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:

i. Notebook. This should be handed in at the end of the semester and should reflect notes taken during class as well as those made during the assigned reading. The Readings must include all the assigned reading PLUS 200 pp from the “optional reading” list. Evidence of this reading must be clearly given in your notebooks! (25%)

ii. Paper: 12-15 pages research paper (40%)

iii. Final Examination. If numbers permit, this will be in the form of either a written exam OR an oral examination 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. (35%)

Assigned Reading

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


Dickson, David Truth’s Victory Over Error (Edinburg: Banner of Truth, 2007)
Optional Reading:


Carson, John To Glorify and Enjoy God (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1994)


Letham, Robert The Westminster Assembly: Reading its Theology in Historical Context (Phillipsburg: P & R, 2009)


Ridgeley, Thomas Commentary on the Larger Catechism 2 Vols (Edmonton, Canada: Still Water Revival Books, nd)


Whyte, Alexander Exposition of the Shorter Catechism (Fearn, Ross-shire: CFP, 2005)