

STMA 592: Lutheran Confessions

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Seattle University School of Theology and Ministry Winter Quarter, 2010

Thursdays: 1:30-4:20pm
HUNT 100

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Office Hours: Monday/Wednesday, 2:00-3:00pm
(and by appointment)
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A. Course Description

This course examines the classical Lutheran confessions of faith contained within the *Book of Concord*, including its statements on sin, justification, ministry, and practical reform of the church. With the help of secondary sources, our task will be to understand these writings first by situating them in their original historical context. We will then explore the meaning(s) of the texts we analyze, moving finally to the question of what implications the confessional documents might have for ministry in the church today.

B. Course Objectives

By the end of the course, the student should be able to:

- Understand the basic criteria that informed the authors of the Lutheran confessional documents in their (re)interpretation of the Christian faith
- Grasp the role of historical context and determine what the authors were responding to in each of the documents surveyed
- Perceive the urgency of the writings at the time (i.e., what was at stake for the authors and why their responses mattered)
- Ascertain how the Lutheran confessional writings may function to inform preaching, worship, and ministry in the context of the Pacific Northwest today

C. Required Texts

- Robert Kolb and Timothy Wengert, eds. *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000.
- Eric Gritsch and Robert Jenson. *Lutheranism: The Theological Movement and Its Confessional Writings*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1976.
- Guenther Gassman and Scott Hendrix. *Fortress Introduction to the Lutheran Confessions*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1999.

D. Recommended Text (available also on reserve in the library)

- Bruce Metzger, Roland Murphy, eds. The New Oxford Annotated Bible. New York: Oxford University Press, 1991, 1994.

E. Methods of Evaluation for Determining Grades

- Participation – 30%: Students are required to participate regularly in class discussion. While the instructor will occasionally solicit personal points of view to begin or encourage discussion, full credit will be given exclusively for active, informed participation concerning directly the text under consideration. Any assigned written work (apart from the case studies) will be included as part of the student's participation grade. Students who do not actively participate in class discussion but do the work and participate in small group discussions will receive a passing grade (a "C") for participation.
- Case Studies –70%: Two case studies, 7-9 pages double-spaced, will be distributed in class. They will each be worth 35% of the total grade.

F. Class Policies

- Attendance: Because of the participatory nature of this graduate course, there is need for an explicit attendance policy. Accordingly, a student will lose half a letter grade with each absence after two unexcused absences. An absence includes missing the equivalent time to one absence or two late arrivals to class. Generally, legitimate excuses for an absence are 1) serious illness (with note from doctor) or 2) a death in the family. Please speak with the instructor if you foresee this to be a difficulty.
- Late Assignments: All assignments will decrease by half of a letter grade for each day they are late.



- Plagiarism: Any use of another person's work (written, printed or online) as one's own is strictly prohibited. This includes quoting verbatim or closely paraphrasing a written or online source without citation as well as work done for another class. The penalty for plagiarism at minimum is an "F" for the paper or the assignment. For more information about plagiarism, please review the university's academic policies at <http://www.seattleu.edu/registrar/> or ask the instructor. Please note the following as well: unintended plagiarism is still plagiarism. A good rule of thumb is this: when in doubt *cite your sources!*
- Written Work: All written work must be submitted as typewritten hardcopy and stapled. **Email attachments will not be accepted for any written work or assignment.** When submitting work as hardcopy, do not use paper clips, a binder, or a folder. Both case studies will require a title page and page numbers. The type should be in 12-point font with 1" margins and double-spaced.
- Professional Conduct: 1) please turn off cell phone ringers before class; 2) laptops may not be used in class except for a documented disability; 3) out of respect for others, please do not speak in class when others are talking; 4) arrive on time and wait until the end of class before preparing to leave.
- Preparation: Since this is a discussion-oriented course, all students should purchase or print, read and bring to class the assigned reading. Readings are to be completed by the beginning of class on the days listed in the class schedule. Failure to do so will affect a student's participation grade.
- Discussion: In keeping with the educational mission of Seattle University, all students are encouraged to make the most of their opportunity to learn and their freedom of speech by openly and actively participating in classroom dialogue without fear of undue censure on the part of other students or the professor. *Personal faith will be honored;*

however, no statement of personal faith will be considered a substitute for scholarly inquiry about the course texts and their content. As a graduate course particularly, it will be crucial that we work together to understand the texts we are analyzing first and then, if possible, evaluate them.

G. Student Performance Requirements*

- “A” – work is excellent. An “A” paper is focused with an explicit thesis statement (when applicable). It exhibits a clear, effective and organized line of thought as well as a thorough understanding of the material. It has no English usage problems, anticipates possible objections (if helpful) to its point of view and/or supporting arguments, and frequently provides pertinent citations to make its case. The writer’s “voice” is firm, confident, and clear.
- “B” – work is very good. A “B” paper directly states and addresses the driving question or thesis (when applicable) and provides supporting citations. The writing may show some English usage problems, but the punctuation, grammar and spelling are generally better than average insofar as they do not prevent the reader from comprehending the point(s) the writer is making. The material is well-organized but transitions may be abrupt and information may be too “thin” or too general.
- “C” – work is adequate. A “C” paper demonstrates that the student basically follows the directions for the assignment. The driving question or thesis (when applicable) has been articulated and argued, but may have been vaguely or imprecisely formulated. Citations are superficial and/or infrequent. The writing may be awkward, unclear or contain English usage problems.
- “D” – work is below adequate. A “D” paper may be late or written without regard for the assignment’s instructions. It lacks a thesis statement or driving question. It is careless, poorly organized, and the information is not under the control of the writer.
- “F” – work is inadequate.

Additional Information to Note:

1. Special Accommodations: If you have, or think you may have, a disability (including an “invisible disability” such as a learning disability, a chronic health problem, or a mental health condition) that interferes with your performance as a student in this class, you are encouraged to arrange support services and/or accommodations through Disabilities Services staff in the Learning Center, Loyola 100, (206) 296-5740. Disability-based adjustments to course expectations can be arranged only through this process.
2. Course Schedule Changes: Any alteration of the course schedule will be announced in class. If a student is absent from class, it is his or her responsibility to contact the instructor or another student in the class regarding such changes as well as missed handouts, revised assignments, etc. The instructor may modify the syllabus/course schedule at his discretion.

* The following grading criteria are based in part upon the syllabus of Robert Sherman, “ST 1501: Introduction to Christian Doctrine” [syllabus online] (Bangor, ME: Bangor Theological Seminary, 2000, accessed 7 June 2005); available from [http://www.bts.edu/courses/Sherman/ST%201501%201501%/20Sy1%20\(Spr%2000\)%20\(HTML\)%](http://www.bts.edu/courses/Sherman/ST%201501%201501%/20Sy1%20(Spr%2000)%20(HTML)%); Internet, 3.

H. Course Schedule



Abbreviations:

AC	Augsburg Confession
AP	Apology of the Augsburg Confession
FCE	Formula of Concord Epitome
FCSD	Formula of Concord Solid Declaration
LC	Large Catechism
SA	Smalcald Articles
SC	Small Catechism
TRPPP	Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope

TH 1/7 Course introduction.

TH 1/14 The Lutheran Reformation: Introduction and Historical Background
Gassmann and Hendrix, ch. 1, 2
Gritsch and Jenson, 2-23

Overview of Confessional Texts. The Starting Point: *Sola Scriptura*
Gassmann and Hendrix, ch. 3, 48-64.
Luther, "The Freedom of a Christian" and "Preface to the New Testament"
(excerpts to be distributed)
FCE, 486-487
FCSD, 524-31

TH 1/21 The Problem: Sin
AC Preface, I, II, III, XIX
AP I, II, III, XIX
SA III:I
FCE I
FCSD I
Gritsch and Jenson, ch. 3, 4, 5

TH 1/28 Diagnosing the Problem: Law
AC XVI; AP XVI
SA III:II, III, IV
FCE V, VI
FCSD V, VI
Gritsch and Jenson, ch. 13 (optional)
Gassmann and Hendrix, 55-64

TH 2/4 Treating the Problem: Justification
AC IV; AP IV
SA III: XIII
Gritsch and Jenson, ch. 7 (optional)
Gassmann and Hendrix, 64-86
Tillich, "You Are Accepted," sermon available at <http://www.religion-online.org/showchapter.asp?title=378&C=84>

The Effects of Justification: Good Works
Gassmann and Hendrix, 163-178
AC XVII, XVIII
Luther, "Preface to the New Testament," 111
FIRST STUDY HANDED OUT IN CLASS

- TH 2/11 Implications of Justification: Predestination and the Nature of God
AC XVII, XVIII
AP XVII, XVIII
FCE II, XI
FCSD II, XI
Gritsch and Jenson, ch. 11 (optional)
Gassmann and Hendrix, 153-163
Luther, *On the Bondage of the Will* (excerpt; additional selections from the *Book of Concord* to be announced)
- TH 2/18 The Church
AC VII, VIII
AP VII, VIII
SA III: XII
Gritsch and Jenson, ch. 6 (optional)
Gassmann and Hendrix, 87-100
FIRST CASE STUDY DUE IN CLASS
- TH 2/25 The Sacraments
Gassmann and Hendrix, 87-122
AC IX
AP IX
SC IV Baptism
LC IV
SA III: V
AC X, XXIV
AP X, XXIV
SC VI Communion
LC V
SA II: III; III: VI
FCE
- TH 3/4 Ministry
Gassmann and Hendrix, 122-132
Gritsch and Jenson, ch. 8 (optional)
AC V, XIV, XXVIII
AP XIV, XXVIII
TRPPP
SA II: IV; SA III: X
SECOND CASE STUDY HANDED OUT IN CLASS
- TH 3/11 *Adiaphora* and Practical Church Reform
Gassmann and Hendrix, ch. 7
Gritsch and Jenson, ch. 14 (optional)
AC XV, XXI, XXII, XXIII, XXV, XXVI, XXVII
AP XV, XXI, XXII, XXIII, XXVII
SA II: III, SA III: XI, XIV, XV
FCE X; FCSD X
Course review and evaluation
- TH 3/18 No class. SECOND CASE STUDY DUE, 5:00pm (instructor's mailbox or office, Casey Hall)