
SL 120

The Lutheran Confessions

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I. Introduction

In the constitution of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, Article II, Confession of Faith, it states:

- “*Section 1:* This church confesses the Triune God — Father, Son and Holy Spirit — as the one true God. It proclaims the Father as Creator and Preserver, His Son, Jesus Christ, as Redeemer and Lord; and the Holy Spirit as Regenerator and Sanctifier.
- Section 2:* The Church Confesses that the Gospel is the revelation of God’s saving will and grace in Jesus Christ, which He imparts through Word and Sacrament. Through these means of grace the Holy Spirit creates believers and unites them with their Lord and with one another in the fellowship of the Holy Christian Church.
- Section 3:* This Church confesses the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the inspired Word of God, through which God still speaks, and as the only source of the Church’s doctrine and the authoritative standard for the faith and life of the Church.
- Section 4:* This Church subscribes to the documents of the *Book of Concord* of 1580 as witnesses to the way in which the Holy Scriptures have been correctly understood, explained and confessed for the sake of the Gospel, namely
- The Apostles’, the Nicene, and the Athanasian Creeds as the chief confessions of the Christian faith;
 - The unaltered Augsburg Confession as its basic formulation of Christian doctrine;
 - Luther’s Small Catechism as a clear summary of Christian doctrine;
 - The Apology of the Augsburg Confession, Luther’s Large Catechism, the Smalcald Articles with the Treatise, and the Formula of Concord as further witnesses to the Unaltered Augsburg Confession.”

Moreover, when a person of the ELCIC is ordained into a ministry of Word and Sacrament, or consecrated into a ministry of Word and Service, the Service of Ordination in the *Occasional Services* book or the Service of Consecration of Diaconal Ministers, as developed by the ELCIC, indicates the following order of service:

- P** The Church in which you are to be ordained [consecrated] confesses that the Holy Scriptures are the Word of God and are the norm of its faith and life. We accept, teach, and confess the Apostles’, the Nicene, and the Athanasian Creeds. We also acknowledge the Lutheran Confessions as true witnesses and faithful expositions of the Holy Scriptures. Will you therefore preach and teach in accordance with the Holy Scriptures and these creeds and confessions?
- R** **I will, and I ask God to help me.**

What are these *Lutheran Confessions* and what does it mean to be a “confessional” church? This course will begin with a discussion on the place and authority of confessions for a church, and then include a survey of the documents of the *Book of Concord*, looking at them in their historical context. The last part of the class will focus on the historical development of, and the theology of, the *Augsburg Confession* (*Confessio Augustana*). By the end of this course, students will be able to competently discuss the relevance of Confessions for the church today, and will have had opportunity to practice integrating the confessions in their pastoral ministry.

II. Student Outcomes

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

1. Identify and describe the constitutive symbols of the *Book of Concord*
2. Explain the Lutheran understanding of the authority of Scripture, the Creeds and the Lutheran Confessions, as required according to the ELCIC constitution
3. Identify, describe and explain the main issues in each of the articles of the *Augsburg Confession*
4. Explain and differentiate the key theological issues formulated in the *Augsburg Confession*
5. Articulate how the Lutheran Confessional documents are applicable today for church and society.

III. Required Texts

The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church. (Either the 1959 Tappert edition or the 2000 Kolb and Wengert edition [preferred]).

Günther Gassmann and Scott Hendrix, *Fortress Introduction to the Lutheran Confessions* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1999).

Eric W. Gritsch and Robert W. Jenson, *Lutheranism: the Theological Movement and Its Confessional Writings* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978).

Robert Kolb and James A. Nestingen, eds, *Sources and Contexts of the Book of Concord* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001).

III. Recommended Texts

Leif Grane, *The Augsburg Confession: A Commentary* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1987).

Timothy J. Wengert, *A Formula For Parish Practice: Using the Formula of Concord in Congregations* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2006)

IV. Assignments

You will be expected to complete the following assignments. Please note that if they are not handed in on time, you will be deducted 5% for each class period they are late.

1. **Attendance and participation** in class — including doing the assigned readings and contributions in class. This is worth 15% of your final grade. (Please remember that more than 3 unexcused absences will affect eligibility for student loans, and that the professor has a right to give you a grade of 'Fail' in the course).
2. **A 2500 word historical paper** (10 pages, typed, 12 point proportional font, double spaced), with appropriate references and footnotes or endnotes, **on the historical development and significance of one of the symbols of the *Book of Concord***, other than the Augsburg Confession. This paper is due on **Monday, October 17**, and is worth 30% of your final grade.
3. **A 3500 word theological paper** (15 pages, typed, 12 point proportional font, double spaced), with appropriate references and footnotes or endnotes, **on a theological theme** or topic which is discussed in the Lutheran Confessions. You will research the Confessional writings of the *Book of Concord* to find *what the Confessions have to say on the topic*. Possible topics could be: The Office of the Keys, Baptism, Infant Baptism, Confession and Absolution, The Sacrament of the Altar, The Use and Abuse of Ecclesial Power, or the

Relationship between the Church and State. This paper is due by noon on **Wednesday, November 23**, and is worth 35% of your final grade.

4. **A sermon**, based on a lectionary text for Series B of the Revised Common Lectionary that strongly incorporates the core teaching of the Lutheran Confessions. This too is to be typed, double spaced, 12 point proportional font). This sermon is worth 20% of your final mark. This sermon is due **Wednesday, December 7** at the beginning of class.

V. Basic Working Bibliography

- Allbeck, Willard D., *Studies on the Lutheran Confessions* (1952)
- Anderson, Charles S. *Faith and Freedom: The Christian Faith According to the Lutheran Confessions* (1977)
- Arand, Charles P. *That I May Be His Own: An Overview of Luther's Catechisms* (2000).
- Word Council of Churches, *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* (1982)
- Bente, Friedrich. *Historical Introductions to the Book of Concord* (1965).
- Braaten, Carl E. *Principles of Lutheran Theology* (1983)
- Burgess, Joseph A., ed. *The Role of the Augsburg Confession: Catholic and Lutheran Views* (1980)
- Fagerberg, Holsten, *A New Look at the Lutheran Confessions, 1529-1537* (1972)
- Forde, Gerhard, *Justification by Faith: A Matter of Death and Life* (1982)
- Forell, George W. *The Augsburg Confession: A Contemporary Commentary* (1968).
- Hebart, Friedman. *"One in the Gospel": The Formula of Concord for our Day* (1979)
- The Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification* (1997)
- Klug, Eugene F., and Stahlke, Otto F. *Getting into the Formula of Concord: A History and Digest of the Formula* (1977)
- Klug, Eugene, F. *We Believe, Teach and Confess: A Study of the Formula of Concord* (1977)
- Kraus, George R. *Augsburg For Our Day: A Study of the Augsburg Confession* (1978)
- LWF Report 9 (June, 1980). "Confession Augustana 1530-1980: Commemoration and Self-Examination"
- Mildenberger, Friedrich, *Theology of the Lutheran Confessions* (1986)
- Preus, Robert. *Getting into the Theology of Concord: A Study of the Book of Concord* (1977)
- Reu, Johann Michael. *Dr. Martin Luther's Small Catechism: A History of its Origin, its Distribution, and its Use. A Jubilee Offering* (1929).
- Russell, William R., *Luther's Theological Testament: The Schmalkald Articles* (1995)
- Sasse, Hermann. *"This is My Body": Luther's Contention for the Real Presence in the Sacrament of the Altar* (1959)
- Scaer, David P. *Baptism*. Confessional Lutheran dogmatics Series (1999)
- _____. *Getting into the Story of Concord: A History of the Book of Concord* (1977)
- Schlink, Edmund. *Theology of the Lutheran Confessions* (1961)
- Schmidt, John. *The Lutheran Confessions: Their Value and Meaning* (1956)
- Spitz, Lewis W, and Lohffi Wenzel, eds. *Discord, Dialogue and Concord: Studies in the Lutheran Reformation's Formula of Concord* (1977)
- Tappert, Theodore G. *The Lord's Supper: Past and Present Practice* (1961).
- Trigg, Jonathan D. *Baptism in the Theology of Martin Luther* (Studies in the History of Christian Thought, V. 56) (2001, reprint)
- Vajta, Vilmos, and Hans Weissgerber, *The Church and the Confessions: The Role of the Confessions in the Life and Doctrine of the Lutheran Churches* (1963)
- Lumen Gentium* (Dogmatic Constitution of the Church)," *The Documents of Vatican II: With Notes and Comments by Catholic, Protestant and Orthodox Authorities* (1966), 14-101.
- Gaudium et Spes* (The Church in the Modern World)," *The Documents of Vatican II: With Notes and Comments by Catholic, Protestant and Orthodox Authorities* (1966), 199-308.

Many of the most valuable scholarly articles on the topic of the Lutheran Confession are found in Journals. The advantage of journal articles is that they often address very specific topics. Please consult them in your research. Commonly, you will find pertinent articles in: *Lutheran Quarterly*; *Concordia Theological Monthly*; *Concordia Journal*; *Currents in Theology and Mission*, *Dialog*, *Logia*, and *Word and World*. Please check ATLA for specific references.

Course Outline

Date:	Topic:	Required Readings:
PART I. INTRODUCTION		
Sept 12	Introduction. Preliminary Questions, Requirements, and Expectations	
Sept 14	The Authority and Self-Understanding of the Confessions.	-Gritsch and Jenson, chapter 1 -Preface to the <i>Book of Concord</i>
Sept 19	The Main Themes and Background History of the Lutheran Confessions	-Gassmann and Hendrix, chapters 1-5 -Gritsch and Jenson, chapters 2 -3
PART II. SURVEY OF THE SYMBOLS OF THE BOOK OF CONCORD		
Sept 21	The Small Catechism	-Preface to the Small Catechism -The Small Catechism -Gassmann and Hendrix, p. 42-44
Sept 26	The Large Catechism	-Preface to the Large Catechism -The Large Catechism
Sept 28	The Schmalkald Articles	-Preface to the Smalcald Articles -The Smalcald Articles -Gassmann and Hendrix, p. 41-42
Oct 3	The Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope	-Preface to the Treatise -The Treatise -Gassmann and Hendrix, p. 42
Oct 5	The Formula of Concord	-Preface to the Formula of Concord -Epitome (minimum), Solid Declaration (encouraged) -Gassmann and Hendrix, 44-47
Oct 10	<i>No class- Thanksgiving Day</i>	
Oct 12	The Apology of the Augsburg Confession	-Preface to the Apology of the Augsburg Confession -The Apology of the Augsburg Confession -Gassmann and Hendrix, p. 38-40
PART III. THE CONFESSIO AUGUSTANA (the Augsburg Confession)		
Oct 17	Preface, Articles I - II (God, Original Sin) (Historical Paper Due)	-Gassmann and Hendrix, p. 48-74 -Gritsch and Jenson, chapter 7
Oct 19	Articles II (Original Sin, con't) and III (the Son of God)	
Oct 24 and 26 – No class – Reading Week		
Oct 31	Article IV (Justification)	-Gassmann and Hendrix, p.75-86 -Gritsch and Jenson, chapters 3-5
Nov 2	Articles V - VIII (The Office of Ministry and the Church) Article IX (The Sacraments: Baptism)	-Gassmann and Hendrix, p. 122-140 -Gritsch and Jenson, chapter 8 -Gassmann and Hendrix, p. 87-100 -Gritsch and Jenson, chapter 6
Nov 7	Article X (The Sacraments: The Lord's Supper)	-Gassmann and Hendrix, p. 109-122
Nov 9	Articles XI - XIII (Sacraments: Confession and the Proper use of the Sacraments)	-Gassmann and Hendrix, p. 100-108

Nov 14	Articles XIV - XVI (Church Order)	-Gassmann and Hendrix, p. 141-149
Nov 16	Articles XVII - XVIII (The Freedom of the Will)	-Gritsch and Jenson, chapters 9-10, 13
Nov 21	Articles XIX - XXI (Faith, Works, Saints)	-Gassmann and Hendrix, p. 149-163
Nov 23	Articles XXII - XXVIII Disputed Articles (Theological Paper Due)	
Nov 28	Articles XXII - XXVIII Disputed Articles, (continued)	

PART IV. THE ROLE OF THE CONFESSIONS IN LUTHERAN CHURCH HISTORY

Nov 30	The Lutheran Confessions in Ecumenical Dialogue	-Gassmann and Hendrix, chapter 7 -Gritsch and Jenson, chapter 12 - <i>The Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification</i> (on www.gjilts.com website)
Dec 5	The Lutheran Confession in other regions of the world	
Dec 7	Course Summary (Sermon due)	

Internet sites of Interest:

Historical Introduction to the Augsburg Confession by F. Bente:
<http://www.iclnet.org/pub/resources/text/wittenberg/bente/conc-int-03.html>

The Book of Concord (sections) <http://www.projectwittenberg.org/>

Standardized referencing to various symbols of the Book of Concord:

CA (or AC)	Augsburg Confession	LC	Large Catechism
Ap	Apology of the Augsburg Confession	FC	Formula of Concord
SA	Schmalkald Articles	FC-Ep	Formula of Concord - Epitome
Tr	Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope	FC-SD	Formula of Concord - Solid Declaration
SC	Small Catechism	BC	Book of Concord

List reference by Symbol, Part (if applicable); Article, and paragraph/sentence number

so: the sentence beginning with, "For God will regard..." from Article 4 of the Augsburg Confession is listed as: AC 4:3, or CA 4:3

likewise, the sentence beginning with, "These and many similar things..." from the Schmalkald Articles, part 3, article 1, is listed as: SA III:I.11 or SA 3:I:11