Instructor: David S. Yeago

Contact Information:

    Email: (Provide email)
    Phone: 803-348-5046

Class Time: Monday from 1-4 PM.

Catalog Course Description: Historical and theological examination of the Apostles, Nicene, and Athanasian Creeds as normative expressions of the Christian faith, including an overview of the development and content of the creeds and consideration of their origin and multiple functions within the life of the church. Special attention will be given to the relation of the Creeds to the biblical understanding of confessing Christ and to the ancient understanding of the Creeds as “rule of faith” for biblical interpretation and theology.

Relation to Curriculum: This course is a required course for the concentration in the Lutheran Studies program. It can serve as a Christian Thought elective for students in the M.Div. and M.A.C.T. programs, or as a general elective for other students. There are no prerequisites.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

This course is designed to introduce students to the history, theology, and function of the Christian creeds, and to and to give them an opportunity to reflect on biblical interpretation, theological study, Christian ministry and mission, and indeed the Christian life as encompassed within the reality of eschatological confession of Christ under the authority of the apostolic witness expressed in the rule of faith. The intended outcomes of the course will contribute to fulfilling the mission identified in the Gordon-Conwell Mission Statement in the following ways:

Article 1: To encourage students to become knowledgeable of God’s inerrant Word, competent in its interpretation, proclamation and application in the contemporary world.

The course will press students to reflect on significant issues in biblical hermeneutics, in particular the role of the creeds as summaries of the “rule of faith” and thus as guides to the message of Scripture and “normed norms” of scriptural interpretation. It requires students to relate the Creeds to Scripture in a concrete way by keeping a Theological Commonplace Book (see below)

Article 2: To maintain academic excellence in the highest tradition of Christian scholarship in the teaching of the biblical, historical and theological disciplines.
Students will be solidly informed about the classic Christian creeds, especially the Apostles, Nicene, and Athanasian Creeds, their historical development and their multiple roles in the life of the church. Students will also receive an overview of the Trinitarian faith of the Creeds and will be challenged to reflect on the Creeds as expressions of the Christian view of the world.

**Article 3: To train and encourage students, in cooperation with the Church, to become skilled in ministry.**

Students will be equipped to expound the Creeds competently in teaching and catechesis.

**Article 4: To work with the churches towards the maturing of students so that their experiential knowledge of God in Christ is evidenced in their character, outlook, conduct, relationships and involvement in society.**

Students will reflect on the “confessional imperative” (Matthew 10:32-33; Romans 10:8-13; 1 Corinthians 15:1-11) in the life of faith and in this way grow in their own identity as “confessing” Christians.

**Article 5: To provide leadership and educational resources for shaping an effective evangelical presence in Church and society.**

Students will reflect on what it means to be a “confessing” theologian-leader in a confessing community of believers. They will consider the implications of the confessional calling of the church for its order and life.

**Article 6: To develop in students a vision for God’s redemptive work throughout the world and to formulate the strategies that will lead to effective missions, evangelism and discipleship.**

Reflection on the creedal/confessional character of the Christian faith is by its very nature already reflection on the shape of God’s redemptive work throughout the world. Reflection on the confessional character of the Church is foundational to reflection on the manner of the Church’s missional presence in the world. By highlighting these issues, the course will contribute to students’ development of the sort of “vision” without which we cannot know what we mean by calling missions, evangelism, and discipleship “effective.”

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:** Achievement of the course objectives will be measured through a variety of assignments. The successful completion of these assignments will require each student to spend at least 135 hours devoted to coursework, both in class and outside of class. The following chart indicates how these hours are distributed across the various course assignments.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Assignment</th>
<th>Expected Time Commitment</th>
<th>Student’s Actual Time</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading the documents for class discussions</td>
<td>65 hours</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assignment</td>
<td>Hours</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class lecture/discussion</td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Weekly Questions &amp; Comments for Instructor</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Commonplace Book</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm Paper</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Paper</td>
<td>10</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

You must keep a record of the time you spend on each assignment and by May 13 must upload to the Sakai site a chart like the one above, indicating the amount of time you have actually spent on each assignment in the right-hand column.

**REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS**


Available Online or on Reserve:


Tip: the following 99-cent Kindle version seems to have modernized the language of the old translation somewhat and may be easier to read:

http://www.amazon.com/Catechetical-Lectures-ebook/dp/B00BQN6O1E/ref=sr_1_2?s=digital-text&ie=UTF8&qid=1368573370&sr=1-2&keywords=cyril+of+jerusalem

Even those who don’t own a Kindle can read this on their computer with a free download of Kindle for PC or MobiPocket Reader.


I still have to determine how the Augustine readings will be made available. The sermons for the “handing over” of the Creed will be on reserve in the New City Press translation. I am still exploring options on the other two works.


Thomas F. Torrance, “Come, Creator Spirit, for the Renewal of Worship and Witness,” Theology in Reconstruction, 240-258. ON RESERVE

ASSIGNMENTS

1. Reading (30 points): You must complete app, 2000 pages of reading according to the schedule at the end of this syllabus. This reading includes both classical and contemporary theological and historical treatment of the creeds and cognate topics. Discussion of this reading will be a major learning activity in class, and thus it is crucial that you complete each reading assignment prior to the class meeting when it will be discussed.

As you read, you must keep a reading log in which you indicate how long it has taken you to complete each reading and when you completed it. By Tuesday, April 17, you must upload your reading log to the Sakai site.

2. Each student will submit questions and comments on the assigned reading to the instructor by email by 5PM on the evening before each class (starting with September 16) (10 points). There is no set word count for these submissions, but they are expected to be thoughtful, clearly articulated, and specific in making reference to the reading assignments. You are expected to spend approximately half an hour each week looking back over the reading assignments and formulating questions and comments. Except for excused absences, these assignments cannot be made up. You will be informed by the instructor if
your questions and comments are not meeting the standard; they will also be discussed at the midterm colloquy.

3. Each student will keep a Theological Commonplace Book throughout the course (20 points). A theological commonplace book (a book of Loci Communes Theologici in the language of the Reformation) is a thematically organized study of Scripture. Each week (starting with September 16), you will be asked to identify two Biblical passages that pertain to an assigned article of the Creed, and to write 500-1000 words of commentary on these texts. The commentary will indicate how the text is related to the Creed and clarify briefly the specific contribution of each particular text to the meaning of the creedal affirmation. Both dimensions of this assignment – the discernment of the relevance of biblical texts to specific theological topics and theologically-attuned attention to their details – relate to basic skills in theological exegesis of Scripture. An example of a commonplace book entry will be provided.

The Commonplace Book must be made available to the instructor before class on September 30 to be checked over and commented on, in order to assure that you are on the right track with the assignment. The Commonplace Book will be also be discussed with the instructor at the two colloquies.

It is important that you spend time working on this assignment each week. You must keep a log in which you record how long it took you to complete each week’s assignment and when you finished it. This is additional to the Reading Log.

4. Each student will write a 10-page double-spaced first integrative paper on the topic: “The Confessing Believer in a Confessing Church: The Personal and Corporate Meaning of the Creeds” (20 points). This paper will be emailed/uploaded to the instructor by October 21. It will be discussed with the instructor during the first colloquy.

The midterm paper must address the following issues:

   What is the theological significance of “confession” in Scripture?

   How does the idea of “confessing” qualify and explicate the meaning of Christian faith?

   How does the confessing believer relate to and depend on the confessing community?

   What sort of institutional practices and arrangements are necessary if a Christian community is to be seriously “confessional”?

6. Each student will write a 12-15 page double-spaced final integrative paper on the topic: “The Creeds as Summary and Rule of Faith” (20 points). This paper must be made available to the instructor by December 9. It will be discussed with the instructor at the final colloquy.

The final paper must address the following issues:

   What should be the authority of the Creeds in the Church?

   What is the relationship between the Creeds and Scripture? How should the Creeds affect the way we read and interpret Scripture?
How does each of the three articles of the Creeds orient and shape the worldview and imagination of the believer and the Church?

6. Each student will meet with the instructor for individual colloquies after the first and final papers are due. The purpose of the colloquies is to provide individualized feedback and dialogue.

**Grading Scale:** The point values listed above mean that the total number of points available for the course is 100. Final letter grades will be applied with cutoffs as follows: A 95, A- 90, B+ 87, B 83, B- 80, C+ 77, C 73, C- 70, D+ 67, D 63, D- 60, F below 60. A grade of A+ will be given very rarely, when the student’s work is truly exceptional. (At Gordon-Conwell, a grade of A+ and a grade of A are both counted the same way in calculating the student’s GPA. Thus, a GPA above 4.0 is not possible.)

**Late work:** All late work will be penalized the equivalent of one letter grade per week beyond the due date, unless arrangements are made ahead of time. Extenuating circumstances will be considered as appropriate. Work turned in later than the Seminary’s announced final date for submission of written work will normally require that an extension be approved by the Seminary. If you anticipate a problem, contact me as soon as possible.

**Attendance Policy:** Class attendance and participation are a central part of this course. Students who must miss a class period should notify me in advance to justify their absence. If a student has more than one unexcused absence from class, he/she will receive a penalty of three points per additional unexcused absence on his/her final grade.

**Document Formatting and Citation Style Requirements:** All written assignments should be submitted as MS-Word files so that I can enter comments on them and return them to you. Assignments should be double spaced with 1” margins on all sides of each page, and should be printed in Times New Roman 12 point type or another font of similar size and appearance. Citations should preferably follow Turabian style, although APA style is also acceptable. **All assignments must be submitted electronically.**

**Syllabus Addendum:** For other Seminary policies, refer to the attached Syllabus Addendum.
# CLASS SCHEDULE AND ASSIGNMENT DUE DATES

## September 9. Introduction; “Confessing the Faith” in Scripture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>READING ASSIGNMENT</th>
<th>OTHER</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trueman, chapters 1-2</td>
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## September 16. Creed, Canon, and the Rule of Faith in the Early Church

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>READING ASSIGNMENT</th>
<th>OTHER</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pelikan, 1-121, 365-396</td>
<td>Questions &amp; Comments to Instructor by 5PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jenson, 1-76</td>
<td>September 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trueman, chapter 3</td>
<td>Commonplace Book, “I Believe”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Williams, 39-80, 163-183</td>
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## September 23. Interpreting the Creeds in the Ancient Church

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>READING ASSIGNMENT</th>
<th>OTHER</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Irenaeus, <em>On the Apostolic Preaching</em></td>
<td>Questions &amp; Comments to Instructor by 5PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyril of Jerusalem, Lectures 1-5</td>
<td>September 22</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rufinus, <em>On the Creed</em></td>
<td>Commonplace Book, First Article</td>
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<tr>
<td>Augustine, <em>On Faith and the Creed; On the Creed to the Catechumens</em>; sermons on the “handing over” of the Creed (ON RESERVE)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Williams, 81-118, 185</td>
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## September 30. Middle Ages, Reformation, Modern Times

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>READING ASSIGNMENT</th>
<th>OTHER</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pelikan, 397-515</td>
<td>Questions &amp; Comments to Instructor by 5PM</td>
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<tr>
<td>Martin Luther, <em>The Large Catechism</em></td>
<td>September 29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peters,, 1-58</td>
<td>Commonplace Book, Second Article</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bray and Beckwith in George, 45-73</td>
<td>Commonplace Book for the first two weeks of class must be made available to the Instructor by 5PM</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trueman, Chapter 4</td>
<td>September 29</td>
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</table>
October 7. The Creeds, Faith, and the Church

READING ASSIGNMENT
Pelikan, 158-305
Webster in Seitz, 119-131
Harmon in George, 74-92
Trueman, chapter 5
Jackson, 1-3
Luther, “The Three Creeds or Symbols of the Christian Faith” (to be distributed electronically)

OTHER
Questions & Comments to Instructor by 5PM
September 22
Commonplace Book, Third Article

October 14. NO CLASS

READING ASSIGNMENT - None

OTHER
Work on Midterm Paper

October 21. The Creeds, the Rule of Faith, and the Interpretation of Scripture

READING ASSIGNMENT
Pelikan, 127-157
Jenson, 79-121
Williams, 119-148
Gignilliat in George, 20-33
Greene-McCreight in Seitz, 167-175

OTHER
Midterm Paper Due
Commonplace Book and Log to Date must be turned in to the Instructor
Questions & Comments to Instructor by 5PM October 20
Commonplace Book, “I Believe”

October 21-26: Colloquies

October 28. Confessing God the Father

READING ASSIGNMENT
Cyril of Jerusalem, Lectures 6-9
Peters, 59-104
Jackson, 4-5
Seitz and DiNoia in Seitz, 19-34, 63-73

OTHER
Questions & Comments to Instructor by 5PM October 27
Commonplace Book, First Article
### November 4. Confessing God the Son

**READING ASSIGNMENT**
- Cyril of Jerusalem, Lectures 10-15
- Peters, 105-202
- Jackson, chapters 6-11
- Torrance, Yeago, Braaten and Farrow in Seitz, 49-61; 87-118; 133-148

**OTHER**
- Questions & Comments to Instructor by 5PM November 3
- Commonplace Book, Second Article

### November 11. Veterans Day. No Class.

**NO READING ASSIGNMENT**

**Commonplace Book, Second Article**

### November 18. Confessing God the Holy Spirit

**READING ASSIGNMENT**
- Cyril of Jerusalem, Lectures 16-18
- Peters, 209-306
- Jackson, chapters 12-17
- Torrance, “Come, Creator Spirit, for the Renewal of Worship and Witness,” *Theology in Reconstruction*, 240-258
- ON RESERVE
- Abraham, Wood, and Guroian in Seitz, 177-212

**OTHER**
- Questions & Comments to Instructor by 5PM November 10
- Commonplace Book, Third Article

### November 25. The Life of the Creeds in the Life of the Church

**READING ASSIGNMENT**
- Pelikan, 306-364
- Trueman, chapter 6
- Williams, 149-162
- Newman, Nelson, Nielson, Rucyahana, and Wood in George, 133-168, 196-201

**OTHER**
- Questions & Comments to Instructor by 5PM November 22
- Commonplace Book, Third Article
- Complete Commonplace Book Due
- Complete Log for Commonplace Book due
December 9: FINAL PAPER AND READING LOG DUE

December 9-14: FINAL COLLOQUIES (Students who turn in the paper early may schedule an earlier colloquy)
Syllabus Addendum

**Academic Standards:**

Cheating and plagiarism are considered serious breaches of personal and academic integrity. Cheating involves, but is not necessarily limited to, the use of unauthorized sources of information during an examination or the submission of the same (or substantially same) work for credit in two or more courses without the knowledge and consent of the instructors. Plagiarism involves the use of another person’s distinctive ideas or words, whether published or unpublished, and representing them as one’s own instead of giving proper credit to the source. Plagiarism can also involve over dependence on other source material for the scope and substance of one’s writing.

Such breaches in academic standards often result in a failing grade as well as other corrective measures. For more information, please consult the Student Handbook.

**ADA Policy:**

The seminary complies with the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act. A student with a qualifying and authenticated disability who is in need of accommodations, should petition the seminary in accordance with the stated guidelines in the Student Handbook.

**Cancellation of Class:**

In the event the seminary has to cancel a class meeting (impending storm, professor illness, etc.), the Registration Office will send out an email (via the GCTS email account) notification to all students registered in the respective course. If the cancelation occurs the day of the scheduled meeting, the Registration Office will also attempt to contact students via their primary phone contact on record. The professor will contact the students (via GCTS account) regarding make-up. If a weekend class is cancelled, the class will be made up during the scheduled Make-Up weekend (see the academic calendar for the designated dates). For more info, consult your Student Handbook.

**Extension Policy:**

Arrangements for submission of late work at a date on or before the “last day to submit written work”, as noted on the seminary’s Academic Calendar, are made between the student and professor. Formal petition to the Registration Office is not required at this time. This includes arrangements for the rescheduling of final exams.

However, course work (reading and written) to be submitted after the publicized calendar due date, must be approved by the Registration Office. An extension form, available online, must be submitted to the Registration Office prior to the “last day to submit written work.” Requests received after this date will either be denied or incur additional penalty. For a full discussion of this policy, please consult the Student Handbook.

**Grades:**

Grades are posted on line within twenty-four hours of receipt from the professor. Students are expected to check their CAMS student portal in order to access posted grades. Those individuals who
need an official grade report issued to a third party, should put their request in writing to the Registration Office. Faculty have six weeks from the course work due date to submit a final grade.

**Returned Work:**

Submitted course work will be returned to the student provided s/he provides a self addressed and postage paid envelope with his/her final work. Work submitted without the appropriate envelope will be destroyed once the grade has been assessed and issued. [Note that this Seminary policy does not apply to this class, because I will not accept hard copies of written work. My comments on all written work will be available through Sakai.] Again, I need to learn about Sakai.