

REFORMED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
01ST6370 Theology of the Westminster Standards
Summer Remote Residential, 2020 Revised 5/23/20
Ligon Duncan

Course Description

A historical and theological survey of the Westminster Assembly and its work. The major documents produced by the Assembly will be studied in detail. Attention will also be given to the historical, political, and theological context of the Assembly. Such issues as the Westminster doctrine of Scripture, the *Confession's* relation to the theology of Calvin, and the debate over Church Government will be discussed.

Course Objectives

To introduce the student to all the major documents of the Assembly and assist the student in gaining a working understanding of the theology of the Westminster Symbols. To familiarize the student with the historical, political and theological background of the Assembly, and with major issues in current debate concerning the Westminster Theology. The student will also be introduced to the basic secondary literature concerning the Westminster Assembly and its work.

Course Requirements

Required Texts:

Westminster Confession (Banner of Truth) *or* **Westminster Confession & Catechisms** (PCA or OPC editions)
Chad Van Dixhoorn, **Confessing the Faith: A Reader's Guide to the Westminster Confession** (Banner of Truth)
Emily Van Dixhoorn, **Confessing the Faith: Study Guide** (Banner of Truth)

Syllabus Articles (Please see due dates for each article in Canvas)

Ligon Duncan, "Owning the Confession: Subscription in the Scottish Presbyterian Tradition"

Donald Macleod, *The Westminster Confession Today*

Donald Macleod, *Five Misunderstandings about Calvinism*

<https://banneroftruth.org/uk/resources/articles/2019/four-misunderstandings-about-calvinism/>

John Murray, Calvin, Dortd and Westminster on Predestination, from **Collected Writings**

John Murray, The Importance and Relevance of the Westminster Confession, from **Collected Writings**

John Murray, The Theology of the Westminster Confession of Faith, from **Collected Writings**

Suggested Resources

John Bower, **The Westminster Confession: A Critical Text and Introduction** (Reformation Heritage)

Chad Van Dixhoorn, **The Minutes and Papers of the Westminster Assembly, 1643-1653** (5 Vols) (Oxford)

John Fesko, **The Theology of the Westminster Standards: Historical Context & Theological Insights** (Crossway)

Rowland Ward, **The Westminster Confession of Faith: A Study Guide** (New Melbourne Press)

A.A. Hodge, **The Westminster Confession: A Commentary** (Banner of Truth)

Robert Shaw, **The Reformed Faith: An Exposition of the Westminster Confession of Faith** (Christian Focus)

Westminster Assembly Project <https://www.westminsterassembly.org/>

Shorter Catechism Project <https://www.shortercatechism.com/>

Post-Reformation Digital Library <https://www.prdl.org/>

Class Attendance

Class attendance is, of course, crucial to the benefit of the student. The professor will try to make every possible provision to the student for synchronous and asynchronous access to the lecture material, but the student will want and need to engage attentively with the course exposition, and to participate in class interaction in various ways.

Course Evaluation

1. Topical Discussion Questions and Student-to-Student Interactions (10%) Students must answer all five topical discussion questions and respond to all four student-to-student interactions in Canvas. Please see due dates in Canvas for each topical discussion question and student-to-student interaction.

2. Final Exam (30%) A final exam will cover material from the class reading, lectures and discussion, focusing on a well-rounded knowledge of the Westminster Standards. **Due: Friday, July 3.**

3. Study Guide Answers (30%) Complete all answers to the Study Guide Questions in Emily Van Dixhoorn's *Confessing the Faith: Study Guide*. Submit these to the professor either handwritten or electronically. **Due: Friday, July 10.**

4. Exposition/Paper or *Help Improve the Syllabus Study Guide (30%) The student will prepare a short term paper (5-10 pages) expounding one chapter in the Standards. Students should pick a term paper topic, to be approved by the professor, from one the 171 topics listed in the Topical Outline of the Confession that has been uploaded into Canvas. The student will use Scripture, Confession and resources. Your paper topic needs to be approved by the professor and must be submitted by **Friday, June 12, 2020 at 12:00 pm Central Time**. Email or contact him through Canvas. If you take the **Help Improve the Syllabus Study Notes*, you will work with Dr. Duncan to add the best possible commentary and resources to ten pages of the Study Notes. Requests should be submitted to the professor by **Friday, June 12, 2020 at 12:00 pm Central Time**. Approval of topics will be made on a first come, first served basis. The **Help Improve the Syllabus Study Notes* would need to include new references to systematic theologies, popular sources, psalms, hymns and other devotional material. **Due: Friday, July 24.**

Course Outline and Assigned Reading

The student should read the indicated portions of the Confession and Catechisms, and Chad Van Dixhoorn's commentary on those portions, prior to the time Dr. Duncan expounds those portions in class. The class will meet from 9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. CT (10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. ET). The class schedule is as follows.

Monday, June 8, 2020 – Class #1

Class Hour 1	Introduction to Background of the Westminster Assembly	
Class Hour 2	A Case for Confessionalism	

Tuesday, June 9, 2020 – Class #2

Class Hour 3	WCF Chapter 1	Scripture
Class Hour 4	WCF Chapter 2	God and the Trinity

Wednesday, June 10, 2020 – Class #3

Class Hour 5	WCF Chapters 3 & 5 God's Eternal Decree and Providence	
Class Hour 6	WCF Chapter 4	Creation

Thursday, June 11, 2020 – Class #4

Class Hour 7	WCF Chapter 6 & 9	Fall and Sin and Free Will
Class Hour 8	WCF Chapter 7	God's Covenant

Friday, June 12, 2020 – No Class

Monday, June 15, 2020 – Class #5

Class Hour 9 WCF Chapter 8 Christ the Mediator

Class Hour 10 WCF Chapter 10 Effectual Calling

Tuesday, June 16, 2020 – No Class

Wednesday, June 17, 2020 – Class #6

Class Hour 11 WCF Chapters 11-13 Justification, Sanctification and Adoption

Class Hour 12 WCF Chapters 14-15 Faith and Repentance

Thursday, June 18, 2020 – No Class

Friday, June 19, 2020 – Class #7

Class Hour 13 WCF Chapters 16-18 Good Works, Perseverance and Assurance

Class Hour 14 WCF Chapters 19-20 Law and Christian Liberty

Monday, June 22, 2020 – Class #8

Class Hour 15 WCF Chapter 21 Public Worship and the Christian Sabbath

Class Hour 16 WCF Chapters 22-23 Oaths and Vows, Civil Government

Tuesday, June 23, 2020 – No Class

Wednesday, June 24, 2020 – Class #9

Class Hour 17 WCF Chapter 24 Marriage and Divorce

Class Hour 18 WCF Chapter 25 The Church

Thursday, June 25, 2020 – No Class

Friday, June 26, 2020 – Class #10

Class Hour 19 WCF Chapter 26 Communion of the Saints

Class Hour 20 WCF Chapter 27 Sacraments

Monday, June 29, 2020 – Class #11

Class Hour 21 WCF Chapter 28 Baptism

Class Hour 22 WCF Chapter 29 Lord's Supper

Tuesday, June 30, 2020 – Class #12

Class Hour 23 WCF Chapters 30-31 Church Discipline and Government

Class Hour 24 WCF Chapter 32 Last Things (1)

Wednesday, July 1, 2020 – Class #13

Class Hour 25 WCF Chapters 33 Last Things (2)

Class Hour 26 Conclusion and Assessment

Contact Information

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Assisting me to facilitate this course will be my TA, **Tony Doggett** (email: tdoggett@rts.edu). If Tony is unavailable you may contact Matt Pinckard (email: mpinckard@rts.edu).

All assignments must be submitted via Canvas in pdf format. Matt is available to answer questions for you about logistical matters related to the course.

A Structural Analysis of the WESTMINSTER CONFESSION OF FAITH (LD)

I. The Bible

1. Of the Holy Scripture God's **REVELATION**: *The Bible is the source and foundation of the WCF's teaching*

II. God

2. Of God and of the Trinity

3. Of God's Eternal Decree

God's **REIGN**: His person and sovereignty, in creation and providence

4. Of Creation

5. Of Providence

III. Man and Sin

6. Of the Fall of Man, of Sin and of the Punishment Thereof

Man's **REBELLION**

IV. Christ and Salvation

7. Of God's Covenant with Man

8. Of Christ the Mediator

9. Of Free Will

10. Of Effectual Calling

11. Of Justification

God's **REDEMPITIVE WORK**:

12. Of Adoption

God's decree revealed in the covenants, His Son, and the plan of salvation

13. Of Sanctification

V. Our Response to the Gospel

14. Of Saving Faith

Man's **RESPONSE**:

15. Of Repentance unto Life

Our response, by grace, to God's redemptive work

16. Of Good Works

17. Of the Perseverance of the Saints

18. Of the Assurance of Grace and Salvation

VI. The Life of a Disciple (as individual, in the family and in society)

19. Of the Law of God

God's **REQUIREMENTS**

20. Of Christian Liberty, and Liberty of Conscience

21. Of Religious Worship, and the Sabbath Day

22. Of Lawful Oaths and Vows

The role of God's law in the Christian life, the believer's freedom for obedience

23. Of the Civil Magistrate

24. Of Marriage and Divorce

VII. The Life of a Disciple (in the church)

25. Of the Church

God's **REQUISITE means for the gathering and perfecting of the saints**:

26. Of the Communion of the Saints God's instructions for His redeemed people's corporate and communal life

27. Of the Sacraments

28. Of Baptism

29. Of the Lord's Supper

30. Of Church Censures

31. Of Synods and Councils

VIII. The Last Things

32. Of the State of Men After Death and of the Resurrection of the Dead

33. Of the Last Judgment

God's **RETRIBUTION** and **REWARD**: The End Times, and Christian Hope

A topical outline and harmony of the Westminster Standards (Beattie)

1.	The Doctrine of Holy Scripture	1-3	1-5	1
2.	The Being, Attributes and Persons of the Godhead	4-6	6-11	2
3.	The Decrees, or the Eternal Purpose of God	7-8	12-14	3
4.	Creation and Providence	9-11	15-19	4, 5
5.	The Covenant of Works, or of Life	12-13	20-21	6-7.
6.	Original Sin	14-19	22-29	6
7.	The Covenant of Grace	20	30-35	7
8.	The Person of Jesus Christ the Mediator	21-22	36-42	8
9.	The Offices of the Mediator: The Prophetic	23-24	41-43	8
10.	The Offices of the Mediator: The Priestly and the Kingly	25-26	44-45, 55	8
11.	The Humiliation and Exaltation of Jesus Christ	27-28	46-56	8
12.	Man's Free Agency and Ability; Guilt and its Degrees	82-84	149-152	9
13.	Union with Christ; Effectual Calling; Regeneration	29-31	57-60, 66-69	10
14.	The Benefits of Redemption: Justification	32-33	70-73	11
15.	The Benefits of Redemption: Adoption & Sanctification	34-36	74-75, 77-81	12, 13
16.	Faith and Repentance	85-87	72-76, 153	14, 15
17.	Good Works; Perseverance; Assurance	36	78-81	16, 17, 18
18.	The Law of God; Christian Liberty	39-42; 82-83	91-98	19, 20
19.	The Communion of Saints, and Religious Worship	---	6, 8, 82-83, 86	21, 26
20.	The Means of Grace: The Word	88-90	98-99, 153-160	19
21.	The Means of Grace: The Commandments: The First Table	43-62	101-121	---
22.	The Means of Grace: The Commandments: The Second Table	63-81	122-148	---
23.	The Means of Grace: The Sacraments: General	91-93	161-164	27
24.	The Means of Grace: The Sacraments: Baptism	94-95	165-167	28
25.	The Means of Grace: The Sacraments: The Lord's Supper	96-97	168-175	29
26.	The Means of Grace: Prayer	98-107	178-196	21
27.	The Church and Her Censures	---	62-65	25, 30
28.	The Synods and Councils of the Church	---	---	31
29.	Lawful Oaths; The Civil Magistrate; Marriage and Divorce	70-72	137-139	22-24
30.	Death and the Middle State	37	84-96	32
31.	The Resurrection and the Judgment	38	87-90	32, 33

A Topical Harmony of the Westminster Standards (borrowed)

Day	WLC	WSC	WCF	Topic
1	1	1	26.2	Glory of God/Man's Chief End
2	2, 3, 4, 5	2, 3	1	Revelation
3	6, 7	4	2.1-2	Attributes of God
4	8, 9, 10, 11	5,6	2.3	Trinity
5	12, 13, 14	7, 8	3	God's Sovereignty/Decree
6	15, 16, 17	9, 10	4	Creation/Angels/Man
7	18	11	5	Providence
8	19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24	12, 13, 14, 15, 16	6.1-3	The Fall
9	25, 26, 27, 28, 29	17, 18, 19	6.4-6	Estate of Sin & Misery
10	30, 31, 32	20	7.1-4	Covenant of Grace
11	33, 34, 35	20	7.5-6	O.T./N.T. Admin. of Covenant
12	36, 37, 38, 39, 40	21, 22	8.2-3,7	Mediator God/Man
13	41, 42, 43, 44, 45	23, 24, 25, 26	8.1	Jesus Christ – Prophet/Priest/King
14	46, 47,	27	8.4a	Humiliation of Christ

	48, 49, 50			
15	51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56	28	8.4b	Exaltation of Christ
16	57, 58, 59, 60	29	8.5-6,8	Benefits Applied to the Elect
17	61, 62, 63, 64, 65	29	25, 26	Visible/Invisible Church
18	66, 67, 68, 69	30, 32	9,10	Free Will, Effectual Calling into Union with Christ
19	70, 71, 72, 73	33	11	Justification
20	74	34	12	Adoption
21	75, 76, 77, 78	35	13, 16	Sanctification
22	79, 80, 81	36	17, 18	Perseverance/Assurance
23	82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90	36, 37, 38	32, 33	Benefits in Life – Death – Resurrection – Judgment
24	91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97	39, 40	19, 20.1	The Moral Law & Its Use

25	98, 99	41, 42	20.2-3	Rules to Understand the 10 Comm.
26	100, 101	43, 44	19	Preface to the 10 Commandments
27	102, 103, 104, 105, 106	45, 46, 47, 48	21.1-2	1st Commandment
28	107, 108, 109, 110	49, 50, 51, 52	21.3-6	2nd Commandment
29	111, 112, 113, 114	53, 54, 55, 56	22	3rd Commandment
30	115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121	57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62	21.7-8	4th Commandment
31	122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133	63, 64, 65, 66	20.4, 23, 30, 31	5th Commandment
32	134, 135, 136	67, 68, 69	23, 26	6th Commandment
33	137, 138, 139	70, 71, 72	24	7th Commandment
34	140, 141, 142	73, 74, 75	26	8th Commandment
35	143, 144, 145	76, 77, 78	22	9th Commandment

36	146, 147, 148	79, 80, 81	26	10th Commandment
37	149, 150, 151, 152	82, 83, 84	6	The Gravity of Sin
38	153, 154	85, 86, 87, 88	14, 15	Repentance & Faith/Means of Grace:
39	155, 156, 157, 158, 159, 160	89, 90	21.5	The Word
40	161, 162, 163, 164, 176, 177	91, 92, 93	27	Introduction to The Sacraments:
41	165, 166, 167	94, 95	28	Baptism
42	168, 169, 170	96	29.1-7	The Lord's Supper
43	171, 172, 173, 174, 175	97	29.8	How to Examine – Enjoy – Evaluate the Lord's Supper
44	178, 179, 180, 181, 182, 183, 184, 185	98	21.3-4	Prayer
45	186, 187, 188, 189	99, 100	N/A	The Lord's Prayer: (Intro.)
46	190	101	N/A	1st Petition
47	191	102	N/A	2nd Petition

48	192	103	N/A	3rd Petition
49	193	104	N/A	4th Petition
50	194	105	N/A	5th Petition
51	195	106	N/A	6th Petition
52	196	107	N/A	Conclusion

Course Objectives Related to MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes

Course: 01ST6370 Theology of the Westminster Standards
 Professor: Rev. Dr. J. Ligon Duncan, III
 Campus: Jackson
 Date: Summer Remote Residential 2020

<u>MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes</u>		<u>Rubric</u>	<u>Mini-Justification</u>
<p><i>In order to measure the success of the MDiv curriculum, RTS has defined the following as the intended outcomes of the student learning process. Each course contributes to these overall outcomes. This rubric shows the contribution of this course to the MDiv outcomes.</i></p> <p><i>*As the MDiv is the core degree at RTS, the MDiv rubric will be used in this syllabus.</i></p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Strong ➤ Moderate ➤ Minimal ➤ None 	
Articulation (oral & written)	Broadly understands and articulates knowledge, both oral and written, of essential biblical, theological, historical, and cultural/global information, including details, concepts, and frameworks. Also includes ability to preach and teach the meaning of Scripture to both heart and mind with clarity and enthusiasm.	Strong	Students will study the major documents of the Westminster Assembly to understand their contents and to be able to articulate and explain them faithfully and persuasively by preparing answers to study guide questions, a comprehensive exam, and a term paper on the Westminster Standards using Scripture, the Confession and Catechisms, and Reformed resources.
Scripture	Significant knowledge of the original meaning of Scripture. Also, the concepts for and skill to research further into the original meaning of Scripture and to apply Scripture to a variety of modern circumstances. (Includes appropriate use of original languages and hermeneutics; and integrates theological, historical, and cultural/global perspectives.)	Strong	Students will explore how Scripture informs and shapes the doctrines contained within the Westminster Standards.
Reformed Theology	Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards.	Strong	Students will become familiar with the Reformed theology of the Westminster Standards by reading and reflecting upon the Westminster Confession and Catechisms in their entirety.
Sanctification	Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student's sanctification.	Moderate	Students will study the Westminster standards to attain a wholesome and comprehensive grasp of biblical truth in order to glorify God and pursue godliness.
Desire for Worldview	Burning desire to conform all of life to the Word of God. Includes ability to interact within a denominational context, within the broader worldwide church, and with significant public issues.	Strong	Students will learn about the history and background of the Westminster Assembly and reflect upon contemporary issues of both ecclesiastical and cultural relevance as well as to gain a knowledge and appreciation of the doctrines of Westminster to guard against the false teachings of our own age.
Winsomely Reformed	Embraces a winsomely Reformed ethos. (Includes an appropriate ecumenical spirit with other Christians, especially Evangelicals; a concern to present the Gospel in a God-honoring manner to non-Christians; and a truth-in-love attitude in disagreements.)	Strong	Students will be taught to provide an affectionate exposition of the doctrines of the Westminster Standards and address controversial issues in a winsomely Reformed manner.
Pastoral Ministry	Ability to minister the Word of God to hearts and lives of both church and unchurched, to include preaching, teaching, leading in worship, leading, and shepherding the local congregation, aiding in spiritual maturity, concern for non-Christians.	Strong	Using guidance from the Westminster Standards, this course is designed to assist students engage in pastoral ministry that is both theologically informed and pastorally effective in public and private settings.