



**UNIVERSITÉ
DE GENÈVE**

INSTITUT D'HISTOIRE
DE LA RÉFORMATION

Institute of Reformation History



SUMMER SCHOOL 2026

From 8 to 12 June

**Language, Texts, Authors:
Reformation Poetics in the French-speaking
Territories (16th-17th Centuries)**

By Véronique Ferrer and Daniela Solfaroli Camillocci

University of Geneva

Institute of Reformation History

22 Boulevard des Philosophes, CH-1211 Geneva 4

The Institute of Reformation History (IHR) is an interdisciplinary research centre 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) 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).

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The Reformation was also literary phenomenon. While historiography rightly emphasises its institutional and theological dimension (doctrinal, liturgical, disciplinary), as well as its social, political and cultural aspects, it has been more reticent about the major role the Reformation played in the literary history of the 16th century and the extraordinary body of texts it generated. The Reformation had a major impact on the French language and Renaissance literature, both in terms of its conceptual foundations and its production. It was accompanied by an unprecedented literary renewal: not only did it contribute to the renewal of existing forms, genres, and models, but it also enriched the French language itself. The return to the Scriptures and the militant challenge of the Reformation fostered experimentation with new genres and the use of philology to rethink literature within the framework of bearing witness to the faith. This ambition ultimately gave rise to a rich corpus of texts, often difficult to classify according to the canons of classical rhetoric, forming what is commonly referred to as Reformed literature. This course aims to explore this multifaceted corpus by bringing historical and literary perspectives into dialogue.

But what exactly does the term "Reformed literature" encompass? The ambiguity of the category calls for a preliminary clarification. Whether it is understood as the confessional characterisation of a corpus, or as the body of works produced by a group of men and women claiming to belong to a reformed confession, the use of this category raises the question of the relationship between writing practices and the construction of religious identities. This relationship will be the guiding thread of the course.

Reformed literature is, in fact, a literature engaged in history: it presents itself as a pragmatic discourse, a word spoken in context, whatever form this involvement in the world may take: confessional, theological, social, or political. The texts are likewise linked to a theology and a spirituality, more precisely to a theological anthropology that ensures their dynamism and internal tensions. Yet is this rootedness of literary discourse in theology and in the history of Christian persecutions and violence sufficient to define a Protestant poetics? The geographical diversity of the centres of the French-speaking Reformation forces us to consider the literature it produced in the plural. To this geographical and human mobility, marked by the trajectories of religious migration and the circulation of printed works, must be added the challenges of building and defending the Reformed churches between the 16th and 17th centuries. The texts adapt to different places and circumstances by producing a specific discourse.

It is this geo-historical and socio-cultural mobility, this variety of textual approaches and religious sensibilities, that the second week or the IHR summer school seeks to examine. It will first consider the different modalities of literary reform and militant spirituality; it will then focus on the diverse social profiles of the actors and actresses involved in the literary field – men and women of letters, publishers, dedicatees – with a particular interest in linguistic and poetic inventiveness, distinctive trajectories, intended readerships, the construction of new forms of authorship, and the religious legitimisation of figures of authority. The course will also highlight the impact of confessional confrontations on representations of gender and social roles within communities of faith. It will conclude with the portrait of a major figure of Reformed literature: the poet-soldier Agrippa d'Aubigné, who, banished from the France of Louis XIII, ended his life in Geneva.

Program

Monday 8 June: Reformation Poetics: questions of definition, issues, methodology. Introduction to the course (DSC and VF)

- Afternoon – Seminar – Study and discussion of selected texts and group activities

Tuesday 9 June: Reformation Poetics: language, models, literary genres (VF)

- Afternoon – Seminar – Study and discussion of selected texts.

Wednesday, 10 June: Satire and spirituality: literary constructions for a militant piety (DSC)

- Afternoon – Seminar – Study and discussion of selected texts.

Thursday, 11 June: The Faithful woman and the Gospel, between polemical representations and the poetics of the testimony of faith (DSC)

- Afternoon – Seminar – Study and discussion of selected texts.

Friday, 12 June: A Case-study: Agrippa d'Aubigné (1552-1630), a poet-soldier between two centuries (VF)

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

Linguistic requirements

The morning course will be given in French; the afternoon seminar will be given in both French and English. Candidates must have sufficient knowledge of both languages to be able to follow the courses. However, they will be able 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.

Application

The registration form must be completed online by **15 April**. Each candidate will have to indicate his/her 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 two signed letters of recommendation (PDF format) should be attached to the form. Applicants who have already completed an IHR summer school do not need the letters 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). Candidates are asked to carefully coordinate their participation with their agenda. Late withdrawals (less than one month before the start of the

Summer school) or early departures will result in exclusion from the following summer school organised by the Institute. For organisational reasons, a cancellation fee may be charged in the event of late withdrawal without justification.

Teaching Staff

Daniela Solfaroli Camillocci, Master of Arts (Pisa), PhD in Modern History (*Scuola Normale Superiore* of Pisa), MAS in Reformed Studies (Geneva). Professor at the Institute of Reformation History. Her areas of research and publication include cultural history and religious practices; history of spirituality; history of women and gender (16th-17th centuries).

Veronique Ferrer, Agrégation in Modern Literature and Doctor of French Literature (Paris Sorbonne University), is a professor at Paris Nanterre University and a member of the Institut Universitaire de France. Her areas of research and publication include the literature of the Reformations and Wars of Religion; the history of 16th and 17th century poetry; Renaissance historiographies.