SCHEDULE, CONTENT AND REQUIRED READINGS

Sep 13	Introductions, Requirements; Calvin Biography	
Sep 20	Knowledge of God	Book I: chapters 1-5
Sep 27	Scripture	I: 6,7,9,10
Oct 4	Trinity	I: 13
Oct 11	Law and Gospel	II: 7,9-11
Oct 18	The Mediator and His Work	II: 6,12,13,15,16
Oct 25	<i>No Class: Reading Week</i>	
Nov 1	The Holy Spirit and Faith	III: 1,2
Nov 8	Justification	III: 11,14
Nov 15	Sanctification	III:3
Nov 22	Predestination	III: 21,22 (omit sections 6-9), 23,24
Nov 29	Church and Ministry	IV: 1,8
Dec 6	Lord's Supper	IV: 17: sections 1-10, 18, 26, 31-32
Dec 13	Examination (date to be confirmed by the Office of the Registrar)	

V. INTRODUCTORY READING LIST

The *Institutes of the Christian Religion* comprise only 6.8% of Calvin's written output. (His commentaries comprise 65%.) Calvin was first a preacher and pastor, then an exegete [the best of the Reformation], then a theologian, and finally a civic leader and city administrator. The *Institutes*, however, remains his single largest work and that by which he is commonly identified. He wrote it (i) as a primer for students in theology (in other words, an introductory text), (ii) to reassure the French king that Protestants were not seditious. Many editions of the *Institutes* have appeared in English. The three most recent are the translations of

Ford Lewis Battles (1960) [the text we are using in class]

John Allen (1949)

Henry Beveridge (1854).

The Latin and French texts of Calvin are still available. Calvin's *Inst.* has been translated into dozens of modern languages.

The best overview of the *Inst.* and the surest guide through its 2000 pages is T.H.L. Parker, *Calvin: An Introduction to his Thought*.

Biographies of Calvin are legion. The best one (in my opinion) is T.H.L. Parker, *John Calvin: A Biography*.

The single most comprehensive and most accurate explication of Calvin is F. Wendel, *Calvin: Origins and Development of His Religious Thought*.

While there is no end to the books that discuss the nature and significance of Calvin's legacy, there are few (if any) better than J.T. McNeill, *The History and Character of Calvinism*.

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Few theologians have merited better press than Calvin, and few have received worse. A useful book correcting the misapprehension is R. Stauffer, *The Humanness of John Calvin*.

VI. SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

<https://calvin.edu/centers-institutes/meeter-center/files/resources-page/WorksbyandAboutJohnCalvin.pdf>

(Tyndale Library supports this course with [e-journals](#), [e-books](#), and the [mail delivery of books](#) and circulating materials. See the [Library FAQ page](#).)