



**UNIVERSITÉ
DE GENÈVE**

INSTITUT D'HISTOIRE
DE LA RÉFORMATION

Institute of Reformation History



SUMMER SCHOOL 2024

First week: From 3 to 7 June

**Divine Will, Predestination, and Human Freedom. Historical
Perspectives on a Perennial Question (1500-1650)**

By Giovanni Gellera, Arthur Huiban and Ueli Zahnd

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The Institute of Reformation History (IHR) is an interdisciplinary research center of the University of Geneva, dedicated to the history of the reforms between the 15th and 17th centuries. Research fields of its members range from intellectual history to cultural and political history, and to the history of women and gender.

In addition to its research library, the Institute houses the rare book and manuscript collection of the Musée Historique de la Réformation (16,000 volumes in total) and is in close proximity to the University Library (over 1,5 million volumes of printed books and manuscripts) and the Geneva State Archives.

Located at *Uni Philosophes*, the Institute provides excellent conditions for research in the above-mentioned subjects. Since 1999 it has been running an annual summer school for graduate students (MA), PhD students or early postdocs, in the fields of History, Philosophy, Literature, History of Religions, and Theology.

The IHR Summer Schools

The aim of the Summer schools at the IHR is to enable participants to deepen their knowledge in a particular historical field and to familiarize themselves with the treatment of sources. Special attention is paid to learning the methods used in the study of intellectual and cultural history.

The courses are given from Monday to Friday from 9am to 5pm. Usually, the days are structured as follows:

- 9am to 11am: Lecture (introduction, problematization and contextualization of the topic of the day; case studies)
- 11am to 3pm: Study of sources (individual or in groups; a reader with the sources to study is sent to the participants a month before the summer school)
- 3pm to 5pm: Seminar (joint discussion of the sources studied before)

During a course, participants have direct contact with members of the teaching staff of the Institute and may ask to discuss their personal research with them. At the end of the Summer school, those who have been actively involved, especially in the afternoon seminars, will receive a certificate if they so wish. On request, and in agreement with their institution and depending on the work done, participants may obtain a certain number of ECTS credits (2 to 4).

Summer School 2024

Divine Will, Predestination, and Human Freedom. Historical Perspectives on a Perennial Question (1500-1650)

First Week: 3 – 7 June

Giovanni Gellera, Arthur Huibani, and Ueli Zahnd

In Protestant historiography, the doctrine of predestination has long been regarded as the central dogma of Calvinism, and the axiom by which the whole of Reformed theology should be understood. This historiographical perspective appears to have gained legitimacy on the basis of the formulation and systematization of Calvinist theology, in particular at the Synod of Dort (1618-19); and along with the acronym TULIP (Total Depravity, Unconditional Election, Limited Atonement, Irresistible Grace, Perseverance of the Saints), predestination is still considered to be at the core of Calvinism's doctrinal identity. From a historical perspective, however, the issue becomes more complex. On the one hand, the Calvinist theology did not have a central dogma as its starting point, and its formulation and systematization were historical processes that unfolded in specific contexts, in response to particular debates, and under the influence of specific challenges. In these diverse contexts, the problem of predestination was one debate among many others. On the other hand, the questions of divine will, predestination, and human freedom are perennial ones. Not only do they predate the Reformation, but they have also been discussed, sometimes very prominently, in other intellectual traditions of the Reformation era, and even outside theology proper.

It is this historical perspective on the doctrine of predestination that our summer school aims to adopt. Keeping this twofold contextualization in mind (that is, the formulation of the doctrine within other debates, and its comparison with other intellectual traditions), we will propose close readings of primary sources combined with lectures on the sources' wider context. In so doing, we will address questions such as: What were the issues at stake when the theologians of the Reformation era discussed the doctrine of predestination? What were their motivations and goals in debating these concepts? What were their philosophical

and theological presuppositions, particularly in relation to human freedom and necessity? What was the role of these doctrines in their thinking, and how did predestination become such a fundamental aspect of Calvinism? Which medieval sources did early modern theologians use to address this issue? What was the significance of these debates in early modern philosophy? And did Augustine, Ockham, Luther and Descartes mean the same thing when they talked about freedom and necessity, intellect and will?

From a methodological perspective and in keeping with the research culture of the *Institut d'histoire de la Réformation*, the participants will be encouraged to approach the questions of predestination, divine will and human freedom, and the textual sources that discuss them, in an interdisciplinary and historically informed way. While some ideas and questions transcend their historical context and have the power to generate inter-epochal, if not universal, interest, these ideas were begotten in historical circumstances and their subsequent history depended largely on the attitudes of the people and institutions involved. The participants will explore the continuities, transformations, and implications of these perennial questions by focusing on the interplay between the universal and the particular, and by taking an interdisciplinary and *longue-durée* approach between theology and philosophy.

Program

*Monday 3 June: **Introduction: at the Roots of a Problem*** (Giovanni Gellera, Arthur Huiban and Ueli Zahnd)

- Seminar — Methodological introduction, study and discussion of selected texts

*Tuesday 4 June: **The Appearance of Voluntarism: the Medieval Legacy*** (Ueli Zahnd)

- Seminar — Study and discussion of selected texts

*Wednesday 5 June: **Erasmus, Luther, Melanchthon: The Debate on Predestination and its Origin in the Controversy on Justification*** (Arthur Huiban)

- Seminar — Study and discussion of selected texts

*Thursday 6 June: **From Calvin to Calvinism: Doctrinal Assessments*** (Ueli Zahnd)

- Seminar — Study and discussion of selected texts

*Friday 9 June: **An Epilogue, or a New Beginning? Liberty and Necessity, Intellectualism and Voluntarism in Early Modern Philosophy*** (Giovanni Gellera)

- Seminar — Study and discussion of selected texts; conclusion of the course.

Linguistic requirements

The classes of the first week will be given in English. Candidates must have sufficient knowledge of English to be able to follow the course. However, they are allowed to express themselves in either English or French. Those who find it difficult to judge their level in these languages may contact a member of the teaching staff before registering. For the linguistic requirements of the second week, please refer to the French version of this brochure.

Application

The registration form must be completed [online](#) by **19 April**. Each candidate will have to indicate their wish to participate in the first, second, or both weeks of the summer school. A letter of motivation, a curriculum vitae, a brief presentation of the research carried out as part of the degree, doctoral thesis, or post-doctoral studies, as well as a signed letter of recommendation (PDF format) should be attached to the form. Applicants who have already completed an IHR summer school do not need a letter of recommendation but must produce updated versions of the other documents and also register via the online form.

Applications will be reviewed by the teaching staff; candidates will be notified of their decision within one week after the application deadline.

Funding

Admission to the summer school takes the form of a residential scholarship, which covers the cost of half-board accommodation (breakfast and lunch). The Institute does not contribute to the participants' travel expenses.

As soon as they are notified of their acceptance, the selected candidates undertake to follow the complete course(s). Late withdrawals (less than one month before the start of the Summer school) or early departures will result in exclusion from the following summer schools organised by the Institute. For organisational reasons, a cancellation fee may be charged in the event of late withdrawal without justification.

Teaching Staff

Giovanni Gellera, studies in philosophy (Università Cattolica of Milan, BA and MA), PhD in history of philosophy (University of Glasgow). Swiss National Science Foundation Scientific collaborator at the *Institut d'histoire de la Réformation*. Areas of expertise: history of philosophy from the Middle Ages to the Early Modernity, with a focus on the traditions of Scottish philosophy, Reformed scholasticism, and Scotism. Areas of competence: the intellectual traditions of the Renaissance and the Reformation, history of philosophy during the Enlightenment.

Arthur Huiban, studies in philosophy (Université Paris 1 - Panthéon Sorbonne) and history (University of Geneva). Swiss National Science Foundation Postdoc at the *Institut d'histoire de la Réformation*. Areas of expertise: history of the early Reformation, intellectual history of the first Reformers (Luther, Zwingli, Melanchthon, Bullinger, Calvin), history of Logic and the arts of discourse, in link with the systematization of Protestant theology in the 16th and early 17th centuries. In the framework of his postdoc, Arthur Huiban investigates the legacy of medieval theology and philosophy (notably late franciscan ones) in the thought of the first Reformers.

Ueli Zahnd, studies in theology and philosophy (Bern and Paris), MAS in Reformed studies (Geneva), PhD degree in medieval philosophy (Freiburg im Breisgau). Full Professor at the *Institut d'histoire de la Réformation*. Areas of expertise: the intellectual history of the 15th and 16th centuries, their traditions of thought and the continuity between the late Middle Ages and the Reformation. Apart from the traditional methods of intellectual history, Ueli Zahnd explores the approaches of digital humanities.