

Course Syllabus
WYH2533 – Confessional Theology in the Reformed Tradition
Wycliffe College
Toronto School of Theology
Fall 2023

Instructor Information

Instructor: Michael Haykin, PhD
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Course Identification

Course Number: 2000 level
Course Format: *In-class*
Course Name: Confessional Theology in the Reformed Tradition
Course Location: St George Campus, Wycliffe College (5 Hoskin Ave), Room Number TBD
Class Times: Fridays 11:00am – 1:00pm
Prerequisites: NA

Course Description

After looking at the roots of confessionalism in the creedal statements of late antiquity, this course focuses on the historical, cultural, and theological context of the Reformed confessions of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The confessional documents that are the focus of primary attention are the Thirty-Nine Articles, the Irish Articles, the Three Forms of Unity, the Westminster Standards, and the First and Second London Baptist Confessions. The reception history of these confessions is also considered as well as their significance for confessional communities today. This course is open to all students.

Course Resources

Required Course Texts/Bibliography

Clark, R. Scott. *Recovering the Reformed Confession: Our Theology, Piety, and Practice*. P & R, 2008.
Fairbairn, Donald and Ryan Reeves. *The Story of Creeds and Confessions: Tracing the Development of the Christian Faith*. Baker Academic, 2019.
Fesko, J. V. *The Need for Creeds Today: Confessional Faith in a Faithless Age*. Baker Academic, 2020.
Gamble, Whitney G. "The Theology of the Westminster Confession of Faith in Its Context." *The History of Scottish Theology, Volume I*, Oxford University Press, 2019
Packer, J.I. and Roger Beckwith, *The Thirty-Nine Articles: Their Place and Use Today*. Latimer Trust, 2006.
Van Dixhoorn, Chad. *Creeds, Confessions, and Catechisms: A Reader's Edition*. Crossway, 2022.

Recommended Reading (Supplemental)

Gamble, Whitney. *Christ and the Law: Antinomianism at the Westminster Assembly*. Reformation Heritage Books, 2018.

Course Website(s)

- Quercus: <https://q.utoronto.ca/>

This course uses Quercus for its course website. To access it, go to the UofT Quercus login page at <https://q.utoronto.ca/> and login using your UTORid and password. Once you have logged in to Quercus using your UTORid and password, look for the **My Courses** module, where you'll find the link to the website for all your Quercus-based courses. (Your course registration with ACORN gives you access to the course website in Quercus.) Information for students about using Quercus can be found at: <https://community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC-10701>.

Course Learning Objectives/Outcomes

Course Outcomes	Course Element	Program Outcomes
In taking this course, students will:	This outcome will be achieved through these course elements:	This course outcome corresponds to these aspects of Wycliffe's statements of outcomes (MTS, MDiv)
demonstrate that they have read and understood classic confessional and catechetical texts of the Reformed tradition, and the significance of confessional theology for the church today.	Readings notes; Participation	MDiv: 1.4, 3.3 MTS: 1.3, 3.2, 3.3
identify and assess the treatment of one theological locus by Reformed confessions, and such how traditional interpretations might shape contemporary understanding of the issue.	Final research paper	MDiv: 1.2, 1.5, 2.1, 2.2 MTS: 1.2, 2.1, 2.2, 3.1
synthesize their learnings to communicate the importance of being confessional and in what ways a particular confession is relevant to their ecclesial tradition.	Creating a Three-Part Course in Confessional Theology	MDiv: 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4 MTS: 2.1, 2.2

Evaluation

Requirements

The final grade for the course will be based on evaluations in four areas:

A. Weekly Reading Reflections (20%)

To help facilitate (and reward!) engaged reading of the assigned materials and informed participation in class sessions, students will prepare a very short (maximum 300 words) reflection on the week's readings (*not including the weekly readings of the creeds/confessions*). Each reflection must include: (1) your understanding of the main thesis/argument of each reading (in one sentence); (2) 3 to 5 key ideas in bullet form for each reading; (3) a brief critical response/engagement with each reading. Where multiple chapters are assigned, students must prepare one reflection per chapter. These reflections are due each Friday before class. Students must complete a total of ten reflections by the end of the course. These reflections will not be graded for style, but are intended to ensure that the readings have been completed and understood. The assignments will be graded on a Pass/Fail basis. Late assignments will receive a 50% deduction and may be submitted any time before the end of the fall exam week.

B. Three-Part Course in Confessional Theology (30%)

Students will write out manuscripts for three talks to be given in an Adult Sunday School or Youth Educational context that discuss: 1) the importance & need of being confessional; 2) the history and overview of one confession that is germane to the student's ecclesiological connection/commitment; and 3) a detailed discussion of one theological locus in this confession (this confession must be the same as the one chosen for the major essay). Talks should be approximately 6-12 pages long (double-spaced), designed for an approximately 30-minute session. While these talks should be written to be accessible to an average congregant in your own ecclesial context, you are to include footnotes which demonstrate how various course readings have shaped your thought throughout. **Due November 3.**

C. Participation (10% of grade)

Students are expected to attend every class prepared to answer the following three questions with reference to the creed or confession readings assigned for that week: "What's good?" "What's bad?" "What exceptions do you take and why?"

D. Research Paper (40% of grade)

Students will write a 3,000-word research paper that compares and contrasts the treatment of one theological locus in four of the confessions discussed in the course. In addition to four confessional/catechetical resources, students must make use of at least four academic sources. **Due December 22, 2023.**

Grading System - Basic Degree Students

90-100 (A+)	Exceptional
85-89 (A)	Outstanding
80-84 (A-)	Excellent
77-79 (B+)	Very Good
73-76 (B)	Good
70-72 (B-)	Acceptable
0-69 (FZ)	Failure

Please see the BD handbook for more details about the grading scale and non-numerical grades (e.g. SDF, INC, etc).

Late work (BD). Basic Degree students are expected to hand in assignments by the date given in the course outline. [The instructor should stipulate the penalty for late work.] The absolute deadline for the course is the examination day scheduled for the course or the last day of exam week for the semester in which the course is taught, whichever is sooner.

This penalty is not applied to students with documented medical or compassionate difficulties or exceptional reasons (e.g., a death in the family or a serious illness); students facing such difficulties are kindly requested to consult with their faculty adviser or basic degree director, who should make a recommendation on the matter to the instructor and request an SDF. The absolute deadline for obtaining an SDF for the course is the examination day scheduled for the course or the last day of examination week, whichever is sooner. An SDF must be requested from the registrar's office in the student's college of registration no later than the last day of exam week in which the course is taken. The SDF, when approved, will have a mutually agreed upon deadline that does not extend beyond the conclusion of the following term. If a student has not completed work but has not been granted an SDF, a final mark will be submitted calculating a zero for work not submitted.

Course grades. Consistently with the policy of the University of Toronto, course grades submitted by an instructor are reviewed by a committee of the instructor's college before being posted to ACORN. Grades are not official until they are posted to ACORN. Course grades may be adjusted where they do not comply with University Assessment and Grading Practices Policy found at <https://governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/secretariat/policies/grading-practices-policy-university-assessment-and-january-26-2012>, policies found in the TST conjoint program handbooks, or college grading policy.

Policies

Accessibility. Students with a disability or health consideration, whether temporary or permanent, are entitled to accommodation. Students in conjoint degree programs must register at the University of Toronto's Accessibility Services offices; information is available at <http://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/as>. The sooner a student seeks accommodation, the quicker we can assist.

Plagiarism. Students submitting written material in courses are expected to provide full documentation for sources of both words and ideas in footnotes or endnotes. Direct quotations should be placed within quotation marks. (If small changes are made in the quotation, they should be indicated by appropriate punctuation such as brackets and ellipses, but the quotation still counts as a direct quotation.) Failure to document borrowed material constitutes plagiarism, which is a serious breach of academic, professional, and Christian ethics. An instructor who discovers evidence of student plagiarism is not permitted to deal

with the situation individually but is required to report it to his or her head of college or delegate according to the TST *Basic Degree Handbook* and the Graduate program Handbooks linked from <http://www.tst.edu/academic/resources-forms/handbooks> and the University of Toronto *Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters* <https://governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/secretariat/policies/code-behaviour-academic-matters-july-1-2019>.

A student who plagiarizes in this course will be assumed to have read the document "Avoidance of plagiarism in theological writing" published by the Graham Library of Trinity and Wycliffe Colleges: <https://www.trinity.utoronto.ca/library/research/theology/avoiding-plagiarism-in-theological-writing/>

Other academic offences. TST students come under the jurisdiction of the University of Toronto *Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters* <https://governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/secretariat/policies/code-behaviour-academic-matters-july-1-2019>

Back-up copies. Please make back-up copies of essays before handing them in.

Obligation to check email. At times, the course instructor may decide to send out important course information by email. To that end, all students in conjoint programs are required to have a valid utoronto email address. Students must have set up their utoronto email address which is entered in the ACORN system. Information is available at www.utorid.utoronto.ca. The course instructor will not be able to help you with this. 416-978-HELP and the Help Desk at the Information Commons can answer questions you may have about your UTORid and password. Students should check utoronto email regularly for messages about the course. **Forwarding** your utoronto.ca email to a Hotmail, Gmail, Yahoo or other type of email account is not advisable. In some cases, messages from utoronto.ca addresses sent to Hotmail, Gmail or Yahoo accounts are filtered as junk mail, which means that emails from your course instructor may end up in your spam or junk mail folder. Students in non-conjoint programs should contact the Registrar of their college of registration.

Email communication with the course instructor. The instructor aims to respond to email communications from students in a timely manner. *All email communications from students in conjoint programs must be sent from a utoronto email address.* Email communications from other email addresses are not secure, and also the instructor cannot readily identify them as being legitimate emails from students. The instructor is not obliged to respond to email from non-utoronto addresses for students in conjoint programs. Students in non-conjoint programs should only use the email address they have provided to their college of registration.

Course Schedule

*All listed readings of creeds and confessions can be found in Van Dixhoorn, *Creeds, Confessions and Catechisms* unless otherwise stated, in which case they are posted on Quercus under "Files."

Week 1

September 15

Christian creeds in Late Antiquity

Readings: Fairbairn and Reeves, Chs 1-2 (pp. 1-37); Van Dixhoorn, pp. 7-27 (Introduction; The Apostles' Creed; The Nicene Creed; The Athanasian Creed; The Chalcedonian Definition).

Week 2

September 22

The Confession of La Rochelle (1559) & The Belgic Confession (1561)

Readings: Fairbairn and Reeves, Chs 13-14 (pp. 231-274); Van Dixhoorn, pp. 77-83 (The Belgic Confession Introduction + Articles 1-7).

Week 3

September 29

The Heidelberg Catechism (1563)

Readings: Fairbairn and Reeves, Chs 15-16 (pp. 253-295); Van Dixhoorn, pp. 289-295 (The Heidelberg Catechism Introduction + Lord's Day 1-5).

Week 4

October 6

The Thirty-Nine Articles (1571)

Readings: Packer and Beckwith, *The Thirty-Nine Articles: Their Place and Use Today*, Chs 1-4.

Week 5

October 13

The Irish Articles (1571)

Readings: Fairbairn and Reeves, Ch 17 & Conclusion (pp. 324-358, 385-388); The Irish Articles, articles 1-21 (posted on Quercus).

Week 6

October 20

The Canons of Dort (1618-1619)

Readings: Fesko, Chs 1-2 (pp. 1-41); Van Dixhoorn, pp. 133-143 (The Canons of Dort Introduction + Articles 1-18).

Week 7

October 27

READING WEEK

Week 8

November 3

The Westminster Confession I (1646)

Readings: Clark, Ch 1 (pp. 1-36); Gamble, "The Theology of the Westminster Confession of Faith in its Context" (pp. 265-276; on Quercus).

Week 9

November 10

The Westminster Confession II (1646)

Readings: Clark, Ch 2 (pp. 39-68); Van Dixhoorn, pp. 183-197, 216-226 (WCF Introduction + Chs 1-7, 21, 23-25).

Week 10

November 17

The Westminster Confession III (1646)

Readings: Clark, Ch 3 (pp. 71-116); Van Dixhoorn, pp. 227-234 (WCF Chs 27-31).

Week 11

November 24

The First London Confession of Faith (Particular Baptist) (1644/1646)

Readings: Clark, Ch 5 (pp. 153-191); The First London Confession of Faith (1644), articles 36-48 (posted on Quercus).

Week 12

December 1

Guest Lecture: Rev. Dr. Bill DeJong on “Why Confessional Theology?”

Readings: Fesko, Chs 3-4 (pp. 43-95).

Week 13

December 8

The Second London Confession of Faith (Particular Baptist) (1677/1689)

Readings: Clark, Ch 6 and Epilogue (pp. 193-225, 343-345); Van Dixhoorn, 237-238, 270-271, 278-284, 287-288 (The London Baptist Confession Introduction + Chs 20, 26, 28, 29, 31-32).

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