

# Davenant Hall

Fall 2019

## John Davenant's On the Death of Christ

Dr. Michael J. Lynch, Instructor

### Course Description

This course will examine John Davenant's most controversial treatise: *De Morte Christi* or *On the Death of Christ*, which offers perhaps the strongest and most nuanced Reformed alternative to a strict "limited atonement" understanding of Christ's death and the application of its benefits. Through a careful read of this text along with an introduction to its historical and theological context, students will become intimately acquainted with early modern English hypothetical universalism and the breadth of the Reformed tradition on this crucial issue.

### Course Objectives

Objectives for this course include: (1) to gain a greater familiarity with the early modern Reformed tradition; (2) to augment one's ability to appreciate and evaluate early modern scholasticism; (3) to increase theological knowledge; (4) to master the biblical, theological, and pastoral motivations of English hypothetical universalism.

### Course Requirements

1. Weekly readings (due before our meeting each week)
2. Weekly interaction with fellow participants and the instructor

### Course Texts (online links provided)

USSHER. Ussher, James. *The Judgement Of the Late Arch-Bishop of Armagh, And Primate of Ireland, 1. Of the Extent of Christs death, and satisfaction, &c. [...]*, edited by Nicholas Bernard. London: John Crook, 1657. Reprinted [here](#).

Davenant, John. *Dissertationes Duae: Prima de Morte Christi, Quatenus ad omnes extendatur, Quatenus ad solos Electos restringatur. Altera de Praedestinatione &*

*Reprobatione. [...] Quibus subnectitur ejusdem D. Davenantii Sententia de Gallicana controversia.* Cambridge: Roger Daniels, 1650. Found [here](#).

**DMC.** In translation: “A Dissertation on the Death of Christ, as to Its Extent and Special Benefits: Containing a Short History of Pelagianism, and Shewing the Agreement of the Doctrines of the Church of England on General Redemption, Election, and Predestination, with the Primitive Fathers of the Christian Church, and above All, with the Holy Scriptures.” In *An Exposition of the Epistle of St. Paul to the Colossians*, 2:309–558. Found [here](#).

**GALLIC.** In translation: “On the Controversy among the French Divines of the Reformed Church, concerning the Gracious and Saving Will of God towards Sinful Men,” in *An Exposition of the Epistle of St. Paul to the Colossians*, 2:559–69. Found [here](#).

## Course Schedule

Meeting 1: Introductions; Introduction to Davenant; Introduction to the early modern debates on the extent of the atonement; reading strategies.

Meeting 2: Read **USSHER** (pgs. 553–71); Discuss Lutheran, Remonstrant and Reformed discussions previous to Davenant.

Meeting 3: Read **DMC** (318–39); Discuss the patristic and medieval roots of HU. Discuss interpretative debates surrounding the history of the question.

Meeting 4: Read **DMC** (340–65); Discuss Davenant’s first thesis (universal remedy).

Meeting 5: Read **DMC** (366–400); Discuss Davenant’s defense of the first thesis.

Meeting 6: Read **DMC** (401–39); Discuss Davenant’s second thesis (ordained sufficiency).

Meeting 7: Read **DMC** (440–72); Discuss Davenant’s third thesis (limited application).

Meeting 8: Read **DMC** (473–512); Discuss Davenant’s fourth thesis (limited means of application).

Meeting 9: Read **DMC** (513–58); Discuss Davenant’s fifth thesis (Christ died for the elect alone).

Meeting 10: Read **GALLIC** (561–69); Discuss Davenant’s response to John Cameron’s theology; Concluding remarks.