

"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."

Semester, Year	FALL, 2025
Course Title	THEOLOGY OF JOHN CALVIN
Course Code	THEO 0636 1S
Date Time	From September 10, 2025 to December 10, 2025 WEDNESDAYS 6:45 – 9:35 PM
Delivery Format	SYNCHRONOUS ONLINE
Class information	This course will meet online on Wednesdays at 6:45 – 9:35 PM.
Instructor Contact Information	VICTOR SHEPHERD, ThD Telephone: 905 821 0587 Email: vshepherd@tyndale.ca or victor.shepherd@sympatico.ca
Office Hours	By appointment only.
Course Materials	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.

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.

Prerequisite: THEO 0531 Systematic Theology

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). Trans. by Henry Beveridge

Weekly readings are posted on the Moodle course page. (Students need not purchase the printed text.) [While the Ford Lewis Battles translation of the *Institutes* is customarily used in this course, it is now hugely expensive. For this reason the Beveridge translation is used, and the weekly readings are supplied.]

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 [STEPBible](#) – 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. ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Any **TWO** of the following three items:

1. **Essay: (50% of final grade), due on the same day as the examination.** An exposition of any major topic in the course, or an essay on a related topic approved by the instructor.
2. **A theologically critical exposition of and commentary upon *Sadoleto's Letter to the Genevans and Calvin's Reply to Sadoleto*.** (2500 – 3000 words, or 7 – 8.5 pages) (50% of final grade.) 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
3. **Take-Home Examination** (50% of the final grade; the date to be confirmed by the Office of the Registrar)

D. SUMMARY OF ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Evaluation is based upon the completion of the following assignments:

Essay	50 %
Examination or Essay	50 %
Total Grade	100 %

IV. COURSE SCHEDULE, CONTENT AND REQUIRED READINGS

Sep 10	Introductions, Requirements; Calvin Biography	
Sep 17	Knowledge of God	Book I: chapters 1-5
Sep 24	Scripture	I: 6,7,9,10
Oct 1	Trinity	I: 13
Oct 8	Law and Gospel	II: 7,9-11
Oct 15	The Mediator and His Work	II: 6,12,13,15,16
Oct 22	<i>No Class: Reading Week</i>	
Oct 29	The Holy Spirit and Faith	III: 1,2
Nov 5	Justification	III: 11,14
Nov 12	Sanctification	III:3
Nov 19	Predestination	III: 21,22 (omit sections 6-9), 23,24
Nov 26	Church and Ministry	IV: 1,8
Dec 3	Lord's Supper	IV: 17: sections 1-10, 18, 26, 31-32

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)

John Allen (1949)

Henry Beveridge (1854). [the text we are using in class]

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>

VI. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR ALL COURSES

A. 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.

B. REQUIREMENTS FOR LIVESTREAM INTERACTION (FOR SYNCHRONOUS COURSE ONLY)

- 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*

C. 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.

D. GUIDELINES FOR THE SUBMISSION OF WRITTEN WORK

Grading Rubric

Please consult the rubric provided for each assignment on your course resource page at classes.tyndale.ca.

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. Please refer to the [Academic Integrity website](#) for further details.

For proper citation style, consult [Citation Guides](#) for different styles. Students are encouraged to consult [Writing Services](#).

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.

Turnitin Text-Matching Software

Tyndale has a subscription to Turnitin, a text-matching software that ensures the originality of academic writing and verifies the proper citation of all sources. The instructor for this course will use Turnitin for assignments submitted through your course resource page at [classes.tyndale.ca](#). Upon submission, you will receive a summary that includes your submitted files along with a similarity report generated by Turnitin. Please be aware that Turnitin can also detect AI-generated content from tools like Grammarly, so students should be mindful of when using such software. It's advisable to confirm with your instructor before using any AI tools into your assignments. Below are some useful resources:

- [Student](#) Guides for Turnitin via [classes.tyndale.ca](#) course resource page
- Interpreting Similarity ([Guide](#), [Video](#), [Spectrum](#))

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 (aau@tyndale.ca) before proceeding.

Late Papers and Extensions Policy

All papers and course assignments must be submitted by the due dates indicated in the course syllabus. Unless the instructor already has a policy on grading late papers in the course syllabus, grades for papers submitted late without an approved extension will be lowered at the rate of two-thirds of a grade per week or part thereof (e.g., from "A+" to "A-," from "B" to "C+"). Please note that some programs, such as cohort-based or intensive courses, may follow a different policy due to the nature of the program.

Faculty may not grant an extension beyond the last day of exams for the semester. Requests for extensions beyond this date must be addressed in writing to the Registrar by filling out the [Extension Request Form](#). The application will be considered only in cases such as a death in the family, medical emergency, hospitalization of oneself or immediate family member or

prolonged illness requiring treatment by a physician. Factors such as assignments for other courses, holidays, and technology-related difficulties are insufficient grounds for requesting an extension.

A temporary grade of incomplete (“I”) may be granted by the Registrar. Once an extension is granted, it is the student’s responsibility to contact the instructor and make satisfactory arrangements to complete the outstanding work. A grade of “F” will be recorded for students who do not complete the outstanding work by the deadline.

E. 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.

F. LIBRARY RESOURCES

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

G. GRADING SYSTEM & SCALE

For each course’s grading rubric, please refer to your course syllabus or classes.tyndale.ca. For general grading guidelines, refer to Seminary [Grading System & Scale](#).