

THE THEOLOGY OF JONATHAN EDWARDS
(Religion 320)
Fall 2004
West 115

Gerald R. McDermott
West 305
X2375; 387-3857
Ofc Hrs: 9:00-10:00 MWF or by appt.

"Edwards was extraordinary. By many estimates, he was the most acute early American philosopher and the most brilliant of all American theologians." (George Marsden)

The **GOAL** of this course is to explore the religious thought of Jonathan Edwards (1703-58), widely regarded as the greatest theologian this continent has produced. An index of his stature is the Yale University Press critical edition of his collected works, which will number 27 volumes, 500-800 pages each. (And that was half of what he wrote!)

The course will use several **STRATEGIES**. We will read both primary and secondary sources—both Edwards's writings and analyses of those writings by scholars of the last century. We will follow Edwards's life and historical context while we read Edwards texts. Each student will make a presentation, seminar-style, of a major Edwards work to the class. Finally, each student will write a paper analyzing a treatise (or collection of sermons) by Edwards that treats a significant theological problem, and reflect upon its implications for theological discussion today. With approval by the instructor, the paper may instead research a particular problem or issue related to Edwards's work.

REQUIRED TEXTS

George Marsden, Jonathan Edwards: A Life (Yale University Press, 2003).
John E. Smith, Harry S. Stout, Kenneth P. Minkema, eds., A Jonathan Edwards Reader (Yale University Press, 1995) - "JER"

RECOMMENDED TEXTS

Wilson Kimnach, Kenneth Minkema & Douglas Sweeney, The Sermons of Jonathan Edwards: A Reader (Yale University Press, 1999)
Gerald R. McDermott, One Holy and Happy Society: The Public Theology of Jonathan Edwards (Penn State Press, 1992)
Gerald R. McDermott, Jonathan Edwards Confronts the Gods: Christian Theology, Enlightenment Religion, and Non-Christian Faiths (Oxford University Press, 2000)

BOOK REVIEW

Each student will submit a 5-10 page book review by the end of the sixth week of class of one of the following texts. Each review should
a) summarize the argument in each chapter (or major section), and
b) spend 2-3 pages critically analyzing the book as a whole.

Wilson Kimnach, Kenneth Minkema, and Douglas Sweeney, The Sermons of Jonathan Edwards: A Reader (Yale University Press, 1999)
Sang Hyun Lee and Allen Guelzo, eds., Edwards in Our Time: Jonathan Edwards and the Shaping of American Religion (Eerdmans, 1999)

- Stephen Stein, ed., Jonathan Edwards's Writings: Text, Context, Interpretation (Indiana University Press, 1996)
- Gerald R. McDermott, Seeing God: Jonathan Edwards and Spiritual Discernment (Regent College Publishing, 2000)
- Gerald R. McDermott, One Holy and Happy Society: The Public Theology of Jonathan Edwards (Penn State Press, 1992)
- Gerald R. McDermott, Jonathan Edwards Confronts the Gods: Christian Theology, Enlightenment Religion, and Non-Christian Faiths (Oxford University Press, 2000)
- Michael McClymond, Encounters with God: An Approach to the Theology of Jonathan Edwards (Oxford University Press, 1998).
- Robert Jenson, America's Theologian: A Recommendation of Jonathan Edwards (Oxford, 1988)
- Sang Hyun Lee, The Philosophical Theology of Jonathan Edwards (Princeton University Press, 2000)
- Perry Miller, Jonathan Edwards (1949; recently republished)

GRADES

Your final grade will be determined by your class presentation(s) (10%), book review (20%), final paper (40%), final exam (20%) and class participation (10%).

Grades are reduced for late papers, and late submission of preliminary stages of paper.

Each student will be responsible for a brief oral report (5-10 minutes) on the readings for a particular day. This report (typed at 2-2.5 pages) should summarize the main points of the reading and briefly discuss why it is important.

The Roanoke College policy of **academic integrity** will be enforced in this course.

SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS AND READINGS

- Sept 2 - Introduction to the course
- 7 - Introduction to Edwards's life and thought. Marsden, chaps. 1-5.
- 9 - Beauty, conversion and piety: "Diary," "Resolutions," and "Personal Narrative"
JER, 266-95
- 14 - Revival: A Faithful Narrative of the Surprising Work of God.
Marsden, chaps. 6-9
JER, 57-88
- 16 - Revival: Marsden, chaps. 10-14
- 21 - Preaching: "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God"
JER, 89-104
Kimnach, "Jonathan Edwards's Pursuit of Reality" (on reserve)
- 23 - Preaching: "A Divine and Supernatural Light"

JER, 105-23
Marsden, chaps. 15-17

- 28 - Salvation: "God Glorified in the Work of Redemption"
"He That Believeth Shall Be Saved"
"The Excellency of Christ"
[these sermons can be downloaded from the Internet
<http://members.aol.com/jonathanedw/Edwards.html>
They are also in The Sermons of Jonathan Edwards: A Reader]
- 30 - Spiritual discernment: The Religious Affections
JER, 137-71
- Oct. 5 - Spiritual discernment: The Religious Affections
The second positive sign: attraction to God and his ways for
their own sake (Internet copy)
****statement of topic/text plus preliminary bibliography due
(including sources consulted and to be consulted)**
- 7 - Spiritual discernment: The Religious Affections
The third positive sign: seeing the beauty of holiness
(Internet copy)
- 12 - Dissent, War, Brainerd, Sacraments
Marsden, chaps 18-21
- 14 - Communion Crisis and Exile to Stockbridge
Marsden, chaps 22-23
- 16 - **BOOK REVIEW DUE**
- FALL BREAK
- 26 - God's sovereignty and human freedom: Freedom of the Will
JER, 192-222
Marsden, chap 26
****thesis of paper plus 1-page outline of argument**
- 28 - Human nature: Original Sin
JER, 223-43
Marsden, chap 27
- Nov 2 - Typology: "Beauty of the World" and Images of Divine Things
JER, 1-8, 14-21
JECG, chap 6
****2-page outline of paper**
- 4 - The beauty of ethics: The Nature of True Virtue
JER, 244-65
Marsden, chap 28
- 9 - The beauty of ethics: The Nature of True Virtue
JER, 244-65
****3-page outline of paper**
- 11 - War
Marsden, chaps 24 & 25

- Society and the kingdom of God: national covenant
Special report: McDermott, One Holy and Happy Society, ch. 1
- 16 - Society and the kingdom of God: magistrates and citizens
OHHS, chaps 4-5
****final outline of paper**
- 18 - History: History of the Work of Redemption
JER, 124-36
JECG, chap. 5
- 23 - NO CLASS
Marsden, chaps 29-30
- 30 - The End for Which God Created the World
Internet
Marsden, chap 28
- Dec 2 - Christianity and the religions: salvation of the heathen
Special report: McDermott, Jonathan Edwards Confronts the Gods, ch 7
****first draft of paper**
- 7 - Christianity and the religions: Islam, China and the American Indians
Special report: McDermott, Jonathan Edwards Confronts the Gods, chaps. 9, 11 & 12
- 9 - Edwards in Retrospect
****paper due**
- 15 - (Wednesday) FINAL EXAM 8:30 AM

Select Bibliography

- Joseph Conforti, JE, Religious Tradition, and American Culture (Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1995)
- Jerald Brauer, "Revivalism Revisited," Journal of Religion 77 (April 1997), 268-77.
- Ava Chamberlain, "The Immaculate Ovum: JE & the Construction of the Female Body," William & Mary Quarterly LVII (April 2000), 289-322.
- Roland Delattre, Beauty and Sensibility in the Thought of JE (Yale UP, 1968).
- Allen Guelzo, Edwards on the Will: A Century of American Theological Debate (Wesleyan Univ. Press, 1989).
- Nathan O. Hatch and Harry S. Stout, eds., JE and the American Experience (Oxford, 1986).
- Paul Helm, Treatise on Grace and Other Posthumously Published Writings (1971)
- James Hoopes, "JE's Religious Psychology," Journal of American History 69 (March 1983), 849-65.
- Frank Lambert, Inventing the Great Awakening (1999).
- Perry Miller, The New England Mind: From Colony to Province (1953).
- Kenneth Minkema, "Old Age and Religion in the Life and Writings of JE," typescript.
- Kenneth Minkema, "JE on Slavery and the Slave Trade," William &

- Mary Quarterly LIV (Oct. 1997), 823-34.
- John Saillant, "Lemuel Haynes and the Revolutionary Origins of Black Theology, 1776-1801," Religion & American Culture 2 (Winter 1992), 79-102.
- William Scheick, Critical Essays on JE (1980).
- John E. Smith, "JE and the Great Awakening, " in Doctrine and Experience, ed. Vincent Potter (1988), 7-21.
- , "JE: Practice and Piety in the American Character," Journal of Religion 54 (April 1974), 166-80.
- Harry S. Stout, The New England Soul: Preaching and Religious Culture in Colonial New England (1986).
- , "Preface to Sermons and Discourses, 1739-1742," typescript.
- Patricia Tracy, JE, Pastor: Religion & Society in 18th-Century Northampton (1980).
- Avihu Zakai, "The Conversion of JE," Journal of Presbyterian History 76 (Summer 1998), 127-38.