

ST550 — The Lutheran Confessions (intensive/online)

January 2021 course syllabus
Department: Systematic Theology
Credit hours: 3

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Description

A close study of the confessional writings of the Lutheran Church as gathered in the *Book of Concord*. The course will focus on the role of the Confessions as public doctrine of the Lutheran Church. The major theological topics in the Confessions will be studied in relation to the wider Christian tradition with an eye to their ecumenical and pastoral implications. Classic and contemporary Lutheran theologians will be consulted for insight into what means to be a “confessional Lutheran” in particular places and times.

Objectives

1. Understand the historical origins and motivations of the Lutheran confessional texts (Confessions).
2. Become familiar with the theological-doctrinal contents of the Confessions in relation to the Christian dogmatic tradition.
3. Recognize and evaluate the strategies of Biblical interpretation exemplified in the Confessions.
4. Assess the role(s) of the Confessions in the worship, teaching, and mission of contemporary Lutheran churches.

These are specific forms of Trinity School for Ministry’s broad Ministry Learning Objectives:

1. Students will recognize and identify the biblical theology evident in the course work.
2. Students will be able to articulate an Anglican understanding of biblical, historical, systematic, and pastoral theology. Students of other traditions, especially those in the Lutheran and Presbyterian programs, should be able to articulate the theological perspective of their own tradition.

3. Students will be able to communicate effectively the Christian message to a diversity of people in order to advance the mission of God.
4. Students will be prepared to effectively lead in a variety of Christian communities.

Texts

1. Robert Kolb and Timothy J. Wengert (eds.). *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*. Fortress, 2000. ISBN 9780800627409.
2. Charles P. Arand, Robert Kolb, and James A. Nestingen. *The Lutheran Confessions: History and Theology of the Book of Concord*. Fortress, 2012. ISBN 9780800627416.
3. Robert Kolb and James A. Nestingen (eds.). *Sources and Contexts of the Book of Concord*. Fortress, 2001. ISBN: 9780800632908.

Structure

Due each day:

1. Complete the reading in *The Book of Concord* and *The Lutheran Confessions* corresponding to the day’s topic.
2. Write a short reading summary (less than 300 words).
3. Listen to the daily lecture.
4. Participate in class discussion.

The most effective reading strategy would be to complete both *The Book of Concord* and *The Lutheran Confessions* before the course begins, and use the days of the course to refresh your memory and to think more deeply about what you have read. In any case, I will expect the relevant sections of both volumes to have been read prior to each day’s discussion.

Due February 8: A paper analyzing the Confessions’ treatment of a specific theological topic. A more detailed guide to this assignment will be provided separately. Length: 3000–4500 words (10–15 pages).

Evaluation

Assignments will be weighted as follows in the final grade:

Reading summaries	20%
Participation in discussion	30%
Final paper	50%

Trinity's grading scale:

A	95 and above	B	84–86
A–	90–94	B–	80–83
B+	87–89	C+	77–79
C	74–76	D	Below 70
C–	70–73	F	Below 60

- A Work demonstrates exceptional coverage of the material, treating it in breadth and depth beyond what is necessary for even a good understanding, in a way that is often marked by unusual creativity, exceptional insight, or extensive research.
- B Work demonstrates sufficiently broad (i.e. comprehensive) and deep (i.e. supported) coverage of the material, displaying accuracy of information and a clear and coherent structure, in a way that is competent without being exceptional.
- C Work demonstrates reasonable coverage of the material, but lacks clarity and coherence, breadth and depth, or imaginative and interesting analysis.
- D Work is notably defective according to the criteria outlined above.
- F Work completely fails according to the criteria outlined above.

Schedule

January 11	Confession, faith, theology Creeds and Catechisms Augsburg Confession and Apology (1)
January 12	Augsburg Confession and Apology (2)
January 13	Augsburg Confession and Apology (3) Formula of Concord (1)
January 14	Formula of Concord (2)
January 15	Formula of Concord (3) Smalcald Articles; Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope Confession, church, unity

Policies

Plagiarism: Plagiarism is a violation of an author's or artist's intellectual property rights, and a serious offense. Note the rules concerning copying material in Trinity School for Ministry's *Academic Catalog*, in the section on "Cheating and Plagiarism" in the "Academic Policies" chapter):

Students at Trinity are expected to display the highest standards of personal and academic integrity in the development of research papers and other academic projects. Perhaps the most critical issue in exhibiting integrity in academic assignments is student compliance with accepted practices of notation of resources and references used to develop their paper or project. It is recognized there can be some confusion regarding proper procedures and practices regarding integration of bibliographical references into assignments. The following policy is intended to address both intentional and unintentional plagiarism. The policy also recognizes that there are levels of plagiarism and that consequences must be aligned with the seriousness of the offense. All students are responsible for being familiar with this policy. Ignorance of plagiarism guidelines will not be accepted as a defense or excuse for violating these standards.

Late work: Instructors may grant due date extensions. Students may, by arrangement with the instructor, submit required course work up to the official end of the term. Any student expecting to submit required course work later than the original due date, but before the last day to submit work for the term, must alert the instructor in writing, stating the extenuating circumstances, in order to obtain permission for late submission; a copy of this request must be submitted to the Registrar to be kept in the student's file. The instructor may reduce the grade given, depending on the reason for the extension, and must clearly indicate any such condition and amount of reduction to the student.

Incompletes: Any extension beyond the official last day to submit work for the term will involve an incomplete, and may be obtained only by written petition to the Academic Dean and Registrar, showing the instructor's support for such an extension. The petition must demonstrate significant extenuating circumstances justifying the request. The Academic Dean and instructor, in consultation with the Registrar, shall determine the length and end date of the incomplete period. The Registrar will generate a contract to be signed by the instructor, the student, and the Academic Dean. The incomplete work shall be due no later than 30 days following the original work due date. An administration fee of \$200, not eligible for scholarship, shall be added to the student's

bill. Additionally, the student may not register for courses in the next term until the required work is submitted and all fees are paid in full. An “I” indicating an incomplete will be entered in the student’s transcript for the course in question. When the work has been completed, the instructor shall submit a final grade to the Registrar, who shall then make an appropriate notation on the transcript indicating removal of the Incomplete and entering the final grade. If the applicable deadline is not met, in accordance with the procedures stated above, an “F” shall be automatically registered for the work in question, and the grade for the course shall be calculated on that basis. Additionally, the student may be put on academic probation.