

PRESBYTERIAN POLITY AND REFORMED WORSHIP, CM 217-3

SYLLABUS

Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary

Spring Term, 2011

Clifton Kirkpatrick, Professor

Course Description:

In this experiential approach, students learn to think theologically and systemically as they apply the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to specific issues and practices at the congregational, presbytery, synod, and general assembly levels. The course also examines the liturgical and sacramental traditions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in relation to its history, theologies and practices of worship. Attention will also be given to ministry and administration in the Presbyterian tradition based on the theology of the church in the Book of Order.

Objectives--at the conclusion of the course students:

- Will have a basic theological understanding of ecclesiology, worship and sacraments on which the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is based.
- Will be prepared to offer excellent leadership and participation “in government and discipline” in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), “serving in governing bodies of the church.”
- Will be able to moderate sessions, shape congregational life, and lead the worship and sacramental life of congregations in conformity with the Constitution of the PCUSA.
- Will be familiar the basic principles of the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and be prepared for the Standard Ordination Examinations in both Church Polity and Worship and Sacraments.

Course Evaluation:

Successful completion of the course requirements (below) will measure proficiency in achieving the various objectives above. Overall class performance on the standard ordination exams of the PCUSA in Church Polity and Worship and Sacraments will be another indicator of how well these objectives have been met. Students will also respond to the seminary’s online evaluation form for this course at the end of the semester. However, you are encouraged to communicate your evaluative observations about your experiences of the course to the instructor at any time, in the spirit of the learning community.

Course Requirements:

Practice Ordination Exams: To prepare students for the denominational examination process, 25% of the class grade will be based on completion of parts of Polity Exams from past Presbyterian Standard Ordination Examinations in Polity and Worship and Sacraments. These will be assigned every other week. Another 25% of the class grade will be based on a three part exam assigned in the final session of the course. Exams are found on the seminary website at http://www.lpts.edu/Content/Documents/Library/Church_Polity.pdf. One section of an exam will be assigned as a take-home assignment at eight different class periods. The student is urged to stick with the time limits in the practice exams (one hour for each section) in order to learn to pace yourself for the actual exam. The exams will be graded in the same way the Ordination Exams are graded. Each one-hour section gets a numerical grade (5 = excellent, 4 = good, 3= satisfactory, 2 = unsatisfactory, 1 = failure. For this class, the number marks will be translated directly to grades: 5 = A; 4 = B; 3 = C; 2 = D; 1 = F. Completed exams are submitted electronically.

Agendas and Moderating (10% of course grade)) based on the ability to prepare an agenda collaboratively with the professor and another student and to moderate sub groups of the class as if they were a session meeting.

Serving as Clerk (5% of course grade) based on the ability to record clearly and simply the proceedings of a particular class meeting or sub-group.

Participation in class (10% of course grade) demonstrating: a) ability to read, reflect on, and apply the assigned readings to the class discussion and b) ability to play a positive role in group discussion.

Pinpoint Responses to Reflection Questions through 50 Word Sentences

For each session after the first a reflection question is listed on the schedule to focus our discussion around a key aspect of our polity and worship. Students will record their response to the reflection question for each week through one 50 word sentence. (See description by Professor Charles Cohen of the University of Wisconsin at the end of this syllabus.) We will often begin our class meetings or our “session” meetings by sharing aloud our sentences with one another and reflecting upon them together. The sentences should be emailed to the professor no later than 9:00 pm on the evening prior to each week’s class so that they can be posted on CAMS in advance to facilitate class discussion. These 50 word sentences count for 25% of the course grade.

Academic Honesty.

All work turned in to the instructor is expected to be the work of the student whose name appears on the assignment. Any borrowing of the ideas or the words of others must be acknowledged by quotation marks (where appropriate) and by citation of author and source. Use of another’s language or ideas from online resources is included in this policy, and must be attributed to author and source of the work being cited. Failure to do so constitutes plagiarism, and may result in failure of the course. Multiple occurrences of plagiarism may result in dismissal from the Seminary. Students unfamiliar with issues relating to academic honesty can find help from the staff in the Academic Support Center. For the Seminary policy, see The Code of Student Conduct, 6.11; the Student Handbook, p. 19.

Inclusive Language.

In accordance with seminary policy, students are to use inclusive language in class discussions and in written and oral communication by using language representative of the whole human community in respect to gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, age, and physical and intellectual capacities. Direct quotations from theological texts and translations of the Bible do not have to be altered to conform to this policy. In your own writing, however, when referring to God, you are encouraged to use a variety of images and metaphors, reflecting the richness of the Bible’s images for God. See for further assistance,

http://www.lpts.edu/Academic_Resources/ASC/avoidinggenderbiasinlanguage.asp

Special Accommodation.

Students requiring accommodations for a documented physical or learning disability should be in contact with the Director of the Academic Support Center (kmapes@lpts.edu) during the first two weeks of a semester and should speak with the instructor as soon as possible to arrange appropriate adjustments. Students with environmental or other sensitivities that may affect their learning are also encouraged to speak with the instructor.

Citation Policy

Citations in your papers should follow the Seminary standard, which is based on these guides:

Kate Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 7th ed. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2007.

The Chicago Manual of Style, 15th ed. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2003.

Copies of these guides are available at the library and in the Academic Support Center.

Attendance Policy:

According to the Seminary catalog, students are expected to attend class meetings regularly. In case of illness or emergency, students are asked to notify the instructor of their planned absence from class, either prior to the session or within 24 hours of the class session.

Required Books

Beattie, Frank A. *Companion to the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.): Polity for the Local Church*. Louisville: Geneva Press, 1999. ISBN 0-664-50146-X.

(An updated version adapted for recent Constitutional amendments is online at

<http://www.pcusa.org/oga/publications/constitution-companion.pdf>)

Book of Order 2009-2011, The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Part II.

(This publication is also available online at <http://www.pcusa.org/oga/publications/2009-2011-boo.pdf>. However, for preparation for the Standard Ordination Exams, it is important to be familiar with using the hard copy of this part of the Constitution.)

Hopper, William, and Kirkpatrick, Clifton. *What Unites Presbyterians: Common Ground for Troubled Times*, Louisville: Geneva Press, 1997. ISBN 0664500072

Rice, Howard L and Huffstatler, James C., *Reformed Worship*. Louisville: Geneva Press, 2001.

Assigned Documents from the PC(USA) website:

Common Faith, Common Mission, <http://www.pcusa.org/oga/publications/cfcm-workbook.pdf>

Frequently Asked Questions about the Proposed Form of Government,

<http://oga.pcusa.org/formofgovernment/pdfs/FAQ-sept-09.pdf>

Proposed Amendments to the Constitution (part 1), Proposed Form of Government,

http://oga.pcusa.org/pdf/proposed_amendments.pdf

Proposed Amendments to the Constitution (part 2), Confession of Belhar,

http://oga.pcusa.org/pdf/proposed_amendments2.pdf

Proposed Amendments to the Constitution (part 3), Amendments to the Book of Order,

http://oga.pcusa.org/pdf/proposed_amendments3.pdf

Report of the "Peace Unity and Purity Task Force" (PUP) section IV, pages 21-32

<http://www.pcusa.org/peaceunitypurity/finalreport/final-report-revised-english.pdf>.

What Is a Missional Ecclesiology? <http://oga.pcusa.org/formofgovernment/pdfs/missional-ecclesiology09.pdf>

Assigned Articles from Presbyterian Leader.com available on CAMS system

Ellison, Brian, "Parliamentary Procedure for Presbyterians."

Lytch, Steve "Serving as an Elder," sessions 1, 2, and 3

Johnson, Earl S. "Serving as Deacon."

McRight, Paige and Barber, Diana, "New Form of Government: A Look Inside"

Resource Library from the Worship Planner on PresbyterianLeader.com,

<https://presbyterianleader.com/ResourceLibrary.aspx>

Booklets:

- Curtiss, Victoria. *Guidelines for Communal Discernment*. Louisville: PCUSA Office of the General Assembly, 2007, (https://www.pc-biz.org/Resources/dd95a72d-310f-466f-84f0-9852958e6bd6/comm_discern.pdf)
- Kirkpatrick, Clifton. *Is There a Future for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)*, Louisville, Geneva Press, 2008. http://www.ppcbooks.com/pdf/price_gwynn/PriceGwynn2008.pdf
- Kirkpatrick, Clifton and Valentine, Linda. *Presbyterian Leadership*, Philadelphia, Board of Pensions, 2009. <http://web.pensions.org/Publications/pensions/Home/Forms%20&%20Publications/Booklets%20&%20Brochures/pub-505.pdf>
- Wolfe, Marianne L. *Parliamentary Procedures in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)*, Louisville: Office of the General Assembly, latest edition. (Available online at https://www.pcusa.org/oga/publications/parliamentary_procedure.pdf)

Other books you should have in your library but will not be assigned for specific readings:

- Robert, Henry M., III, et al. *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised in Brief*. Da Capo Press; Da Capo edition (April 1, 2004) ISBN: 0306813548
- The Book of Common Worship*, Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993.
- The Book of Confessions*, Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), part 1.

Charles L. Cohen on the 50-word assignment:

"A single-sentence exercise with a finite word limit counters students' proclivity for aerating their prose with superfluities. Given at most fifty words, students must distill their arguments' fundamentals and phrase them concisely, for, as my syllabus warns, the fifty-first word and its successors face a terrible fate. (I have been known to cut out extraneous verbiage and turn the tattered remnant into a paper airplane—a practice proved sound pedagogically if not aerodynamically.)

Fifty words might appear too many—the contests cereal companies run, after all, ask for only twenty five—but I prefer giving students sufficient rope. For one thing, the fifty-word limit allows them to cope with the assignment, which often requires complicated responses. For another, it weans them from dependency on simple declarative sentences and challenges them to experiment with multiple clauses. Some can handle compound-complex sentences, but most require—and appreciate—tutelage in them. Nor are fifty words too few; no student has ever complained about an inability to pare down the verbiage. Had Goldilocks stumbled into my section instead of the Three Bears' den, she would have found the word limit "just right."

Consider, for example, the assignment that I recently gave students in History/Religious Studies 451, entitled "Constructing a hypothesis": "Using the maps in the front of the packet, compare the distribution of churches within Anglo-America east of the Mississippi River in 1750 with the distribution in 1850 and, in one sentence NOT EXCEEDING 50 words (need I say more?), hypothesize the reasons for the difference." To complete the exercise, students must examine a series of maps, aggregate data presented graphically and convert it into written form, analyze that data and develop a hypothesis to explain patterns they may have found. They must attend carefully to the material (not the least of the minor assignment's benefits is its capacity to monitor students' preparation), read the maps against each other, and offer a succinct but accurate conclusion, thereby rehearsing several critical skills simultaneously.

The quality of the responses varied, as one might expect, but the best submission hit the mark exactly, intellectually and, at fifty words, quantitatively: 'The maps show a relative decline in Anglican and Congregational Churches in relation to the growth of other churches between 1750 and 1850, which reflects the shift towards the disestablishment of state churches and the demand for a constitutional guaranty of religious freedom that occurred during the American Revolutionary Settlement.' Even more impressive, English is not the writer's native language."

Presbyterian Polity and Reformed Worship

Class Schedule Spring Term 2011

Week 1 – February 10, 2011

Theme: Introduction to Presbyterian Polity and One Another

Components: Getting acquainted with one another and our Presbyterian journeys
Overview of course syllabus, assignments, and schedule
Introduction to Lambeth Bible Study
Assignment of Moderating and Clerking Duties
Overview of the Structure of the Constitution
Introduction to Constitutional Resources
Review of Standard Ordination Examinations for Polity and Worship and Sacraments

Readings: Book of Order: Preface, Table of Contents and Index
Companion to the Constitution: Introduction and chapters 1, 2, and 3

Take Home Practice Ordination Polity Exam 1 (Aug. 2007, Section One) - Due by Monday, February 21 (Limit yourself to one hour for doing each exam)

Week 2 – February 17, 2011

Theme: The Work of the Session and Decent Order

Components: The role of the Session as a Governing Body
Agendas and Meeting Planning
Parliamentary Procedure
Discernment as a model of decision making
Tricks of the trade in moderating meetings

Readings: Book of Order: G-9 and G-10
Companion: Chapters 10, 12, Appendices M, O, P, Q.
Wolfe
Curtiss, pp. 4-12
Lytch, "Serving as an Elder"
Ellison, "Parliamentary Procedure for Presbyterians"

Reflection: Based on the Book of Order and your readings, when would parliamentary procedure best serve a governing body in making decisions and when would other discernment methods be more appropriate?

Week 3 – February 24, 2011

Theme: Basic Vision/Ecclesiology in our Constitution

Components: Basic Principles and Theological Foundations for our Polity

Connections to our Confessions
Lecture/Discussion using methodology of Common Faith-Common Mission
Core Values in our Constitution

Readings: Book of Order, G-1 through G-4
Foundations of Presbyterian Polity (from New Form of Government)
Book of Confessions: Nicene Creed, Westminster Shorter Catechism, and Brief Statement of Faith
Kirkpatrick and Hopper, chapters 3-6
Common Faith, Common Mission, <http://www.pcusa.org/oga/publications/cfcm-workbook.pdf>

Reflection: Based on the principles articulated in our Books of Order and Confessions, what biblical image of the church would best reflect a Presbyterian understanding of our ecclesiology and why?

Take Home Polity Exam 2, Aug. 2007, Section Two) Due Monday, March 7

Week 4 – March 3, 2011

Theme: The More Inclusive Governing Bodies

Components: The role of presbytery, synod and General Assembly
Establishing, amending and interpreting the Constitution
The General Assembly as a program agency and as a governing body
Dialogue with General Assembly leaders

Readings: Book of Order: G-11, G-12, G-13, and G-18
Companion, chapter 15
Kirkpatrick, *Is There a Future for the PCUSA?*
Book of Amendments from the 219th General Assembly

Reflection: What Amendment to the Constitution which has been sent from the 219th General Assembly to the presbyteries is most critical for the future of the PCUSA and why?

Week 5 – March 10, 2011

Theme: Ministers, Elders, Deacons, and Members in their Life Together in Congregations

Components: The complimentary roles of ministers, elders, and deacons in congregations
Ministerial limits and prerogatives
Ordination, calling, and “The Essential Tenets of the Reformed Faith”
Leadership of the laity
Review of Ordination Exams

Readings: Book of Order W-1.4000, W-3100-3.3200, W-4.4000, W-6, G-5, G-6, G-7, and G-14.0400-14.0500
Companion: Chapters 6, 7, 8 and Appendices G, L, P, S, T
Johnson, *Serving as Deacon*

Reflection: Identify two responsibilities that ministers and elders share in common and one that is distinct for each?

Take Home Polity Exam 3 (Aug. 2007, Section Three—choose A or B), Due Monday, March 28.

Week 6 – March 17, 2011

Theme: Decently and In Order

Components: Dealing with Conflict in the Congregation
Administrative Review and Judicial Process
Finances and Property
Ethical Standards for Church Officers

Readings: Book of Order, G-8, G-9.0400, G-11.0500, D-1 through D-5
Companion, chapters 11 and 14, Appendices F, H
Standards of Ethical Conduct (on CAMS)

Reflection: D-1.0102 states, “The power that Jesus Christ has vested in his Church, power manifested in the exercise of church discipline, is one for building up the body of Christ, not for destroying it, for redeeming, not for punishing.” Given this basic understanding, can you cite two mechanisms that exist in our polity to resolve conflict and correct error short of judicial process?

Week 7 – March 31, 2011

Theme: The Future of Presbyterian Polity

Components: Recent Developments in Polity
Foundations and Future Trends in Presbyterian Polity
Overview and Rationale for the Proposed New Form of Government

Readings: Proposed Amendments to the Constitution (part 1), Proposed Form of Government, http://oga.pcusa.org/pdf/proposed_amendments.pdf, pp. 1-11.
PUP Report, section IV, “Resources for Peace, Unity and Purity” PP. 21-31, <http://www.pcusa.org/peaceunitypurity/finalreport/final-report-revised-english.pdf>.
What Is A Missional Ecclesiology?, <http://oga.pcusa.org/formofgovernment/pdfs/missional-ecclesiology09.pdf>
McRight and Barber, “New Form of Government: A Look Inside,” session 1.

Reflection: Given the momentum in the church for a “new polity” what are two aspects of our current polity you would want to keep and two that you would want to change?

Take Home Polity Exam 4 (Jan. 2010, Section One), Due Monday, April 11

Week 8 – April 7, 2011

Theme: The New Form of Government

Components: Similarities and differences in new and existing Forms of Government
Impact on sessions and congregations of a less regulatory polity
Pastoral leadership in the transition between two polities

Readings: Proposed Amendments to the Constitution (part 1), Proposed Form of Government, http://oga.pcusa.org/pdf/proposed_amendments.pdf, pp. 12-56.
Frequently Asked Questions about the Proposed Form of Government, <http://oga.pcusa.org/formofgovernment/pdfs/FAQ-sept-09.pdf>
McRight and Barber, "New Form of Government: A Look Inside," session 2.

Reflection: Identify a major similarity and a major difference between the existing and proposed Forms of Government.

Week 9 – April 15, 2011 (Note the Friday date – due to conflict with Presidential Inauguration)

Theme: Presbyterian Polity and Pastoral Leadership

Components: Transforming Leadership within Presbyterian Polity
Concluding Summary of Presbyterian Polity

Readings: Kirkpatrick and Valentine, *Presbyterian Leadership*, pp. 10-20.
"Candidates Handbook for Ordination Exams," pp. 13-51,
<http://www.pcusa.org/media/uploads/prep4min/pdfs/ordination-exams-handbook.pdf>

Reflection Some have maintained that the only thing that holds Presbyterians together is their polity. Do you agree?

Take Home Worship and Sacraments Exam 1 (Jan. 2010, Section Two), Due Monday, April 25

Week 10 – April 28, 2011

Theme: Introduction to Reformed Worship

Components: The Centrality of Word and Sacrament in Reformed Worship
Overview of the Directory for Worship
Worship, Sacraments and the Confessions
Introduction to the Book of Common Worship

Readings: Small, Joseph D., *A Church of the Word and Sacrament*,
<http://www.pcusa.org/media/uploads/theologyandworship/pdfs/op16.pdf>
The Directory for Worship in the Book of Order

Reflection Based on the *Directory for Worship*, what are three unique responsibilities of the pastor (not subject to the authority of the session) for the worship life of a congregation?

Take Home Worship and Sacraments Exam 2 (Jan. 2010, Section One), Due Monday, May 2.

Week 11 – May 5, 2011

Theme: **Worship and Sacraments in the Book of Confessions**

Components: Historical development of Reformed worship
Theology of our Confessions on worship and the sacraments

Readings: Martha Moore-Keish, “How Shall We Worship,” in Joseph Small, editor,
Conversations with the Confessions, pp. 187-206
Book of Confessions (sections related to worship and sacraments)
Rice and Huffstutler, *Reformed Worship*, pp. 47-78

Reflection: Identify by confession and paragraph number two sections in the *Book of Confessions* that most helpfully articulate the Reformed doctrine of the real presence of Christ in the Lord’s Supper.

Take Home Worship and Sacraments Exam 2 (Jan. 2010, Section Three), Due Monday, May 9

Week 12 – May 12, 2011

Theme: **Worship and Sacraments in Contemporary Practice**

Components: Analyzing Presbyterian worship services in light of Constitutional standards
Creativity in worship and the Directory for Worship
Resources for Reformed worship leaders

Readings: The Resource Library from the Worship Planner on PresbyterianLeader.com,
<https://presbyterianleader.com/ResourceLibrary.aspx>
The Book of Common Worship
Rice and Huffstutler, *Reformed Worship*, pp. 79-150.

Reflection: What are major sensitivities that need to be honored in developing worship services that are both contemporary/emergent and Reformed?

The Final Exam will be a take home “Ordination Exam” (with questions drawn from both former polity exams and former worship and sacraments exams). Limit yourself to 3 hours.