Course Description: An introduction to the content and structure of the Christian faith through a close study of the Ecumenical Creeds and Martin Luther’s Small and Large Catechisms. Historical issues will be considered, but the central focus of the course will be the role of creed and catechism as summary, confession, and rule of the church’s faith, guiding and forming preaching, teaching, and biblical interpretation.

Required Texts: You will need the following texts for use in this course.


Course Design: This asynchronous, online course is the first class in the NALS theology sequence. Its purpose is to lay a foundation for your ongoing theological study and formation, and to present to you the basic principles of Christian theology. The overall aim of the course is for you to consider in some depth what it means to be a confessional Christian, practicing Christian life, ministry, and theology on the basis of Holy Scripture according to a definite rule of faith. The class format includes weekly readings, recorded lectures, papers, and discussion forums. Students will take turns asking the weekly forum questions, and everyone is expected to contribute to each week’s discussion by posting two responses.

Course Grade and Assignments:

1. Participation (20%): The student is expected to complete the assigned readings, listen to weekly recorded audio lectures, and submit papers in a timely fashion. Course participation will be further assessed through weekly discussion forums.
2. Reading Summaries (5% each; 20% total): Four times during the semester, the student will complete a 2-3 page, double-spaced summary of a particular reading.
3. Midterm Paper on ‘The Need for Creeds’ (30%): The student will submit a paper of 10-12 pages explaining the importance of creeds and confessions for Christian faith and practice.
4. Final Paper on a Creedal Clause (30%): The student will write a paper of 12-14 pages on one of the clauses found in the Apostles’ Creed.