



Theology 210 - Course Syllabus

Course Title: *Creeks, Councils, and Confessions (3 Credits)*

Course Description: This course follows the church's confession of Christ "to the ends of the earth" as foretold in the book of Acts. Beginning with early church fathers, weaving through church councils, following historical-theological movements, and ending with modern evangelical affirmations, each section of this course is paired with a primary-source theologian. Week one introduces a "Historical Catechism" that students memorize in segments. Weekly reading prepares students for classroom engagement with Athanasius, Augustine, Anselm, Luther, Calvin, Edwards, and Machen. Coursework consists of guided readings, quizzes, and a cumulative final exam. By the end, students should be able to articulate how creeds relate to Scripture and guard against heresy, how councils and leading theologians formulated doctrine in light of biblical revelation and historical developments, and how confessions can foster true unity in Christ's church--all with an eye towards God's glory and faithful ministry today.

Prerequisites: None

Instructors:

- Professor: Bob Snyder
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Course Materials:

- Bible (unless otherwise specified, you may use the translation of your choice)
 - Lecture notes and quiz blanks will use the ESV translation.
- The Apostolic Fathers, ed. and trans. Michael W. Holmes, ISBN: 978-0-8010-3468-8
- On the Incarnation, Athanasius (trans. Penelope Lawson), ISBN: 978-0-7684-6452-8
- Confessions, Augustine (trans. Henry Chadwick), ISBN: 978-0-19-953782-2
- Freedom of the Christian, Martin Luther (trans. Mark D. Tranvik), ISBN: 978-0-8006-6311-7
- A Reformation Debate, John Calvin and Jacopo Sadoletto (trans. Benjamin Wirt Farley, ed. John C. Olin), ISBN: 978-0-8010-2390-3
- Jonathan Edwards' Resolutions and Advice to Young Converts, ed. Stephen J. Nichols, ISBN: 978-0-87552-189-3
- Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God, Jonathan Edwards (ed. John D. Currid), ISBN: 978-0-87552-233-3
- Christianity & Liberalism, J. Gresham Machen, ISBN: 978-0-8028-6499-4

- *Optional: The Major Works, Anselm of Canterbury (eds. Brian Davies and G. R. Evans), ISBN: 978-0-19-954008-2*
- *Optional: Martin Luther's Ninety-Five Theses, ed. Stephen J. Nichols, ISBN: 978-1-62995-733-3*

Class Time: Class meets once a week on Sundays from 4pm-7pm. Class takes place in Room 105 at Hope Community Church, located at 2100 Ellsworth Rd. Ypsilanti, MI, 48197. Class time is broken down into the following general schedule:

- Quiz (4:00 - 4:10)
- Review of Assignments (4:10 - 4:30)
- Lecture (4:30 - 5:20)
- Break (5:20 - 5:30)
- Lecture (5:30 - 6:25)
- Break (6:25 - 6:30)
- Discussion (6:30 - 7:00)

Assignments:

- **Quizzes** - There are eleven quizzes over the course of the semester. These quizzes generally take place at the beginning of class time each week and cover the previous week's materials. The quiz format includes multiple-choice, fill-in-the-blank, and short-answer-style questions. The purpose of these quizzes is to provide the students with regular graded feedback on their understanding of the course material and to prepare them for the exams. The quizzes also ensure a student's regular and on-time attendance for the scheduled lecture time. The lowest two quiz scores for each student are dropped.
- **Historical Catechism** – This page of questions and answers is presented on the first day of class. Students memorize the answers and gain a timeline and framework for the materials in the course. The catechism is tested in three parts: in a super quiz on the fifth week, in a super quiz on the eleventh week, and as part of the final exam.
- **Reading and Reading Guide** – Each week a selection is assigned, often from a major theologian in one of the church traditions. Students read the selection and complete the reading guide in preparation for class discussion and the final exam. A copy of the reading guide is brought to class and shown to the instructor at the start of class. Notes are taken from the class discussion and added later to the reading guide. A final copy is turned in the next day through Canvas. Instructions for the reading guide (and a sample) are published on Canvas.
- **Final Exam** - The final exam is scheduled for 12/14/25. There is about an hour for some final review in class before the exam is taken. The exam is cumulative and gives equal weight to all portions of the class. Students answer three of the four questions with a 200 to 300-word essay. The historical catechism is also part of the final exam. The purpose of the final exam is to encourage each student to review the entire course material and to ensure that each student retains the information learned throughout the course of the semester.

- **Optional Essay** – Extra credit up to three percentage points (depending on the quality) is given to a double-spaced, 1200-word essay on any major theme in church history. The paper must thoughtfully incorporate quotes from at least five assigned readings. Other primary and secondary sources are also allowed, but credit is given according to the devotional and/or practical application of the theme. *Note: Extra credit cannot make up for missing assignments.* All work in this course must be completed to receive credit.

Canvas: Canvas is an online course management system for college courses. It is used in this course for online submission of assignments and for posting grades, announcements, and access to relevant course documents. Further details on how to set up a Canvas account and access this course can be found in the appendix to this document.

Assessment: Assignments have the following grade weights:

Assignment	Grade Weight	Notes
Reading	10%	Demonstrated in the Reading Guides
Reading Guides	30%	13 reading guides, each given equal weight
Quizzes	20%	11 quizzes, according to the course schedule (lowest two quizzes, dropped)
Historical Catechism	10%	Tested in three parts on 9/29/24, 11/10/24, and 12/15/24
Final Exam	30%	Taken on 12/14/24

An extra bonus point is added for perfect attendance with no tardiness or absences.

We use the following thresholds to convert raw scores in the course into letter grades:

- A+: $\geq 98\%$
- A: $\geq 92\%$
- A-: $\geq 90\%$
- B+: $\geq 88\%$
- B: $\geq 82\%$
- B-: $\geq 80\%$
- C+: $\geq 78\%$
- C: $\geq 72\%$
- C-: $\geq 70\%$
- D+: $\geq 68\%$
- D: $\geq 62\%$
- D-: $\geq 60\%$
- F: $< 60\%$

Depending on the distribution of raw scores at the end of the semester, these thresholds may change; however, the final thresholds will be no stricter than the current thresholds. For example, if you receive a raw score of 85% in the course, you will be guaranteed a letter grade of at least B; however, it may happen that you receive a higher letter grade depending on the overall distribution of raw scores.

Class Schedule:

Week #	Lecture Topics	Assignments Due
Week 1 (8/31/25)	Course Introduction Judaism, Gnosticism, and Martyrs	
Week 2 (9/7/25)	The Canon of Scripture Origen, Athanasius, and the East	- 9/7/25: Selections from Holmes, <i>The Apostolic Fathers</i> - 9/7/25: Quiz – Week 2 - 9/8/25: Reading Guide
Week 3 (9/14/25)	The Trinity, Incarnation, and Creeds The Cappadocians	- 9/14/25: Athanasius, <i>On the Incarnation</i> , Preface, Sections 1-32 - 9/14/25: Quiz – Week 3 - 9/15/25: Reading Guide
Week 4 (9/21/25)	The Theology of Athanasius Cyprian, Augustine, and the West	- 9/21/25: Handout of Four Creeds, Athanasius, <i>On the Incarnation</i> , Sections 33-57 - 9/21/25: Quiz – Week 4 - 9/22/25: Reading Guide
Week 5 (9/28/25)	The Theology of Augustine Developments in Tradition and Missions	- 9/28/25: Augustine, <i>Confessions</i> , Books VII, VIII, and X - 9/28/25: Super Quiz – Historical Catechism – Part I - 9/29/25: Reading Guide
Week 6 (10/5/25)	Developments in the Papacy Faith and Reason in Scholasticism	- 10/5/25: Patrick, <i>Confessions</i> and <i>Letter to the Soldiers of Coroticus</i> - 10/5/25: Quiz – Week 6 - 10/6/25: Reading Guide
Week 7 (10/12/25)	The Theologies of Anselm and Aquinas The Indulgence Controversy	- 10/12/25: Anselm, <i>Cur Deus Homo</i> , Letter to Urban II through Book I.4, then Book I.19-25 and Book II.1-9 - 10/12/25: Quiz – Week 7 - 10/13/25: Reading Guide

Week 8 (10/19/25)	Martin Luther and Christian Liberty The Theology of Martin Luther	- 10/19/25: Luther, <i>95 Theses</i> and Luther, <i>Freedom of a Christian</i> - 10/19/25: Quiz – Week 8 - 10/20/25: Reading Guide
Week 9 (10/26/25)	Reformed Christianity The Theology of John Calvin	- 10/26/25: Calvin & Sadoletto, <i>A Reformation Debate</i> , Letters - 10/26/25: Quiz – Week 9 - 10/27/25: Reading Guide
Week 10 (11/2/25)	The Justification Controversy Developments in English Christianity	- 11/2/25: Calvin & Sadoletto, <i>A Reformation Debate</i> , Appendices I, II - 11/2/25: Quiz – Week 10 - 11/3/25: Reading Guide
Week 11 (11/9/25)	Pietism and the Evangelical Revivals Pietism and German Liberalism	- 11/9/25: Edwards, <i>Resolutions and Advice to Young Converts</i> and <i>Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God</i> - 11/9/25: Super Quiz – Historical Catechism – Part II - 11/10/25: Reading Guide
Week 12 (11/16/25)	The Theology of Jonathan Edwards William Carey and Global Missions	- 11/16/25: Machen, “Christian & Culture” (handout) and <i>Christianity & Liberalism</i> , chs. 1, 2 - 11/16/25: Quiz – Week 12 - 11/17/25: Reading Guide
Week 13 (11/23/25)	The Bible Controversy The Marriage Controversy	- 11/23/25: Machen, <i>Christianity & Liberalism</i> , chs. 3, 4, 5 - 11/23/25: Quiz – Week 13 - 11/24/25: Reading Guide
Break (11/30/25)	Thanksgiving Week	
Week 14 (12/7/25)	The Theology of J. Gresham Machen The Evangelical Tradition	- 12/7/25: Machen, <i>Christianity & Liberalism</i> , chs. 6, 7 - 12/7/25: Quiz – Week 14 - 12/8/25: Reading Guide
Week 15 (12/14/25)	Last Review for the Final Exam Final Exam	- 12/14/25: Final Exam

Late Policy:

Assignments are expected to be submitted prior to the due date. If there are extraordinary circumstances outside of the student’s control, they may request an extension from the teaching staff.

Additionally, it is often the case that due to any number of other circumstances, a student finds that they are unable to adequately complete a given assignment. In such cases,

the student is welcome to submit the assignment after the due date, up to the end of the semester; however, a late penalty will be given for such a late assignment. The standard late penalty is a 20% flat reduction in grade for the given assignment. This late penalty is meant to penalize late submissions and encourage timeliness, while still allowing the student to still finish the given assignment to the best of their ability even if they are unable to complete the assignment for some time due to any extended circumstances.

This late policy is subject to instructor discretion. The 20% late penalty policy is intended to allow for unique or difficult but not extraordinary circumstances. Any student who abuses this policy, per the instructor's discretion, is liable to have this policy revoked and the grade revert to either a zero or that based on any submission prior to the due date.

Appendix: How to Set up Your Canvas Account

This course will use the free version of Canvas. This means that you will be able to set up a Canvas account with your regular email and will be able to access the course on Canvas with a simple course invitation sent to your email. Please perform the following steps to set up your Canvas account:

- Check your email for a course invitation to Canvas.
- Click the “Get Started” button, which should redirect you to a Canvas page.
- Accept the course invitation. Upon accepting, it should redirect you to a page that will allow you to either set up a new Canvas account or link a current Canvas account.
- If you do not already have a free Canvas account, proceed to create a new account. To create a new account, it will set your login to be your email, you simply need to set your password and accurate time zone.

Your new account should be all set. To log in to Canvas in the future, go to the following URL: <https://canvas.instructure.com/login/canvas>

Use your email and password to log in. Then click on your course.

To use the mobile Canvas app, you’ll want to download the Canvas app. Upon downloading and opening the app for the first time, it will prompt you to “Find my School.” Select this option and put in “Free Canvas Accounts.” Select this option and proceed to log in with your email and password associated with your free Canvas account.

Appendix: How to submit assignments on Canvas

From the course’s Canvas home page, navigate to the assignments tab. Select the specific assignment from the list of assignments. Follow the instructions for the different cases of typed and handwritten submissions.

For typed documents:

- Click “Start Assignment” (“Submit Assignment” in the mobile app)
- Click “Upload File” (“Files” in the mobile app)
- Click “Choose File” (simply select the file in the mobile app)
- Navigate to the proper file and select it
- You may add any number of files by selecting “Add Another File”

For handwritten documents:

You may use a scanner, scanner app, or simply take photos of your work and submit the files by following the same steps outlined for typed documents. The best option may be to use the Canvas mobile app to submit the assignment and use the scanner feature as an option after selecting “Submit Assignment.”

Please note, you may submit as many times as you would like prior to the assignment deadline. The most recent submission will count as your graded submission.

Appendix: Academic Integrity

Students are expected to hold themselves to a Christian standard of ethics in all matters. This includes but is not limited to, refraining from any forms of plagiarism, cheating, sharing, or acquiring any materials that would give a student an unfair advantage, or any dishonest representation of one's work. Below are outlined the consequences for an infringement of academic integrity for a given assignment:

- First offense – A grade of zero is given for the assignment; the professor must notify the Registrar and Dean of Students. A statement goes into the student's file.
- Second offense – A grade of F is assigned for the course; the professor must notify the Registrar and Dean of Students. A statement goes into the student's file. The Dean of Students and/or Registrar will notify faculty of students who incur a second offense in this area.
- Third offense – The professor must notify the Registrar and Dean of Students. A statement goes into the student's file and the student may be suspended or dismissed from this institution.

Appendix: Policy on Use of Generative Language Models for Written Assignments

The use of generative language models, such as ChatGPT, is not strictly prohibited and in some cases is very much encouraged as a research and brainstorming tool. However, all written assignments submitted as your own work should reflect your own personal writing. This prohibits copy and paste use of such tools, however, you may feel free to quote such tools provided that you make clear it is a quotation.

In general, you should treat generative language models as equivalent to speaking to another person. You may gain insight from them and be able to improve your value and productivity, but you should not misrepresent someone else's work as your own. These tools may also be treated somewhat like calculators in a math class. You may use them when appropriate and assignments may even assume their use in some ways, but all submitted work must be your own unless specified otherwise.