

Baptist Confessions
July 6–July 9, 2026

Professor: Dr. Zack DiPrima
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Course Number: ST6350

Total Meeting Hours: 26 Hours (2 Credits)

Meeting Days & Times: Mon - Thurs: 9:00 - 4:30

“Follow the pattern of the sound words that you have heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.”

–The Apostle Paul

“All that I shall say more, is to entreat you to labor after holiness, and to awake out of sleep, that you may adorn your sacred profession, and prepare to meet the Lord; that as you have a good doctrine, you may also have a holy and good conversation; and then we need not fear who can harm us, whilst we are followers of that which is good. O let us bear one with another, and if in anything we differ, let us avoid all animosities.”

–Benjamin Keach (1640–1704), A Short Confession of Faith

“This ancient document is the most excellent epitome of the things most surely believed among us. It is not issued as an authoritative rule or code of faith, whereby you may be fettered, but as a means of edification in righteousness. It is an excellent, though not inspired, expression of the teaching of those Holy Scriptures by which all confessions are to be measured.”

–Charles Spurgeon (1834–1892) on the Second London Baptist Confession of 1689

Course Description

This course covers the history and importance of confessions in Baptist life from the seventeenth century to today. Course material will focus on denominational, associational, and individual confessions, and their place in Baptist history. The aim is to give the student a robust understanding of Baptist theological identity as it developed in historical context.

Course Objectives

- To help each student gain an appreciation for the place of confessionalism in the local church and broader denominational settings.
- To help students trace the rich history of Reformed convictions among Baptists.
- To help each student identify and appreciate peculiarities and implications of different Baptist Confessions.
- To equip students on how to use confessions in their own local church context.

Course Texts

- Carl Trueman, [*Crisis of Confidence: Reclaiming the Historic Faith in a Culture Consumed with Individualism and Identity*](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2024).
- William Lumpkin, [*Baptist Confessions of Faith*](#) (King of Prussia, PA: Judson, 2011).
- Robert Gonzales ed., [*The Confessing Baptist: Essays on the Use of Creeds in Baptist Faith and Life*](#) (Greenbrier, AR: Free Grace, 2021).
- Select Primary Sources

Supplemental (Not Required Texts)

- Peter Gentry and Stephen Wellum, [*Kingdom Through Covenant: A Biblical-Theological Understanding of the Covenants, Second Edition*](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2018). Select Chapters.
- Sam Renihan, [*The Mystery of Christ: His Covenant & His Kingdom*](#) (Cape Coral, FL: Founders Press, 2020).

Course Requirements

- **Participation and Reading (20%)** – The course will meet nine three hour classes. Students are expected to attend class, participate in classroom discussions, and read the course texts. All assigned reading must be completed in accordance with the reading schedule provided at the beginning of the course.
- **Position Paper and Presentation (25%)** – Students will write a position paper (1200–2000 words) answering the following question: *What would you do if you were a pastor leading a new church of a hundred members with little history in adopting a statement of faith (confession)?* Please include details of which confession you would choose (including if you opt to write your own) and why. Also share how you would want the statement of faith to function in the life of your church. For example, would your statement of faith merely be a doctrinal standard for leaders in the church, or the whole congregation?
- **Biographical Sketch and Presentation (25%)**– Students will write a brief biographical sketch (1500–2000 words) of a figure or movement from Baptist History, drawing out the implications of his or their legacy on the topic of confessionalism. Figures or movements must either come from the pre-approved list provided by the instructor, or be approved by him upon request.
- **Final (30%)** – A 2-hour final exam will cover course lectures and assigned reading on the last day of the course. This is a closed book, no notes exam.

Course Outline & Schedule (*subject to change*)

Day 1 (7/6):

- Introductions, Syllabus Review, Baptist Origins & Reformed Theology, Confessionalism (1500–1700)
- Confessionalism Continued, 17th Century Confessions (1610–1689)
- Gill, Fuller, English Particular Baptists – Spurgeon & the Downgrade Controversy (1689–1892)

Day 2 (7/7):

- Spurgeon & the Downgrade Controversy, Baptists in America, 20th Century Baptist Confessions, Modern Problems (1712–Present)
- The Second London Baptist Confession Part I

Day 3 (7/8):

- The Second London Baptist Confession Part II
- Baptist Covenant Theologies, Forms of Subscriptions

Day 4 (7/9)

- Presentations
- Final

Course Objectives Related to MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes

Course: Baptist Confessions (ST6350-A1)
Professor: Zack DiPrima
Campus: Atlanta
Date: July 6–July 9, 2026

| <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 | Two significant papers and presentations. |
| 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 | Mostly an history of doctrine. However, there will be significant discussion of biblical teaching on a variety of topics. |
| Reformed Theology | Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards. | Strong | In many ways, this class is a discussion of the history of Reformed Doctrine among Baptists. |
| Sanctification | Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student's sanctification. | Moderate | Working out issues of catholicity. |
| Desire for Worldview | Burning desire to conform all of life to the Word of God. | Moderate | This class promotes the establishment of a clear external standard of doctrine for Christian people. |
| 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 goal of this class is to promote cheerful confessionalism. |
| 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-Xns. | Strong | This class will have direct implications for the practical ministry of local churches. In particular, it will help prepare pastors and ministry leaders in how to equip their people in the faith once and for all delivered to the saints. |

Zoom Policy

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. 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.

Extension Policy

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.

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)

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)