

ST6370 Theology of the Westminster Standards

RTS Dallas

July 2023

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Course Description

In this historical and theological survey of the Westminster Assembly and its work, the major documents produced by the Assembly are studied in detail, with attention also 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 are discussed.

Meeting Times and Dates

- Monday-Thursday, July 17-20
- 9am-4:30pm

Academic Policies

Those outlined in the most recent edition of the seminary's course catalogue and the Student Handbook.

Recording of Class Lectures

You are not permitted to record class lectures.

Failure to Submit Assignments in a Timely Manner

In the event that you fail to turn in required assignments, you will receive the grade of an "F." For late assignments, you will be docked 25 percentage points for every day that it is late unless there is a legitimate excuse for a late submission. In the event that you need a time extension to complete your coursework within the semester, you must obtain an official approval well before the end of the semester.

Course Requirements

Your course grade will be based upon three things:

Participation (10%) – You will be graded over your participation in class via questions asked and answered, both those drawn from the reading and lecture materials. Note the grading rubric:

A (100-93)	B (92-84)	C (83-77)	D (76-70)	F (69 – 0)
Provided many good ideas for class consideration; inspired others;	Participated in discussions; shared questions and comments. Was	Listened mainly; occasionally asked a question or offered a comment. Was	Seemed bored with discussions; rarely spoke up, and questions or comments were off	Failed to attend class—missed more than three lecture periods total.

clearly communicated desires, ideas, questions, and comments. Was respectful of others.	respectful of others.	respectful of others.	topic. Was disrespectful of others. Or, dominated class time by not permitting others to ask their questions.	
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Required Reading (30%) – You will be asked to submit a reading report to indicate the percentage of the readings you have completed. Submit your reading report percentage on Canvas.

Research Paper (30%) – You are required to submit a 12-15 page paper on an aspect of the Westminster Standards. You may write on a historical-theological, exegetical, or dogmatic paper, or one that integrates the three disciplines. Your paper should conform to the latest edition of the Turabian's style guide, be double-spaced, 12pt Times New Roman font, with single-spaced 10pt Times New Roman footnotes. **You should employ a minimum of 12 sources, 3 of which must be journal articles.** Failure to follow source requirements will result in lowering your grade by one full letter (e.g., A to B).

A (100-93)	B (92-84)	C (83-77)	D (76-70)	F (69 – 0)
Follows assignment rules re. format, length, and sources; engages primary sources; provides analysis, not simply rehearses information.	Follows assignment rules re. format, length, and sources; engages minimal primary sources and is more reliant upon secondary sources; has more repetition of information than analysis	Fails to meet assignment rules re. format, length, and sources; does not engage primary sources; relies upon secondary sources exclusively; has minimal analysis.	Fails to meet assignment rules re. format, length, and sources; relies upon secondary sources exclusively, and has no analysis.	Fails to submit paper or significantly fails to meet assignment rules.

Final Exam (30%): The final exam covers theological concepts covered in the course lectures and assigned readings.

Textbooks

Holy Bible (any version).

J. V. Fesko, *The Theology of the Westminster Standards: Historical Context and Theological Insights* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2014).

Westminster Confession of Faith (1646; Glasgow: Free Presbyterian Publications, 1995). Note, **this is a recommended, not required edition.** It is recommended because it contains the Directories for Government and Worship, the Sum of Saving Knowledge, the Practical Use of Saving Knowledge, Warrants to Believe, and Evidences of Truth

Faith. These are historical interpretive documents for the Standards. They are included in your CANVAS-posted PDFs if you do not wish to purchase this edition.

Leah Farish, “The First Amendment’s Religion Clauses: The Calvinist Document that Interprets them Both,” *Journal of Religion and Society* 12 (2010): 1-22. **ON CANVAS.**

Note the primary source documents that are required reading for this course and available in PDF on Canvas:

- Scottish National Covenant
- Solemn League and Covenant
- Act of Uniformity
- Thirty-Nine Articles
- Irish Articles
- Sum of Saving Knowledge
- The Evidences of True Faith
- Practical Uses of Saving Knowledge
- Warrants to Believe
- Directory for Public Worship
- Directory for Church Government

Lecture Schedule and Reading Assignments

- * = Readings available on Canvas in PDF
- WSC = Shorter Catechism
- WLC = Larger Catechism
- WCF = Westminster Confession of Faith

Day	Time	Topic	Readings
Monday	9am-11am	Introduction Historical Background	Fesko, pp. 1-64, 395-98 Scottish National Covenant* Solemn League and Covenant* Act of Uniformity* 39 Articles* Irish Articles*
	11am-12pm	The Work of the Assembly	
	LUNCH		
	1pm-2pm	Scripture	Fesko, pp. 65-94 WCF 1; WSC 2-3; WLC 3-5
	2pm – 4:30pm		
Tuesday	9am-11am	God and the Decree	Fesko, pp. 95-124 WCF 2-5; WSC 4-11; WLC 6-20
	11am-12pm	Covenant and Creation	Fesko, pp. 125-68 WCF 6-7, 19; WSC 14-20, 39-84; WLC 21-35, 91-152
	LUNCH		
	1pm-2pm		

			Sum of Saving Knowledge*
	2pm – 4:30pm	Christology	Fesko, pp. 169-206 WCF 8; WSC 21-28; WLC 36-57, 68
Wednesday	9am-11am	Justification	Fesko, pp. 207-38 WCF 9-12, 14, 15; WSC 29-34, 82, 85-86; WLC 57-60, 66-67, 70-74, 149, 153
	11am – 12pm	Sanctification	Fesko, pp. 239-66 WCF 13, 15, 16; WSC 35-36, 87; WLC 75-78 The Evidences of True Faith*
	LUNCH		
	1pm-2pm		
	2pm-4:30pm	Law of God and Christian Life	Fesko, pp. 267-98 WCF 17-20, 22, 24; WLC 79-81 (review WSC 39-84; WLC 91-152) Practical Use of Saving Knowledge* Warrants to Believe*
Thursday	9am-11am	Church	Fesko, pp. 299-334 WCF 23, 25-29; WSC 36-38, 88-97; WLC 65-66, 82-83, 86, 90, 161-77 Farish
	11am-12pm	Worship	Fesko, pp. 335-62 WCF 21, 30-31; WSC 98-107; WLC 178-79, 180-96 Directory for Public Worship* Directory for Church Government*
	LUNCH		
	1pm-2pm		
	2pm-4:30pm	Eschatology	Fesko, pp. 363-94 WCF 32-33; SC 37-38, LC 84-90

Course Objectives Related to MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes

Course: ST6370 Theology of the Westminster Standards Professor: J. V. Fesko

Campus: Dallas, TX

Date: July 2023

MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes <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> <i>*As the MDiv is the core degree at RTS, the MDiv rubric will be used in this syllabus.</i>		Rubric <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong • Moderate • Minimal • None 	Mini-Justification
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 are required to participate in discussions where we analyze the Westminster Standards
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.)	MODERATE	This course focuses on the history of doctrine, which involves the history of exegesis.
Reformed Theology	Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards.	STRONG	This course studies the Westminster Standards.
Sanctification	Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student's sanctification.	STRONG	A key point of this course is to learn humility and charity by studying early church doctrine and gleaning knowledge from it.
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	The Westminster Standards are ultimately glorifying God and enjoying him forever.
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	The course encourages students to the know the faith they profess.
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	This course studies documents such as the Directory for Public Worship, which is all about applying the Standards' doctrine to the life of the church.