

The Theology of the Westminster Standards
RTS - Atlanta
Spring Term – 2024

“Creedal expression when faithful to the revealed counsel of God never becomes obsolete.” – John Murray

I. Course Description

- A. 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. Priority is given to a theological analysis of the organically unified system of religion expressed in the Westminster Confession of Faith.

II. Course Details

- A. Dates: Jan 29–April 15, 2024 (Term extends to May 10)
- B. Times: Monday (2:00–5:00 PM) - Class days on 1/29, 2/12, 2/19, 2/26, 3/11, 3/18, 3/25, 4/8, 4/15
- C. Location: RTS-Atlanta Campus
- D. Instructor: Dr. R. Carlton Wynne
- E. Contact: c.wynne@wmpca.org

III. Course Goals

- A. To aid students in employing the Westminster Standards as confessional documents for the church.
- B. To promote the Scriptural theology taught in the Westminster Standards, with a view to further preparing men for ordination and to enable others to engage in ecumenical fellowship and dialogue within the international Reformed community,
- C. To familiarize the students with the historical, political, and theological background of the Westminster Assembly, along with some relevant secondary literature.

IV. Course Philosophy and Structure

- A. Students of theology need to be steeped in the Word of God and familiar with the best statements of faith produced by the Christian church. These are prerequisites for usefulness to the church. For confessional Presbyterians, that means knowing the Bible and understanding the Westminster assembly’s catechisms, and the Confession of Faith as revised between 1789 and 1903. For non-Presbyterian students, a study of the Westminster assembly and its texts remains theologically and spiritually enriching, and will help them to engage with others within the Reformed community.
- B. The course will mainly consist of lecture material on the chapters of the Westminster Confession of Faith, with supplemental detours into the catechisms at relevant junctures. After an opening defense of creeds and confessions, along with a survey of the historical and political context of the assembly, the course will examine the structure and content of the Confession—noting key debates among the Westminster divines and the different emphases between the Confession and catechisms—before closing with a discussion of formal subscription to the Westminster Standards in the church.

V. Course Reading

A. Primary Sources

1. *Westminster Confession of Faith*. 1646. Reprint, Glasgow: Free Presbyterian, 1995.
 - i. Note: this is a recommended, not required edition. It is recommended because it contains the text of the Confession, as well as the two Westminster catechisms, the Directory for Public Worship, and a number of other important documents related to the Westminster assembly.
2. *The Westminster Larger Catechism*
3. *The Westminster Shorter Catechism*

B. Secondary Sources (consult “Course Assignments” below before purchasing)

1. Beattie, Francis R. *The Presbyterian Standards: An Exposition of the Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms*. Richmond, VA: The Presbyterian Committee of Publications, 1896.
2. Fesko, J. V. *The Theology of the Westminster Standards: Historical Context and Theological Insights*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2014.
3. Letham, Robert. *The Westminster Assembly: Reading Its Theology in Historical Context*. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2009.
4. Moore, J. D. “The Extent of the Atonement: English Hypothetical Universalism Versus Particular Redemption.” In *Drawn into Controversie: Reformed Theological Diversity and Debates Within Seventeenth-Century British Puritanism*, eds. M. A. G. Haykin and M. Jones, 124–61. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 2011.
5. Rehnman, Sabastian. “A Particular Defence of Particularism.” *Journal of Reformed Theology* 6 (2012): 24–34.
6. Troxel, A. Craig. “Amyraut ‘at’ the Assembly: The Westminster Confession of Faith and the Extent of the Atonement.” *Presbyterion* 22:1 (1996), 43–55.
7. Van Dixhoorn, Chad. *Confessing the Faith: A Reader’s Guide to the Westminster Confession*. Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2014.
8. Van Dixhoorn, Emily. *Confessing the Faith: Study Guide*. Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2014.

C. Suggested Resources

1. Westminsterassembly.org
2. Hall, David W., ed. *The Practice of Confessional Subscription*. Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1995.
3. Duncan, Ligon, ed. *The Westminster Confession into the 21st Century*. 3 vols. Fearn, Ross-Shire: Christian Focus, 2003–2009.
4. Muller, Richard, and Rowland Ward. *Scripture and Worship: Biblical Interpretation and the Directory for Public Worship*. Phillipsburg: P&R, 2007.
5. Shaw, Robert. *The Reformed Faith: An Exposition of the Westminster Confession of Faith*. 1845. Reprint. Fearn, Ross-Shire: Christian Focus, 2008.
6. Whyte, Alexander. *Exposition of the Shorter Catechism*. Fearn, Ross-Shire: Christian Focus, 2005.

VI. Course Assignments

Assignment ‘A’ will be completed in class.

Assignment ‘B’ will be completed prior to each relevant class period.

Assignment ‘C’ will be completed in class.

Assignments ‘D’ and ‘E’ are due by the beginning of the Spring Term exam period.

Assignments ‘D’ (and E.2, if selected) should be SINGLE spaced, with a standard font (Times New Roman 12 pt) and margins (1”).

Assignment ‘E.3’ (if selected) should be DOUBLE spaced, with a standard font (Times New Roman 12 pt) and margins (1”). Number your pages. **Please submit all uploaded assignments in ONE file.**

Number your pages.

A. Class Participation (15% of grade)

1. Prompt class attendance is, of course, crucial to the benefit of the student. The student will want and need to engage attentively with the course exposition and assignments, and to participate in class interaction in various ways.
2. Please turn off your cell phones. Checking your phone in a class discussion or lecture is as

thoughtless as checking it while holding a conversation with another person. Relatedly, please do not check email or chat online during class. Of course, you should feel free to use your class break for this purpose.

3. Please notify the instructor if you are providentially hindered from attending a particular class period. For extensions, see the “Extension Policy” provided by the RTS-A Registrar at the end of this syllabus.
4. The primary (but not exclusive!) expression of participation will be in **a class debate** centered on the readings by Troxel, Rehman, and Moore on English hypothetical universalism and the Westminster Confession of Faith. This exercise will take place during class on Week 7 and is meant to be enjoyable, though some diligent preparation will be needed for your joy to be full (cf. Phil 2:2–4).
 - i. To prepare for the debate, you must be familiar with the positions on both sides.
 - ii. To do this, you must read Moore’s “The Extent of the Atonement” (along with Rehman’s response in “A Particular Defence of Particularism”) and Troxel’s “Amyraut ‘at’ the Assembly” (All available under “Files” on our CANVAS page)
 - iii. Come to class week with notes summarizing the arguments on both sides (including how best to respond to them!), so that when you are assigned a position (along with a “team”) on the first day of class, you will be prepared to argue for it to the best of your ability.
 - iv. Be sure to focus on this specific question: “Does the WCF leave room for English Hypothetical Universalism?”
 - a. Note: You are NOT asked to argue for or against EHU itself. Be a historian!
 - v. More details to come in class regarding the teams, length, and structure of the debate.
 - a. Note: You will be submitting your notes to the professor as part of your participation in the debate.

B. Confessional Comprehension (5% of grade) – COMPLETE RELEVANT SECTIONS PRIOR TO EACH CLASS PERIOD (see “Course Schedule” below) and take READING QUIZ prior to final in-class meeting (DUE APRIL 15, 2024).

1. Read *The Westminster Confession of Faith*
2. Read *The Westminster Larger Catechism*
3. Read *The Westminster Shorter Catechism*
4. Read *The Directory for Public Worship*
5. Read Moore, J. D. “The Extent of the Atonement: English Hypothetical Universalism Versus Particular Redemption.” In *Drawn into Controversie: Reformed Theological Diversity and Debates Within Seventeenth-Century British Puritanism*, eds. M. A. G. Haykin and M. Jones, 124–61. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 2011.
6. Read Rehman, Sabastian. “A Particular Defence of Particularism.” *Journal of Reformed Theology* 6 (2012): 24–34.
7. Read Troxel, A. Craig. “Amyraut ‘at’ the Assembly: The Westminster Confession of Faith and the Extent of the Atonement.” *Presbyterion* 22:1 (1996), 43–55.
8. Read Van Dixhoorn, Chad. *Confessing the Faith: A Reader’s Guide to the Westminster Confession*. Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2014.

C. Written Quiz (5% of grade) – COMPLETE IN CLASS (DUE Week 5 – March 11, 2024)

1. Halfway through the term (March 13, 2023), during class, I will ask you to provide from memory the titles/topics of the Confession of Faith (e.g.: 1. Scripture, 2. God, 3. Decrees, etc.).

D. Response Papers (45% of grade) – COMPLETE BY MAY 10, 2024

1. Answer questions for any *six* chapters of Emily Van Dixhoorn’s *Confessing the Faith Study Guide*.
 - i. Notes:

- a. The chapters you select must come from different “parts” of the confession. The “Table of Contents” notes nine parts. So you will choose one chapter from at least six of these nine.
 - b. You need answer ONLY ten questions from each chapter that you select.
 - c. Please reproduce the questions in your written responses.
 - d. Your answers should typically be 1–3 sentences in length.
2. Provide in 2 pages your own commentary on any *section/paragraph* (not chapter!) of the *Westminster Confession of Faith*. Imagine the commentary as a teaching tool for adults or teens in your church. *Comment on a section/paragraph that you do not treat in any other assignment (such as D.1, D.3–6, or E.2).*
 3. In 1–2 pages, summarize the most important observations or arguments in J.V. Fesko, *The Theology of the Westminster Standards: Historical context and theological insights* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2014), any two chapters.
 4. In 1–2 pages, summarize the most important observations or arguments in Robert Letham, *The Westminster Assembly* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2009), any two chapters from chapters 7–15.
 5. In 1–2 pages, summarize the most important observations or arguments in Beattie, Francis R. Beattie, *The Presbyterian Standards* (Richmond, VA: The Presbyterian Committee of Publications, 1896), any two chapters from chapters 3–23.
 6. Indicate that you read the entirety of Chad Van Dixhoorn’s *Confessing the Faith* (Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2017), as well as items listed in Assignment ‘B’ above.
- E. Final Exam OR assignment OR essay (40% of grade) – COMPLETE BY MAY 10, 2024**
1. Students may take a 2-hour written exam on the content of the course, focusing on the lecture material.
 2. OR students may answer questions from another *six* chapters of Emily Van Dixhoorn’s *Confessing the Faith Study Guide*.
 - i. Notes:
 - a. The questions you select must not be from chapters or paragraphs you already treated in assignment D.1 or D.2. Nice try!
 - b. The chapters you select must come from different ‘parts’ of the confession. The “Table of Contents” notes nine parts. So you will choose one chapter from each. At least three of the chapters must come from parts of the confession not treated in D.1.
 - c. You need answer ONLY ten questions from each chapter that you select.
 - d. Your answers should typically be 1-3 sentences in length.
 3. OR students may write at 12–15 page research paper on some aspect of the confession or catechisms.
 - i. Structure: Your paper should include all of the following:
 - a. A clearly defined thesis statement (“The thesis of this paper is . . .” “This paper seeks to demonstrate that . . .”). A thesis statement does far more than merely introduce the general topic under consideration (i.e., please do not merely write, “This paper will discuss the issue of . . .”)/
 - b. Citations of *at least 8 scholarly sources*.
 - i. For the purposes of this paper, a scholarly source is a book or article by a recognized expert in the field—ideally one that has been peer-reviewed. I.e., no sources derived from the internet, unless they are books online.
 - ii. Wikipedia is clearly *not* a scholarly source. That said, with sufficient discernment, Wikipedia can be a *useful pointer* to scholarly sources and is generally reliable for fact-checking on uncontroversial issues.
 - c. Use of a recognized scholarly style for citations (e.g., Chicago/Turabian, SBL).
 - d. A standard bibliography.

- e. Page numbers in the top, right-hand corner of each page (no page number for a title page, which is optional).
 - f. Evidence of diligent attention to proper grammar, spelling, and formatting (i.e., “Scripture” not “scripture”; “biblical” not “Biblical”; block quotations that are single-spaced and indented on both sides; periods and commas inside closing quotations marks; no space between final periods and footnote numbers; etc.).
 - g. A section at the beginning containing all of the following: your name, the name and year of the course; the instructor’s name; the title of the paper.
 - h. The following statement at the end of your paper and signed by you: *I understand and have not violated the Seminary’s position on plagiarism.* (For a brief explanation of what plagiarism is and is not, please refer to p. 13 at https://rts.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Student-Hanbook_1920-1.pdf).
 - i. Adherence to the requirements and guidelines above will affect the paper grade.
- ii. **Topic**
- a. For a topic, you may choose anything relevant to the study, background, content, or use of the Westminster Standards. Paper should interact with Scripture, as well as primary and secondary sources related to the Confession, and contain a clear explanation of the issue that demonstrates your understanding of its various dimensions.
 - b. For grammar and style guidelines, consult the Grading Rubric below.
- F. *About Grades*
1. In this course, grades are a fallible way for the instructor to assess your comprehension of the course material as you prepare for gospel ministry.
 2. The grading rubric (see below) will serve as a guide for grading the written assignments. Please use it as a guide for completing the written exams.
 3. If you think it would be useful to your growth in Christ (see Phil 2:14), I will be happy to discuss your exam/paper grades with you.
 4. The final course grade is calculated as follows:
 - i. *Assignment ‘A’*: 15%
 - ii. *Assignment ‘B’*: 5%
 - iii. *Assignment ‘C’*: 5%
 - iv. *Assignment ‘D’*: 45%
 - v. *Assignment ‘E’*: 40%

VII. RTS Zoom Policy

- A. Your professor may allow you to Zoom into class or watch Zoom recordings for excused absences based on the professor’s discretion and subject to the availability of equipment.
- B. Students should contact their professor well in advance of the class meeting. For a third absence the Registrar should be consulted. Your professor may require additional interactive assignments to offset the absence of classroom interaction. Sync or Remote Live courses have priority for the limited Zoom equipment.

VIII. RTS Extension Policy

- A. All assignments and exams are to be completed by the deadlines announced in this syllabus or in class. Extensions for assignments and exams due within the normal duration of the course must be approved beforehand by the Professor. Extensions of two weeks or less beyond the date of the last deadline for the course must be approved beforehand by the Professor. A grade penalty may be assessed.
- B. Extensions of greater than two weeks but not more than six weeks beyond the last deadline for the course may be granted in extenuating circumstances (i.e. illness, family emergency). For an extension of more than two weeks the student must request an Extension Request Form from the Registrar’s Office. The request must be approved by the Professor and the Academic Dean. A

- grade penalty may be assessed. (RTS Catalog p.46 and RTS Atlanta Student Handbook p. 18)
- C. Any incompletes not cleared six weeks after the last published due date for course work will be converted to a failing grade. Professors may have the failing grade changed to a passing grade by request. (RTS Catalog p. 49)

IX. Course Schedule

DATE	LECTURES	ASSIGNMENT DUE
Week 1 (Jan 29)	<i>Introduction, Defense of Creeds and Confessions, Historical Context of the Assembly</i>	
<u>No class Feb 5</u>		
Week 2 (Feb 12)	<i>Scripture; God and the Decree</i>	WCF 1; WSC 2–3; WLC 3–5 <i>Confessing the Faith</i> , ch. 1
Week 3 (Feb 19)	<i>Creation, Providence, Fall; Covenant and Christ;</i>	WCF 2–3; WSC 4–8; WLC 6–14 <i>Confessing the Faith</i> , ch. 2–3; WCF 4–6; WSC 9–19; WLC 15–19, 21–29, 84; <i>Confessing the Faith</i> , ch. 4–6; WCF 7–8; WSC 1, 20–28; WLC 1–2, 20, 30–57; <i>Confessing the Faith</i> , ch. 7–8
Week 4 (Feb 26)	<i>Free Will, Effectual Calling, Justification</i>	WCF 9–11; WSC 82–84, 29–33; WLC 149–152, 58–60, 66–69, 70–73, 85; <i>Confessing the Faith</i> , ch. 9–11; Troxel, “Amyraut ‘at’ the Assembly,” 43–55; Rehnman, “A Particular Defence of Particularism,” 24–34.
<u>No class March 4</u>		
Week 5 (March 11)	<i>Adoption, Sanctification, Saving Faith, Repentance unto Life</i>	WCF 12–15; WSC 34–36, 85–87; WLC 74–77, 153; <i>Confessing the Faith</i> , ch. 12–14; Assignment ‘C’ Due (Quiz on Chapters of the Confession)
Week 6 (Mar 18)	<i>Good Works, Perseverance Assurance, Law of God,</i>	WCF 16–17; WSC 78; WLC 78–80; <i>Confessing the Faith</i> , ch. 15–17; Moore, “The Extent of the Atonement,” 124–61; WCF 18–19; WSC 39–81; WLC 81, 91–148; <i>Confessing the Faith</i> , ch. 18–19;
Week 7 (Mar 25)	<i>Christian Liberty, Religious Worship and the Sabbath Day</i>	WCF 20–21; WSC 88–90; <i>Confessing the Faith</i> , ch. 20–21 Assignment ‘A’ (Class Debate) Due – Have read Troxel, Rehnman, and Moore

<u>No class April 1</u>	RTS SPRING BREAK	
Week 8 (April 8)	<i>Oaths and Vows, Civil Magistrate, Marriage and Divorce, Church, Communion of the Saints</i>	WCF 22–26; WSC 39–42; WLC 61–65, 82–83, 86, 154–160; <i>Confessing the Faith</i> , ch. 22–26
Week 9 (April 15)	<i>Sacraments, Baptism, Lord’s Supper, Church Censures, Synods and Councils, After Death and the Resurrection, Last Judgment; Subscription and Stating Exceptions</i>	WCF 27–29; WSC 91–107; WLC 161–196; <i>Confessing the Faith</i> , ch. 27–29; WCF 30–33; WSC 37–38; WLC 86–90; <i>Confessing the Faith</i> , ch. 30–33 Assignment ‘B’ Quiz (Required Selected Reading) Due
May 10, 2023		Assignments ‘D’ and ‘E’ Due

Grading Rubric for Written Assignments

	The A Paper	The B Paper	The C Paper	The D Paper	The F Paper
Ideas	Excels in responding to assignment. Interesting, demonstrates sophistication of thought. Central idea/thesis is clearly communicated, worth developing; limited enough to be manageable. Paper recognizes some complexity of its thesis: may acknowledge its contradictions, qualifications, or limits and follow out their logical implications. Understands and critically evaluates its sources, appropriately limits and defines terms.	A solid paper, responding appropriately to assignment. Clearly states a thesis/central idea, but may have minor lapses in development. Begins to acknowledge the complexity of central idea and the possibility of other points of view. Shows careful reading of sources, but may not evaluate them critically. Attempts to define terms, not always successfully.	Adequate but weaker and less effective, possibly responding less well to assignment. Presents central idea in general terms, often depending on platitudes or clichés. Usually does not acknowledge other views. Shows basic comprehension of sources, perhaps with lapses in understanding. If it defines terms, often depends on dictionary definitions.	Does not have a clear central idea or does not respond appropriately to the assignment. Thesis may be too vague or obvious to be developed effectively. Paper may misunderstand sources.	Does not respond to the assignment, lacks a thesis or central idea, and may neglect to use sources where necessary.
Organization & coherence	Uses a logical structure appropriate to paper's subject, purpose, audience, thesis, and disciplinary field. Sophisticated transitional sentences often develop one idea from the previous one or identify their logical relations. It guides the reader through the chain of reasoning or progression of ideas.	Shows a logical progression of ideas and uses fairly sophisticated transitional devices; e.g., may move from least to more important idea. Some logical links may be faulty, but each paragraph clearly relates to paper's central idea.	May list ideas or arrange them randomly rather than using any evident logical structure. Paragraphs have topic sentences but may be overly general, and arrangement of sentences within paragraphs may lack coherence.	May have random organization, lacking internal paragraph coherence and using few or inappropriate transitions. Paragraphs may lack topic sentences or main ideas, or may be too general or too specific to be effective. Paragraphs may not all relate to paper's thesis.	No appreciable organization; lacks transitions and coherence.
Support	Uses evidence appropriately and effectively, providing sufficient evidence and explanation to convince.	Begins to offer reasons to support its points, perhaps using varied kinds of evidence. Begins to interpret the evidence and explain connections between evidence and main ideas. Its examples bear some relevance.	Often uses generalizations to support its points. May use examples, but they may be obvious or not relevant. Often depends on unsupported opinion or personal experience, or assumes that evidence speaks for itself and needs no application to the point being discussed. Often has lapses in logic.	Depends on clichés or over-generalizations for support, or offers little evidence of any kind. May be personal narrative rather than essay, or summary rather than analysis.	Uses irrelevant details or lacks supporting evidence entirely. May be unduly brief.
Style	Chooses words for their precise meaning and uses an appropriate level of specificity. Style fits paper's audience and purpose. Sentences are varied, yet clearly structured and carefully focused, not long and rambling.	Generally uses words accurately and effectively, but may sometimes be too general. Sentences generally clear, well structured, and focused, though some may be awkward or ineffective.	Uses relatively vague and general words, may use some inappropriate language. Sentence structure generally correct, but sentences maybe wordy, unfocused, repetitive, or confusing.	May be too vague and abstract, or very personal and specific. Usually contains several awkward or ungrammatical sentences; sentence structure is simple or monotonous.	Usually contains many awkward sentences, misuses words, employs inappropriate language.
Mechanics	Almost entirely free of spelling, punctuation, and grammatical errors.	May contain a few errors, which may annoy the reader but not impede understanding.	Usually contains several mechanical errors, which may temporarily confuse the reader but not impede the overall understanding.	Usually contains either many mechanical errors or a few important errors that block the reader's understanding and ability to see connections between thoughts.	Usually contains so many mechanical errors that it is impossible for the reader to follow the thinking from sentence to sentence.

A Structural Analysis of the *Westminster Confession of Faith*¹

Two *Principia* of Theology (1–2)

1. Of the Holy Scripture
2. Of God and of the Trinity

The Decree and Its Outworking

3. Of God's Eternal Decree
4. Of Creation
5. Of Providence
6. Of the Fall of Man, of Sin and of the Punishment Thereof

The History of Redemption

7. Of God's Covenant with Man
8. Of Christ the Mediator

[The Anthropological Effects of the Fall]

9. Of Free Will

The Application of Redemption

10. Effectual Calling

Benefits in Christ

11. Of Justification
12. Of Adoption
13. Of Sanctification

Human Response to Christ

14. Of Saving Faith
15. Of Repentance unto Life
16. Of Good Works
17. Of the Perseverance of the Saints
18. Of the Assurance of Grace and Salvation

Christian Duty under Christ

19. Of the Law of God
20. Of Christian Liberty, and Liberty of Conscience
21. Of Religious Worship, and the Sabbath Day
22. Of Lawful Oaths and Vows
23. Of the Civil Magistrate
24. Of Marriage and Divorce
25. Of the Church
26. Of the Communion of the Saints
27. Of the Sacraments
28. Of Baptism
29. Of the Lord's Supper
30. Of Church Censures
31. Of Synods and Councils

The Last Things

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

¹ Adapted from Dr. Ligon Duncan's "Structural Analysis" from his Remote Residential Course Syllabus (2020).

A Truncated Outline of *Westminster Larger Catechism*²

- * Chief End (1)
- * Scripture (2–5): Belief & Duty (5)
 - * Belief (6–90)
 - * Trinity: person and work (6–19)
 - * Covenant of Works/Life (20–30)
 - * Covenant of Grace (31–35)
 - * Christ the Mediator of the Covenant of Grace (36–56)
 - * Person (36–42)
 - * Work (43–56)
 - * Prophet, Priest, and King (43–45)
 - * Humiliation and Exaltation (46–56)
 - * Application of Christ’s Benefits to the Church (57–64)
 - * Union with Christ (65–90) (not in WCF or WSC)
 - * Communion with Christ “in grace” (66–81)
(Effectual Calling, Justification, Adoption, and Sanctification)
 - * Communion with Christ “in glory” (82–90)
 (“This life,” Intermediate State, and Resurrection)
 - * Duty (91–196)
 - * Law (92–152)
 - * “Outward” Means of Grace (153–196)
 - * Word (155–160)
 - * Sacraments (161–177)
 - * Prayer (178–196)

Truncated outline of *Westminster Shorter Catechism*

- * Chief End (1)
- * Scripture (2–3): Belief & Duty (3)
 - * Belief (4–38)
 - * Trinity: person and work (4–11)
 - * Covenant of Works/Life (12–19)
 - * Covenant of Grace (20)
 - * Christ the Mediator of the Covenant of Grace (21–38)
 - * Person (21–22)
 - * Work (23–28)
 - * Prophet, Priest, and King (23–26)
 - * Humiliation and Exaltation (23–28)
 - * Application of Christ’s Redemption (29–38)
 - * Benefits in “this life” (32–36) (Justification, Adoption, Sanctification)
 - * Benefits “at death” (37)
 - * Benefits “at the resurrection” (38)
 - * Duty (39–107)
 - * Law (40–84)
 - * Faith/Repentance (85–87)
 - * “Outward” Means of Grace (88–107)
 - * Word (89–90)
 - * Sacraments (91–97)
 - * Prayer (98–107)

² Taken from “Lecture 3” of Dr. Bob Cara’s “Creeds and Confessions” RTS-C course notes.

A Topical Outline and Harmony of the Westminster Standards (Beattie)³

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

³ Francis R. Beattie, *The Presbyterian Standards: An Exposition of the Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms* (Richmond, VA: The Presbyterian Committee of Publication, 1896), 26.

A Topical Outline of the Westminster Confession of Faith⁴

1. Holy Scripture

- 1.1 The necessity of Scripture
- 1.2 The contents of Scripture (positively stated): canon
- 1.3 The contents of Scripture (negatively stated): “apocrypha”
- 1.4 The authority of Scripture
- 1.5 The authenticity of Scripture
- 1.6 The sufficiency of Scripture
- 1.7 The clarity of Scripture
- 1.8 The immediate inspiration, preservation and translation of Scripture
- 1.9 The interpretation of Scripture
- 1.10 The supreme authority of Scripture in all theological controversy

2. God and the Trinity

2.1 God himself

- The one, living, true, infinite, perfect God
- The spirituality, invisibility, incorporeality, and impassibility of God [and simplicity*]
- The immutability, immensity, eternity, incomprehensibility, and omnipotence of God
- The unchangeable and righteous purpose of God
- The love, grace, mercy, patience, goodness, faithfulness, and forgiveness of God
- The generous reward of God
- The just and terrible judgment of God

2.2 God in and of himself

- The inherent blessedness of God
- The all-sufficiency and glory of God
- The self-existence (aseity) of God
- The sovereignty of God
- The omniscience of God
- The holiness of God
- The worthiness of God

2.3 God the Trinity

- The Trinity defined: God is one essence in three persons, consubstantial, co-omnipotent, co-eternal
- The personal property of the Father: neither begotten nor proceeding
- The personal property of the Son: eternally begotten
- The personal property of the Spirit: eternally proceeding from the Father and the Son (*filioque*)

3. God’s Eternal Decree (comprehensive, eternal, unchangeable, holy, wise, sovereign purpose and plan)

- 3.1 The scope of the decree defined in relation to sin, choice, and contingency
- 3.2 The relation of the decree to God’s absolute, exhaustive foreknowledge
- 3.3 The inclusiveness of the decree (both predestination to life & foreordination to death)
- 3.4 The absolute unchangeability of the decree as to predestination and foreordination
- 3.5 The non-contingency of predestination to life, not conditioned or caused by the creature
- 3.6 The comprehensiveness of the decree, entailing the ends, means and subjects of redemption
- 3.7 The proximate cause and end of the decree of preterition
- 3.8 The special pastoral care and prudence required in the handling of this doctrine

4. Creation

- 4.1 The purpose of creation: the display of the Triune God’s glory
- 4.2 The creation of man, male and female, in God’s image, with law on their hearts

⁴ <https://ligonduncan.com/a-topical-outline-of-the-westminster-confession-of-faith/> (accessed October 26, 2020).

5. Providence

- 5.1 The nature of divine providence
- 5.2 The decree of God, non-contingency, providence and second causes
- 5.3 The ordinary providence of God, and means
- 5.4 The providence of God, the fall, and sin
- 5.5 The providence and the sin of believers
- 5.6 The providence of God and the sin of the ungodly
- 5.7 The providence and the care of the church

6. Fall, Sin and Punishment

- 6.1 The first sin, and the permission, purposes and glory of God
- 6.2 The consequences of sin for Adam and Eve
- 6.3 The consequences of their sin for their descendants
- 6.4 Original corruption and our actual sins
- 6.5 The persistence of original corruption, even in the regenerate
- 6.6 The nature and consequences of sin

7. God's Covenant with Man

- 7.1 The necessity of God's covenant as his means for communion and blessing
- 7.2 The nature of the covenant of works
- 7.3 The nature of the covenant of grace
- 7.4 The covenant of grace as testament
- 7.5 The covenant of grace under the law
- 7.6 The covenant of grace under the gospel

8. Christ the Mediator

- 8.1 The election, identity and offices of the Mediator
- 8.2 The divine-human person of the Mediator
- 8.3 The unction and vocation of the Mediator
- 8.4 The willing work of the Mediator
- 8.5 The atoning work of the Mediator
- 8.6 The atonement effective for the elect even before the incarnation
- 8.7 The Mediator's hypostatic union and the Reformed *communicatio idiomatum*
- 8.8 The application of redemption

9. Free Will

- 9.1 The nature of human freedom
- 9.2 Human freedom in the state of innocence (*posse peccare, posse non peccare*)
- 9.3 Human freedom in the state of sin (*non posse non peccare*)
- 9.4 Human freedom in the state of grace (*posse non peccare*)
- 9.5 Human freedom in the state of glory (*non posse peccare*).

10. Effectual Calling

- 10.1 The subjects and nature of effectual calling
- 10.2 The effectual call is unconditional, the subjects passive until enabled by the Spirit
- 10.3 The effectual calling of elect infants and other incapables
- 10.4 Effectual calling and the non-elect

11. Justification

- 11.1 The nature of justification
- 11.2 The alone instrument of justification that is never alone

- 11.3 The ground of justification in Christ's obedience and death
- 11.4 The act of justification is in time, not eternal
- 11.5 The state of justification and the sins of the justified (*simul justus et peccator*)
- 11.6 The nature of justification under the old testament and the new

12. Adoption

- 12.1 The nature, subjects, basis, and blessings of adoption

13. Sanctification

- 13.1 The nature of sanctification
- 13.2 The extent and imperfection of sanctification
- 13.3 The eventual overcoming in the war of sanctification

14. Saving Faith

- 14.1 The source of saving faith
- 14.2 The nature and acts of saving faith
- 14.3 The degrees of saving faith

15. Repentance unto Life

- 15.1 The source of repentance, and the necessity of preaching it
- 15.2 The nature of repentance
- 15.3 The necessity of repentance
- 15.4 The warning and warrant of repentance
- 15.5 The specificity of repentance
- 15.6 The practice of repentance

16. Good Works

- 16.1 The nature of good works
- 16.2 The place and value of good works
- 16.3 The ability of good works
- 16.4 The imperfection of good works (supererogation)
- 16.5 The imperfection of good works (merit)
- 16.6 The acceptance of good works
- 16.7 The works of the unregenerate

17. Perseverance of the Saints

- 17.1 The certainty of perseverance
- 17.2 The grounds of perseverance
- 17.3 The trials of perseverance

18. Assurance of Grace and Salvation

- 18.1 The certainty of assurance
- 18.2 The nature and grounds of assurance
- 18.3 The experience of assurance
- 18.4 The fluctuations of assurance

19. Law of God

- 19.1 The law given to Adam in the covenant of works
- 19.2 The moral law, from fall to Sinai
- 19.3 The ceremonial law (now abrogated)
- 19.4 The judicial law (now expired)

- 19.5 The moral law (still binding)
- 19.6 The usefulness of the moral law
- 19.7 The moral law not contrary to the grace of the gospel

20. Christian Liberty and Liberty of Conscience

- 20.1 The nature of Christian freedom
- 20.2 The nature of freedom of conscience
- 20.3 The perversion of Christian freedom (licentiousness)
- 20.4 The perversion of Christian freedom (rejection of lawful civil authority)

21. Religious Worship, and the Sabbath Day

- 21.1 The duty and terms of worship
- 21.2 The object and means of worship
- 21.3 Prayer as an element of worship
- 21.4 The content of prayer
- 21.5 The other elements of worship (reading, preaching, hearing of Scripture, singing, sacraments, etc)
- 21.6 The place of worship
- 21.7 The day of worship (Christian Sabbath/Lord's Day)
- 21.8 The observance of the Christian Sabbath

22. Lawful Oaths and Vows

- 22.1 The definition of lawful oaths
- 22.2 The basis of a lawful oath
- 22.3 The limits of oath-taking
- 22.4 The obligations of oath-taking
- 22.5 The definition of vows
- 22.6 The parties and purposes of vows
- 22.7 The limits of vows

23. Civil Magistrate (Civil Authority and Government)

- 23.1 The divine institution, purpose and power of civil government
- 23.2 The legitimacy and conduct of Christians in public office
- 23.3 The limits of civil authority in relation to the church
- 23.4 The duty of the people to civil authority

24. Marriage and Divorce

- 24.1 The nature of marriage
- 24.2 The purpose of marriage
- 24.3 The prerequisites of marriage
- 24.4 The explanation of forbidden marriages
- 24.5 The basis of lawful divorce and remarriage
- 24.6 The grounds and process of divorce

25. The Church

- 25.1 The identity of the church in all ages (universal and invisible)
- 25.2 The identity of the church under the gospel (universal and visible)
- 25.3 The endowment, purpose, and dynamics of the church's mission
- 25.4 The varying visibility and purity of the church
- 25.5 The admixture, degeneration and preservation of the church
- 25.6 The head of the church

26. The Communion of the Saints

- 26.1 The basis and nature of the communion of the saints
- 26.2 The practical expression of the communion of the saints
- 26.3 Misunderstandings of the communion of the saints

27. Sacraments

- 27.1 The definition and purpose of sacraments
- 27.2 The relationship between sign and thing signified
- 27.3 The efficacy of sacraments
- 27.4 The number of sacraments
- 27.5 The relationship of old to new testament sacraments

28. Baptism

- 28.1 The nature and significance of baptism
- 28.2 The element and administration of baptism
- 28.3 The mode of baptism
- 28.4 The subjects of baptism
- 28.5 The necessity of baptism
- 28.6 The efficacy of baptism
- 28.7 The frequency of baptism

29. Lord's Supper

- 29.1 The institution and purpose of the Lord's Supper
- 29.2 The nature of the Lord's Supper
- 29.3 The administration of the Lord's Supper
- 29.4 Practices contrary to the nature of the Lord's Supper
- 29.5 The outward elements and sacramental relation of signs and things signified in the Supper
- 29.6 The error of transubstantiation
- 29.7 The way in which we receive Christ in the Lord's Supper
- 29.8 The danger of unworthy participation in the Lord's Supper

30. Church Censures (Church Discipline)

- 30.1 The government of the church appointed by Christ
- 30.2 The commitment and nature of the power of the keys
- 30.3 The aims of church discipline
- 30.4 The types of church discipline

31. Synods and Councils

- 31.1 The need for wider church assemblies (synods or councils)
- 31.2 The work and authority of synods and councils
- 31.3 The fallibility of synods and councils
- 31.4 The jurisdiction of synods and councils

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

- 32.1 The nature of death, and the intermediate state of the dead
- 32.2 The last day, the living changed, the dead resurrected and reunited body and soul
- 32.3 The difference between the resurrection of the unjust and just

33. The Last Judgment

- 33.1 The nature of the day of judgment

33.2 The purpose of the day of judgment

33.3 The practical use of the doctrine of the judgment

Course Objectives Related to MDiv Student Learning Outcomes

Course: Theology of the Westminster Standards

Professor: Rev. Dr. R. Carlton Wynne

Campus: Atlanta

Date: Spring Term 2024

<u>MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes</u> <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. *As the MDiv is the core degree at RTS, the MDiv rubric will be used in this syllabus.</i>		<u>Rubric</u> Strong Moderate Minimal None	<u>Mini-Justification</u>
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.	Strong	To employ the Standards as confessional documents requires knowing their content and developing the ability to articulate one's own views in relation to them.
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	At relevant points in the course, students will engage with the Scriptural logic and prooftexts that support the Standards' language concerning the system of doctrine contained in Holy Scripture.
Reformed Theology	Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards.	Strong	Throughout the course students will examine the theology expressed in the Standards under a wide range of logical headings.
Sanctification	Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student's sanctification.	Moderate	Students will see how the theology of the Standards relates to the Christian's growth in grace, especially in the context of covenant fellowship with God.
Desire for Worldview	Burning desire to conform all of life to the Word of God.	Strong	By reflecting on the Westminster Standards, students will be encouraged to order their deepest worldview commitments according to God's Word.
Winsomely Reformed	Embraces a winsomely Reformed ethos. (Includes an appropriate ecumenical spirit with other Christians,	Strong	Students will learn how to express and discuss their theological views in relation

	especially Evangelicals; a concern to present the Gospel in a God-honoring manner to non-Christians; and a truth-in-love attitude in disagreements.)		to Reformed symbols with those who disagree with those views.
Preaching	Ability to preach and teach the meaning of Scripture to both heart and mind with clarity and enthusiasm.	Minimal	The course's training in the Westminster Standards ought to inform the preacher's theology, and so will only indirectly shape preaching itself.
Worship	Knowledgeable of historic and modern Christian-worship forms; and ability to construct and skill to lead a worship service.	Strong	Students will directly engage with the Westminster Confession's chapters that deal with worship (ch. 1, 20, 21).
Shepherd	Ability to shepherd the local congregation: aiding in spiritual maturity; promoting use of gifts and callings; and encouraging a concern for non-Christians, both in America and worldwide.	Moderate	Students will explore how the Standards' view of man, the law, and the Spirit bear upon the Christian life.
Church/World	Ability to interact within a denominational context, within the broader worldwide church, and with significant public issues.	Moderate	Through a study of the Standards, students will be better prepared to engage with others in the international Reformed community.