

# 01ST624 THEOLOGY of WESTMINSTER STANDARDS

(Winter 2019)

January 7-11

Dr. Derek W. H. Thomas

## Course Description/Objectives

The course will attempt to provide a comprehensive survey and analysis of the Westminster Standards, including historical background and contexts. The lectures will aim to establish lines of continuity and discontinuity both within the Standards themselves (reflecting the diversity of opinion among the Westminster Divines) as well as provide trajectories to and from other Reformed Confessions. Occasional mention will be made to the area of Theological/Reformed 'Symbolics.' Attention will be given to tracing a Reformed tradition from the Patristic theologians to Aquinas (yes!) and Calvin showing that the alleged discontinuity of Puritan Theology with the Reformation is largely a theologically prejudicial construct imposed upon the Westminster Standards.

## Course Requirements (uploaded to Canvas – well, at least I'm trying!):

1. **Paper** (60%): 12-15 pages, including bibliography, on
  - a. A point of disagreement with the Confession (i.e. an "exception"), or,
  - b. A particular doctrine
2. **Final Examination** (40%) If numbers permit, this will be in the form of either a written exam OR an oral examination (Skype) reflecting the nature of a typical ordination examination in a Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church of America. Students may choose which form they wish to take. In both cases, some verbatim knowledge of the Westminster Standards is advisable for the best grades to be assigned.

## Assigned Reading

Beeke, Joel R. & Sinclair Ferguson (Eds.) Reformed Confessions Harmonized (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1999)

Shaw, Robert The Reformed Faith: An Exposition of the Westminster Confession of Faith (Fearn, Ross-shire: CFP, 2008)

Dixhoorn, Chad Van, Confessing the Faith: A Reader's Guide to the Westminster Confession of Faith (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 2014)

### **Optional Reading:**

- Bower, John R. The Larger Catechism: A Critical Text and Introduction (Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 2010)
- Carson, John To Glorify and Enjoy God (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1994)
- Duncan, Ligon (Ed.) The Westminster Confession into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Vol. 1 (Fearn, Ross-shire: CFP, 2003)
- Duncan, Ligon (Ed.) The Westminster Confession into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Vol. 2 (Fearn, Ross-shire: CFP, 2003)
- Duncan, Ligon (Ed.) The Westminster Confession into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Vol. 3 (Fearn, Ross-shire: CFP, 200)
- Letham, Robert The Westminster Assembly: Reading its Theology in Historical Context (Phillipsburg: P & R, 2009)
- Muller, Richard and Rowland Ward Scripture and Worship (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2007)
- Ridgeley, Thomas Commentary on the Larger Catechism 2 Vols (Edmonton, Canada: Still Water Revival Books, nd)
- Selvaggio, Anthony The Faith Once Delivered (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2007)
- Spear, Wayne Faith of Our Fathers: A Commentary on the Westminster Confession of Faith (Pittsburgh, PA: Crown and Covenant, 2006)
- Whyte, Alexander Exposition of the Shorter Catechism (Fearn, Ross-shire: CFP, 2005)

**Course Objectives Related to MDiv Student Learning Outcomes  
With Mini-Justification**

Course: ST624 Westminster Standards

Professor: Derek W. H. Thomas

Campus: Jackson

Date: Winter 2019

<b><u>MDiv Student Learning Outcomes</u></b>		<b><u>Rubric</u></b> > Strong > Moderate > Minimal > None	<b><u>Mini-Justification</u></b>
<b>Articulation (oral &amp; written)</b>	Broadly understands and articulates knowledge, both oral and written, of essential biblical, theological, historical, and cultural/global information, including details, concepts, and frameworks.	<b>STRONG</b>	Student must grasp contents of Westminster Standards, know how they are based on biblical and theological material
<b>Scripture</b>	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.)	<b>Minimal</b>	Occasional references to Greek and Hebrew.
<b>Reformed Theology</b>	Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards.	<b>STRONG</b>	Knowledge of integration with other Reformed Theological symbols and confessions is essential
<b>Sanctification</b>	Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student's sanctification.	<b>STRONG</b>	Reformed Theology and its Relationship to Sanctification is stressed throughout.
<b>Desire for Worldview</b>	Burning desire to conform all of life to the Word of God.	<b>MODERATE</b>	How does Reformed Theology provide a shaping contour for the whole of life is stressed.
<b>Winsomely Reformed/ Evangelistic</b>	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.)	<b>STRONG</b>	Students are taught how Reformed symbols are to be handled in debate with those who disagree with various aspects.
<b>Preach</b>	Ability to preach and teach the meaning of Scripture to both heart and mind with clarity and enthusiasm.	<b>WEAK</b>	Only in as far as Reformed Symbols shape the general theological content of preaching.
<b>Worship</b>	Knowledgeable of historic and modern Christian-worship forms; and ability to construct and skill to lead a worship service.	<b>STRONG</b>	Chapters 1, 20, 21 of WCF relate directly to Worship

<b>Shepherd</b>	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	Counseling and the Reformed Confessions will be a feature of the course.
<b>Church/World</b>	Ability to interact within a denominational context, within the broader worldwide church, and with significant public issues.	MODERATE	Relationship of Reformed Confessions to other ecumenical documents