

FACULTY PROFILE

Ronald Rittgers, Ph.D.

Erich Markel Chair in German Reformation Studies and Professor of History and Theology

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Biography

Professor Rittgers joined the Valparaiso University faculty in the fall of 2006 after having taught for seven years at Yale University. He is the first occupant of the Erich Markel Chair in German Reformation Studies.

Professor Rittgers is interested in the religious, intellectual, and social history of late medieval and early modern Europe. His course offerings include Reformation Europe, The Theology of Martin Luther, Penitential Thought and Practice in the Christian Tradition, Christian Spirituality in the Age of Reform, and Reformation Theology.

His first research project examined how the Lutheran version of private confession shaped the politics and piety of the German Reformation. His book, *The Reformation of the Keys: Confession, Conscience, and Authority in Sixteenth-Century Germany* (Harvard University Press, 2004), was nominated for the American Society of Church History 2005 Philip Schaff Prize, and for the 2006 Columbia Council for European Studies Book Award.

Professor Rittgers is currently working on a book project that examines the efforts of Protestant reformers to change the way their contemporaries understood and coped with suffering. The project is tentatively entitled *The Reformation of Suffering: A Study of Pastoral Theology and Lay Piety in Early Modern Germany*. Professor Rittgers has received research grants from the German Academic Exchange Service, the Lilly Endowment, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the Herzog August Bibliothek in Wolfenbüttel, Germany. He has also served on the Governing Council of the American Society of Church History.

Professor Rittgers is married and has three sons. He enjoys hiking, cycling, soccer, playing with his kids, and watching Star Trek re-runs.

Education

B.A. - Wheaton College M.T.S. - Regent College Ph.D. - Harvard University

Research Interests

Medieval and Early Modern/Reformation Europe

Books

- *The Reformation of the Keys: Confession, Conscience, and Authority in Sixteenth-Century Germany* - Harvard University Press 2004

