**Predestination and Reprobation in Early Modern Theology**

Dr. Michael J. Lynch, Instructor

**Course Description**

Are some elected to eternal punishment? Or is damnation always a matter of human, not divine, choice? Is hell locked from the inside or the outside? Such questions have made divine predestination and reprobation one of the most contentious points of Christian belief since the early medieval Augustinian and Pelagian debates. This doctrine and the interpretation of its use in Scripture, especially by the Apostle Paul, reached something of zenith in the early modern period when, just after the Reformation, both Protestants and Roman Catholics attacked their own theologians as well as those of the other part of Western Christendom.

This class will be an introduction to these debates, observing how medieval predestinarianism was both embraced and debated in the early modern period. To that end, special attention will be given to the two great early modern controversies regarding predestination: Congregatio de Auxiliis and the Synod of Dordt. Because of the nature of early modern predestinarian debates, we will also inevitably touch on questions of free choice, theodicy, grace, and human nature.

**Course Format**

The format of the course will be predominantly one of guided discussion. The instructor will often be doing most of the talking, but generally to illuminate and draw out themes from the text for discussion, rather than in straight-up lectures. Thus, students will be expected to come having read and engaged with the text selection for the week, and with thoughts prepared to contribute.

Classes will meet via Zoom for two and a half hours each week and will be recorded for later viewing by students who cannot participate. Additional student participation and instructor interaction can take place on a private discussion board.

**Course Objectives**

Objectives for this course include: (1) to grasp the historical background to early modern debates on predestination and reprobation (2) to sketch the theological contours and development of these doctrines from the medieval to post-reformation scholasticism (3) to focus on the scholastic exposition of these doctrines (4) to better understand how Protestants and Roman Catholics interpreted each other (5) to summarize the Congregatio de Auxiliis and Synod of Dordt (6) to remark on the various pastoral and moral concerns related to the doctrines of predestination and reprobation.

**Course Requirements**

1. Weekly readings (due before our meeting each week).

2. Weekly interaction with fellow participants and the instructor in live class sessions.

**Additional Course Requirements for Course Credit:**

1. Weekly (8) 1-page, typed, in 12-point Times New Roman font, reflections which engage with the assigned readings for that day. These may range from a simple digest of the material to an engagement with and reflection upon a single aspect of the reading.
2. One (1) 12–15 page essay exploring a topic related to the course and approved by the instructor.

**Course Text**

Most texts will be provided. However, you should purchase Vermigli (if not already owned) as it will not be provided in a digital format:

Peter Martyr Vermigli, *Predestination and Justification: Two Theological Loci.* Edited and translated by Frank A. James III. The Peter Martyr Library 8. Moscow: ID: The Davenant Press, 2018.

**Course Schedule**

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| **Week** | **Dates** | **Discussion Topics** | **Reading** |
| 1 | TBD | Introduction and Aquinas (Part 1) | *ST*: Q.22 and Q.23 and *De Veritate*: Q.6 |
| 2 | TBD | Early Reformed: Vermgli | Vermigli: 3–84 |
| 3 | TBD | Reformed vs. Lutheran: Beza and Andreae | TBD |
| 4 | TBD | Lutheran: Gerhard | TBD |
| 5 | TBD | Remonstrants—Arminius and his followers | Arminius, *Works*: 3:263–278; Hoard, *God’s Love to Mankind* |
| 6 | TBD | Later Reformed: Davenant, Dordt, and Leiden Synopsis | Davenant, Prolegomena of *De Praed*., Canons of Dordt (First Main Doctrine), and *Synopsis Purioris*: 22–65 |
| 7 | TBD | Roman Catholics: Becanus | TBD |
| 8 | TBD | Summary: Le Blanc | TBD |