



**ERSKINE**  
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

*For Christ and His Church*

## **HT 718 - CREEDS AND CONFESSIONS**

**January Term, 2011**

**Elective: 3 Credit Hours**

**Due West: Tuesdays, 9-5**

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### **COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

“The creeds of the early Church as well as Reformation and Modern confessions provide windows through which this course examines the development of vital doctrines in their historical and theological contexts.” *Elective. Three hours.*

### **COURSE PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this course is to build upon the required Church History classes. In this class we will study the development of Christian doctrine through the formal affirmations of Christian churches. The goal is that each student can articulate the *credo* of the Christian church in her various expressions and a personal *credo* as well.

### **COURSE OBJECTIVES:**

The mission of ETS is to educate persons for ministry in the Christian church. The study of creeds and confessions can greatly aid the students' growth in knowledge, grace and spiritual maturity.

It is the goal of this instructor that upon successful completion of this course each student will demonstrate the following competencies:

1. Identify the classic creeds and confessional statements of the Christian church.
2. Explain the historical and theological context that gave rise to the creed.
3. State in simple terms the content of the creed and its distinctive features.

### **COURSE METHODS AND REQUIREMENTS:**

The purpose and objectives are achieved through four learning components:

1. The content component requires the mastery of reading assignments measured by weekly quizzes (3 quizzes).
2. The second component is classroom participation. Each class will include lecture and discussion. Each student is expected to stay current with the reading assignments and participate in class discussion.

*Christian Commitment and Excellence in Learning*

3. Each student will memorize the Apostles' Creed and answers to the Westminster Shorter Catechism, questions 1-15.
4. Each student will complete a typed, double-spaced paper, 8-12 pages of text. Th.M. students will complete a paper 20-25 pages in length. Details of the paper TBA. See syllabus below for three examples of possible topics. Students are not limited to these topics, but the instructor must approve all topics. Each student will write an "original" paper for this class. You may not use a "recycled" or modified paper written for some other class. The paper is due on January 25.

NOTE: I DO NOT ACCEPT LATE RESEARCH PAPERS

### **REQUIRED TEXTS:**

Students are expected to secure their own copies of all required textbooks. As a convenience, the seminary has a bookstore portal of the website at <http://www.erskineseminary.org/bookstore.html>. There you will find links to familiar vendors (CBD, Amazon, B&N, and Books-A-Million) and can check availability of texts, compare prices, and place orders. The ETS SBA will receive a modest percentage of the profits from students' and professors' purchases through this portal. The Erskine Campus Bookstore will carry a limited number of copies of every required text and orders for books can be placed through the Campus Bookstore.

Campbell, Ted A. *Christian Confessions: A Historical Introduction*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996. (ISBN 0-664-25650-3)

Leith, John H. *Creeds of The Churches: A Reader in Christian Doctrine From the Bible to the Present*. Richmond: John Knox Press, 1963, revised ed., 1973. (ISBN 0-8042-05159)

McGrath, Alister E. *I Believe: Exploring the Apostles' Creed*. InterVarsity Press, (ISBN 0830819460)

### **NOTE: Th.M. students will also read the following books:**

McGoldrick, James, *Christianity and its Competitors: The New Face of Old Heresy*, Ross-shire, Scotland: Christian Focus Publications, 2006, 206p. ISBN 1-84550-140-3

Noll, Mark A. *Confessions and Catechisms of the Reformation*, Vancouver: Regent College Publishing, paperback ed., 2004, 232p.

**NOTE:** The professor WILL distribute handouts and assign additional reading.

### **RECOMMENDED TEXTS:**

Cochrane, Arthur C. *Reformed Confessions of the 16<sup>th</sup> Century*. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1966.

Hughes, Philip. *The Church in Crisis: A History of General Councils, 325-1870*. Garden City, NJ: Hanover House, 1961.

Leith, John H. *Crisis in the Church, The Plight of Theological Education*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997.

Leo, Donald Davis. *The First Seven Ecumenical Councils*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1983.

Lumpkin, W.L. *Baptist Confessions of Faith*. Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1969.  
Pelikan, Jaroslav. *Credo: Historical and Theological Guide to Creeds and Confessions of Faith in the Christian Tradition*. New Haven: Yale U P, 2003.  
Rushdoony, R.J. *The Foundations of Social Order*. Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Pub. Co., 1972.  
Schaff, Philip and David S. eds., *The Creeds of Christendom*, 3 vols., Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1931, reprinted, 1983.

**CRITERIA for GRADING RESEARCH PAPERS/PROJECTS:**

Clarity and coherence of the thesis  
Grasp of basic information and understanding of concepts  
Use of sources, clarity of context, infrequent use of block quotes  
Consistent use of sources through paraphrase and proper citation  
Adherence to instructions, length, structure, margins, etc.  
Analysis in addition to summary of the content  
Depth and originality of the topic and content  
Proper use of the English language, grammar, spelling, etc.  
Use of Turabian, *A manual of Style for Writers*, 6<sup>th</sup> edition

**GRADING SCALE:**

Note: See current catalog. p. 85.

**COURSE EXPECTATIONS AND SEMINARY POLICIES:**

Regular attendance is crucial for the successful completion of this class. It is essential that students attend each class.  
Only under extraordinary circumstances will a student “miss” classes and still pass. You cannot miss the first class and remain enrolled in the class. It is also required that students arrive on time and remain until class is dismissed.

**INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE:**

The seminary encourages all students to make use of language, in reference to human beings, that is inclusive rather than needlessly exclusive. It is the mark of a good communicator to build bridges rather than barriers; therefore, such language should be used in all written work and oral presentations. The Seminary catalog stands as an example of recommended language.

**PLAGIARISM:**

Any student guilty of plagiarism, cheating, and or using previously used papers liable for dismissal from the seminary. An incident of the behavior described may become a part of a student's permanent record at the seminary. All papers and book critiques for this class must be original work, and done by the student.

**STYLE AND BIBLIOGRAPHICAL FORMATTING REQUIREMENTS:**

All papers must be typed/processed (12-point type, double-spaced, one-inch margins) and fully documented, following the standards in the “Style and Form Standards” (Erskine Seminary). In this course, footnotes and a bibliography are required

in each paper. The paper's cover page and bibliography are not counted towards page requirements.

### **INCOMPLETES:**

The grade of "I" or incomplete is given at the discretion of the professor. A grade of "I" is normally given when a student has substantially completed the requirements for a course but has been prevented by extraordinary circumstances from completing the remainder of the course requirements. A student who wishes to request an incomplete should normally complete an incomplete form prior to the end of the semester and ask the professor to grant the request. (Under unusual circumstances, the student may communicate with the professor by phone or email rather than in person, and the professor may then agree to fill out the form at the student's request. Under exceptional circumstances, the professor may initiate the process by filling out the form on the student's behalf.) If the professor grants the request, he/she will sign the incomplete form and turn it in with his/her final grade report. An "I" in any course must be removed by March 1 for the Fall Term, April 1 for the January Term, August 1 for the Spring Term, and November 1 for the Summer Term. Only the Dean may grant extensions of incompletes beyond the established completion date. Otherwise, these grades automatically become "F."

### **OFFICE HOURS:**

My office hours are posted on my office door. To be certain that we connect, please schedule an appointment.

Contact me by phone or e-mail.

### **DROP/ADD AND COURSE WITHDRAWAL:**

Once a student has completed, signed, and submitted his/her registration to the Registrar for this class, it is a binding contract, and billing will be based on this registration. If the student decides not to take this class, he/she must complete a "drop/add" form and secure the appropriate signatures prior to the drop/add deadline during the second week of the semester or term. If one wishes to withdraw from the course after the drop/add deadline, one must complete a withdrawal form, and tuition will be refunded on a pro rated basis. Failure to withdraw from the class properly will result in the student's receiving a grade of "F" for the course, and full tuition charges will apply. No exceptions will be made to this policy.

### **WEIGHTING OF GRADES:**

The quiz grades plus the, Apostles' Creed & WSC, Q. 1-15, equal 30%

Class participation and completion of reading assignment equal 10%

Research paper/project equals 60% of your final grade

### **SAMPLE RESEARCH PAPER/PROJECT TOPICS:**

1. Compare and contrast a creed or confessional statement from your own faith tradition with that of another tradition.

2. Using the Apostles' Creed as your standard, develop a Sunday School curriculum, or a sermon series which teaches the basic doctrines of Christianity.
3. Write a paper defending the proposition that creeds are unnecessary and in fact an impediment to faith and practice in the Christian church.

## HT 718 - COURSE OUTLINE

**January 4**      Syllabus distribution, course overview and assignment

Lecture- "The Protestant Theological Spectrum"

Lecture- "Brief Introduction to Creeds and Confessions"

**Read:** McGrath, *I Believe: Exploring the ... Creed*

### EARLY CHURCH ERA

Lecture- "An Exposition of The Apostles' Creed"

**Read:** Campbell, *Christian Confessions*, pp. 1-63.

Leith, *Creeds of the Church*, pp. 1-36.

Lecture- (Begin) Exploration of the Ancient Creeds: Nicea and Constantinople

**Read:** Campbell, pp.64-113

Leith, pp. 37-59

**January 11**

### QUIZ #1

#### Writing Assignment due:

Preliminary research topic

Lecture- "Ancient Creeds, (continued), Ephesus

Chalcedon

"2<sup>nd</sup> Council of Orange, 529 A.D.

### MEDIEVAL ERA

#### Writing Assignment for January 11

Research topic, thesis statement, bibliography

Lecture Topics-"4<sup>th</sup> Lateran Council, 1215"

Council of Florence, 1438-45

Waldenses, 7 Articles of Faith

**Read:** Leith, pp. 59-126

## REFORMATION and MODERN ERA

January 18

### QUIZ #2

Lecture Topics-Lutheran- *Augsburg Confession, 1530*  
*Formula of Concord, 1577*

**Read:** Campbell, pp. 115-83  
Leith, pp. 127-230, 231-81

Anabaptists:

*The Schleitheim Confession, 1527*

Reformed and Anglican:

*67 Articles, 1523*

*Consensus of Zurich, 1549*

*42 Articles of Religion, 1549*

*39 Articles, 1560*

*Scots' Confession of Faith, 1560*

*Belgic Confession of Faith, 1561*

Baptist:

*London Confession of Faith*

*Philadelphia Confession of Faith*

*The New Hampshire Confession, 1833*

January 25

### QUIZ #3

Congregational:

*The Cambridge Platform, 1648*

**Read:** Campbell, pp. 185-256  
Leith, pp.353-442

Roman Catholic:

*Canons and Decrees of Trent, 1563*

Vatican Council I, 1870

Vatican Council II, 1964

**Due: All Reading Assignments completed**

**Apostles' Creed Quiz**

Westminster Shorter Catechism Quiz: Q. 1-15

Oral Presentations of Research Papers

**Research Paper Due, January 25**

COURSE EVALUATIONS