

## **SYLLABUS**

### **Presbyterian Heritage and Polity, ET 1044**

**Spring Term 2016**

**Professors: Shannon Craig-Snell and Clifton Kirkpatrick**

#### **Course Description:**

Presbyterian Heritage and Polity is a course that provides a comprehensive introduction to the Presbyterian and Reformed Tradition through an exploration of its history, its theology and confessions, its polity and worship, and its interaction with contemporary culture in the USA and around the world.

The course will also seek to achieve the objectives of the two prior courses (Presbyterian Heritage and Presbyterian Polity):

*From Heritage: This course serves as an introduction to the Reformed tradition as embodied in the history, faith, institutions, and practices of the Presbyterian churches, with particular attention devoted to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). The course surveys major figures and movements, recurring theological themes, and perennial and recent challenges to the life of the church. The course also provides for close and contextual readings of Reformed creeds and confessions.*

*From Polity: 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. 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.*

Successful completion of this course will obviously make a major contribution toward students achieving M. Div. Student Learning Objective # 4: "Students will demonstrate an understanding of their denominational heritage."

#### **Class and Credit Hours:**

This will be a four credit hour course. Classroom sessions will take place twice a week for one hour and fifty minutes each time.

#### **Core Texts:**

Bradley Longfield. *Presbyterians and American Culture: A History* (WJK)

Christopher Elwood. *Calvin for Armchair Theologians* (W/JK).

PC (USA). *The Book of Confessions, Study Edition* (W/JK)

PC (USA) *Book of Order* 2015-17 edition (OGA)

Earl Johnson, *Selected to Serve: A Guide for Church Leaders* (WJK)

Clifton Kirkpatrick, *Race and Reconciliation: The Confessions of 1967 and Belhar* (CMP)

**Assignments and Requirements:  
Presbyterian Heritage and Polity**

**1. Preparation and participation.** Your preparation and thoughtful contribution to class leadership and discussion will represent about 20% of your final grade. During the polity portions of the course this preparation and participation will be demonstrated through your role as the moderator and the clerk of your “session” group.

**2. Practice Polity Exams:** Students taking the polity portion of the course will be expected to complete one portion of each of three practice polity exams drawn (drawn from previous exams given by the Presbyteries Cooperative Committee). These exams will count for 20% of your grade.

**3. Fifty word sentences on Reflection Questions.** Usually for one session each week there will be a polity or heritage reflection question to which students are to answer through a 50 word sentence. These are to be submitted electronically to the instructor by 6:00 pm on the evening prior to the class in which they will be discussed. Students are expected to answer eight such questions during the course. These 50 word sentences will count for 20% of your grade.

**4. Analysis of a point of Reformed doctrine in the Book of Confessions.** Each student will prepare a 10-12 page paper analyzing Reformed confessional positions as reflected in The Book of Confessions on the topic you negotiate in advance with the professors. (see A. and B. below). In addition you and your partner will be expected to facilitate a discussion on the date indicated in the syllabus for your topic. Discussion will be expected to center around a theology ordination exam question that you will devise which presents a scenario in ministry relating to the point of Reformed doctrine you have been assigned (see B. below). Please make copies of your ordination question for your classmates. In your class discussion time, please have the class divide into small groups to work on all or part of the question you devise. Then have the class come back together to discuss the question as a whole. You are encouraged to have your paper completed by the date on which your assigned topic is due to be discussed. Please include your answer to the ordination question in your paper. All papers will be due no later than May 5. Submit the paper (as a Word document) to the instructor’s email inbox.

The chart below on this syllabus lists the most obvious locations for theological discussions of particular doctrines in The Book of Confessions. Please note that locations have not been provided for the Apostles’ Creed, the Nicene Creed, the Brief Statement of Faith, or the Confession of Belhar since their brevity allows you to peruse them quickly for relevant comments on the doctrines listed.

The Book of Confessions is also available in searchable form on the computers in the Seminary’s computer lab. If you are not presenting on a particular day, you are expected to perform a computer search of the BoC for the doctrinal topic(s) assigned for that day. This exercise will both enhance your own learning and support your classmates’ efforts in leading discussion on those topics.

In your paper you should:

**A. Discuss the unity and diversity of the Reformed witness.**

i. Begin by identifying the general contours of “a Reformed position” on your topic. What is distinctive about the Reformed ways the confessions treat the topic? In the process of identifying what the confessions say about your topic, do not go through each confessional document outlining in detail what each says. Be restrained and judicious in your use of quotations and citations. Do cite passages that seem particularly important or illustrative of common or distinctive themes.

ii. Once you have attempted to find a common thread or witness in the confessions as a whole, pay attention to differences. Where do you find divergent emphases? Where do you see outright disagreement? Where do you note development in positions over time? As part of your analysis, it will be as important to attend to what is left out as it will be to note what is said. If your topic is not taken up in a confessional document, think about possible reasons for the omission.

**B. Discuss practical applications of the point of doctrine.**

Devise a theology ordination exam question centered around the doctrine you have been assigned. Look at some actual theology exams questions before you write your own. (The library has several CD’s of the questions from previous ordination exams. This content is also available on the web at <http://www.lpts.edu/library/library-services/guides/standard-ordination-exams> under the category Theological Competence.) You will be devising a question for Section I of the exam, in which you are allowed to use an unmarked Book of Confessions. Outline a realistic scenario in the practice of ministry on which the confessional doctrinal positions you have discussed in part A of this assignment would have some significant bearing. The test of a “good” question is how well it facilitates your exploration of the practical dimensions of theological convictions. In your class presentation/discussion you should spend time working with the class toward a helpful analysis of and answer to this ordination exam question.

If you are working with a partner for this assignment, you may devise one exam question together, and collaborate on the class presentation, but you should each hand in a paper. In your paper, sketch out an answer to the ordination exam question that you devise for class discussion.

This assignment will count for 40% of your final grade.

## Themes in the Reformed Confessions

	Scots Confession	Heidelberg Catechism	Second Helvetic	<i>Westminster Confession</i> (UPC numbering)	Barmen Declaration	Confession of 1967
<i>Scripture</i>	XVIII-XX	21	I-II	I	1	Preface, 3, 27, 30, 49
<i>Trinity</i>	I	25	III	II		5, 7
<i>Creation &amp; Providence</i>	I-II	1, 26-28	VI-VII	IV-V		16-17
<i>Sin &amp; Covenant</i>	III-V	3-11, 19,74	VIII-IX, XX	VI-VII, IX, IXX		12-14, 18-19
<i>Election</i>	VII-VIII	26, 31, 52, 54	X	III,X		(18-20)
<i>Law</i>	XIV-XV	3-4, 92-115	XII	XIX (VII, XIII, XX)		
<i>Gospel</i>	IV-V	19, etc.	XIII	VII,VIII, XXXV		6, 7, 18, etc.
<i>Jesus Christ</i>	V-XI	29-52	XI	VIII	1-2	3, 8-11, 15, 24, 32
<i>Justification, Sanctification, Repentance</i>	(XII, XV)	31-34, 60-64	XIV-XV	XI-XV		21-22
<i>Faith, Works, the Christian Life</i>	XII-XIV	1-2,21,32,53, 60-61,63,74, 86,91-92, Part III	XVI	XIII, XIV,XVI, XIX-XX	2-3	10, 21-26, 41-47
<i>Holy Spirit</i>	XII	53-64	III, etc.	XXXIV		Part I, section C
<i>Church</i>	V, XVI-XVIII, XX-XXII, XXV	54, 85	XVII-XVIII, XXVIII	XXV-XXVI, XXX-XXXI	3-4	20, 22, 25, 31-42, 43-47
<i>Worship &amp; Sacraments</i>	XVI, XXI-XXIII	65-82	IV-V, XIX-XXII	XXI, XXVI-XXIX		36-37, 48-52
<i>Resurrection &amp; Last Things</i>	XI, XXV	45, 52, 57-59, (75)	In XI (5.075), XXVI	In XXIX (6.161), XXXII-XXXIII		26, Part III
<i>State</i>	XXIV		XXX	XXIII	Entire	17, 25, 43-47

**CLASS THEMES AND READING ASSIGNMENTS**  
**PRESBYTERIAN HERITAGE AND POLITY**  
**SPRING 2016, LOUISVILLE PRESBYTERIAN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY**

**Themes** and readings for the classes will be as follows. (Note that the initials in each section are for the professor who has primary responsibility for organizing the teaching for that day.)

**Part 1 – The Reformed Tradition to the mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century**

- Thurs. Introduction to the course and showing and discussion of the film, “Division and  
2/4 Reunion: Reflection on American Presbyterianism” (CK AND SC)
- Tues. Emergence of Reformed Protestantism (Calvin in Geneva)  
2/9 *Elwood, ch. 1-4, Nicene Creed, and Apostles’ Creed* (SC)
- Thurs. Historical Spread of the Reformed Movement across Europe (SC)  
2/11 *Elwood, ch. 5;*
- Tues. Reformation Era Confessions (SC)  
2/16 *Scots’ Confession, Heidelberg Catechism, Second Helvetic Confession, and the Westminster Shorter Catechism*
- Thurs. American Reformed Protestantism 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> centuries (SC)  
2/18 *Longfield pp.1-81*
- Tues. Themes in American Presbyterianism from the Civil War to the First World War:  
2/23 Race, Slavery, and World Mission (CK)  
The Fundamentalist/Modernist Controversy (SC)  
*Longfield, pp. 81-174. The Auburn Affirmation, <http://www.opc.org/cce/AuburnAf.html>*
- Thurs. Neo-Orthodoxy and Karl Barth (SC)  
2/25 *The Barmen Declaration*
- Tues. Presbyterian Reunion (and Divisions) (CK)  
3/1 *A Brief Statement of Faith*
- Thurs. Race and Reconciliation (CK)  
3/3 *Kirkpatrick, The Confession of 1967, The Belhar Confession* (An inclusive language version of C-67 can be found at <http://www.creeds.net/reformed/confess67.pdf>)

Tues. Presbyterians and Ecumenism (CK)  
3/8 *The Ecumenical Stance of the PCUSA and Interreligious Stance of the PCUSA* (both on CAMS)

Thurs. Global Presbyterianism (CK)  
3/10 *“The World’s Christians, Protestant Tradition” and “The Future of the Reformed Movement Worldwide”* (both on CAMS)

### **Research and Study Week**

#### **Part 2 – Presbyterian Polity**

Tues. “The Foundations of Presbyterian Polity” for a Missional Church (CK)  
3/22 *Book of Order, Foundations of Presbyterian Polity, ch. 1-3, Johnson, ch. 3*

#### **Thurs. Easter Holiday**

Tues. Introduction to the Form of Government and Presbyterian Leadership through Polity (CK)  
3/29 *Book of Order: Preface, Table of Contents, and Index; Wolfe, Parliamentary Procedure; Ellison, Parliamentary Procedures; and Lambeth Bible Study. (These three readings on CAMS)*

Thurs. The Congregation as the Basic but not Sufficient Form of the Church and the role of Ruling and Teaching Elders (CK)  
3/31 *Form of Govt., ch. 1,-2; Johnson, ch. 1, 2, and 7*

Tues. The Councils of the Church: Session, Presbytery, Synod, and General Assembly and the Church Ecumenical (CK)  
4/5 *Form of Govt., ch. 3 and 5*

Thurs. Decently and In Order: Finances, Property, and Church Discipline (CK)  
4/7 *Form of Govt., ch. 4 and Rules of Discipline, ch. 1-3 and 6; Johnson, ch.*

Tues. Introduction to Worship and Sacraments in American Presbyterianism (CK)  
4/12 *Directory for Worship, Johnson, ch. 4 and 5 (The proposed revised Directory for Worship can also be found on CAMS.)*

#### **Part 3 – Presbyterian Theology and Polity Looking Forward**

Thurs. Postmodernism and Pluralism in Contemporary American Presbyterianism-Toward an Inclusive Church (SC)  
4/14

4/19 Presentation of Analysis of Reformed Doctrine Papers (SC)

Thurs. Presentation of Analysis of Reformed Doctrine Papers (SC)  
4/21

Tues. Presentation of Analysis of Reformed Doctrine Papers (SC)  
4/26

Thurs. Presentation of Analysis of Reformed Doctrine Papers (SC)  
4/28

Tues. Holding a Mock General Assembly (CK)

5/3 *Papers from the Office of the General Assembly for the 222<sup>nd</sup> General Assembly as they become available will be online or on CAMS*

Thurs. Closing Reflections on Polity and Theology (SC and CK)  
5/5 *Longfield, Epilogue, pp. 201-203*

## **ACADEMIC POLICIES**

### **Use of 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. For more information see: <http://lpts.libguides.com/content.php?pid=469569&sid=4083885> 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.

### **Academic Honesty**

All work turned in to the instructors 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. Two occurrences of plagiarism may result in dismissal from the Seminary. Students unfamiliar with issues

related to academic honesty can find help from the staff in the Academic Support Center. For more information, see the Policy for Academic Honesty in the Student Handbook.

### **Special Accommodations**

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](mailto:kmapes@lpts.edu)) during the first two weeks of a semester (or before the semester begins) 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 Seminary standards, which are based on these guides:

American Psychological Association. *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*. 6th ed. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2010.

Turabian, Kate L., Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams. *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations: Chicago Style for Students and Researchers*. 8th ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013.

*The Chicago Manual of Style*. 16th ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010.

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

### **Policy for Attendance and Submission of Papers**

According to the Seminary catalog, students are expected to attend class meetings regularly and to submit written work on the dates due as specified in the syllabus and/or by the professors. 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. Multiple absences and/or late papers may result in a low or failing grade in the course.