

HT615 Presbyterian History and Confessions

Summer 2018

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3 credits

Letter grade or P/F

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will engage with the history, theology, and practice of the Reformed tradition. Through readings, lectures, and discussions, students will explore the history of Presbyterianism in the United States, survey the confessional Reformed theology in the *Book of Confessions*, and discuss how to apply this theology to the practical demands of pastoral ministry. The course will prepare students to pass the ordination examination of theological competence.

In addition to using the *Book of Confessions* as our theological guide, we will use Randall Balmer and John Fitzmier's *The Presbyterians* to guide us in the history and Andrew Purves's *Reconstructing Pastoral Theology* to guide us in connecting theology to practical ministry.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Students who participate fully in this course will:

1. Gain a working knowledge of Reformed history and theology, with a special focus on the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).
2. Become familiar with the *Book of Confessions* of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), gaining an understanding of the development and major themes of the Reformed confessional tradition.
3. Learn how to apply Reformed theology to the tasks of pastoral ministry and to develop a pastoral theology in the Reformed tradition.
4. Develop the knowledge and skills for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)'s ordination process.

REQUIRED TEXTS

The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Part I, The Book of Confessions. Louisville: Office of the General Assembly, 2016. Available online:

https://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/oga/pdf/boc2016.pdf (*The Book of Confessions, Study Edition, Revised* is highly recommended)

Randall Balmer and John R. Fitzmier, *The Presbyterians* (Denominations in America). Westport, CT: Praeger, 1994.

Andrew Purves, *Reconstructing Pastoral Theology: A Christological Foundation*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2004.

RECOMMENDED TEXTS (NOT REQUIRED)

Book of Catechisms: Reference Edition. Louisville: Geneva Press, 2001.

Book of Confessions, Study Edition, Revised. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2017.

Hart, D. G. and Mark A. Noll, eds. *Dictionary of the Presbyterian and Reformed Tradition in America*. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2005.

Leith, John H. *An Introduction to the Reformed Tradition*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1993.

Longfield, Bradley. *Presbyterians and American Culture: A History*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2013.

McKim, Donald K. *Introducing the Reformed Faith: Biblical Revelation, Christian Tradition, Contemporary Significance*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001.

Migliore, Daniel L. *Faith Seeking Understanding: An Introduction to Christian Theology*. 3rd ed. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014.