

#3313 The Westminster Doctrine of God
Western Reformed Seminary (www.wrs.edu)
John A. Battle, Th.D.
Spring 2014

COURSE INFORMATION

Course goals

The WRS *Catalog* describes this course as follows: “A careful study of the doctrine of God as propounded in the Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms and as held by the Westminster divines and their contemporaries, including God’s existence, nature, and attributes; comparison and contrast with views of God held by ancient heresies and modern alternate theologies.” By taking this course the student should be able to thoroughly understand and be able to teach the various aspects of the doctrine of God, as held by the Westminster Assembly. He also will give presentations regarding current debates regarding such related topics as God’s existence, nature, attributes, and purposes—comparing current opinions with those of the Westminster Assembly.

This is an elective class, emphasizing research and class presentations and discussion. There will be no tests.

Reading assignment

Required reading

- Two commentaries on Chapters 2-3 of the Westminster Confession of Faith
- Two commentaries on the Westminster Shorter Catechism, Questions 4-7 (several are available online at <http://shortercatechism.com>)

Elective Reading and Review (For extra hour of credit)

- Read a scholarly book related to this course and write a critical review of the book. Your review should be about 1,500 words, and of a high quality, suitable for publication in a journal. Obtain the professor’s approval of the book before reading it.

Research projects

During the semester you will conduct five research projects, selected from the topics listed below. Each research project should take at least ten hours of work outside of class. Research will include reading and the preparation of a presentation to be made to the class. This presentation will be oral, and should include a time for questions and answers. It should take about an hour. PowerPoint and/or printed handouts should be used.

Research topics:

1. God's existence, denial of atheism
2. God's unity, denial of polytheism
3. God's nature as spiritual
4. God's lack of "body, parts, or passions"
5. God's immutability
6. God's immensity in time and space
7. God's incomprehensibility
8. The wisdom of God
9. The sovereignty of God
10. The goodness of God
11. God and the problem of evil
12. The justice of God
13. The self-sufficiency of God
14. The duty to worship and obey God
15. The Trinity, denial of Unitarianism
16. The relations of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; meaning of "begotten" and "proceeding"
17. The "filioque" controversy
18. God's ordaining of all events, and human free agency
19. Relation of God's foreordination and foreknowledge
20. Unconditional election of the predestined believers
21. Foreordination of the lost; supralapsarianism vs. infralapsarianism
22. The preaching of election and predestination

Grading

Two-hour course

Required reading assignment	20
Research projects	60
Attendance and participation	20

Three-hour course

Required reading assignment	10
Elective reading assignment	15
Research projects	60
Attendance and participation	15

Class Schedule

Jan.	23	
	30	
Feb.	6	Project #1
	13	
	20	Project #2
	27	
Mar.	6	Project #3
	13	(Midterm Exams; no class)
	20	Required Reading due
	27	Project #4
Apr.	3	(Spring Recess)
	10	(Church Planting class; no class)
	17	
	24	Project #5
May	1	(G. W. Presbytery; no class)
	8	
	15	(Final Exams; no class) Elective Reading and Review due