

SYLLABUS

Presbyterian Heritage and Polity, ET 1044, Spring Term 2018

Professors: Amy Plantinga Pauw and Clifton Kirkpatrick

Course Description:

Presbyterian Heritage and Polity is a course that provides a comprehensive introduction to Presbyterian and Reformed traditions through an exploration of Presbyterian history, theology, and confessions, polity and worship, especially in their 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:

Carlos Wilton, *Principles of Presbyterian Polity* (Geneva)

William Yoo, *The Presbyterian Experience in the United States: A Sourcebook* (WJK)

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

PC (USA). *The Book of Confessions, Study Edition* [Be sure to get the study edition base on the latest edition – the one with the Belhar Confession (WJK)

PC (USA) *Book of Order* 2017-19 edition (OGA)

**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: In the polity portion of the course, students 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 respond with 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 **ten** 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 choose in conversation with the professors. (see A. and B. below). In addition, you 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 work alone or in pairs on all or part of the question you devise. Then have the class 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 professors’ 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 topic, 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 & Providence</i>	I-II	1, 26-28	VI-VII	IV-V		16-17
<i>Sin & 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 & Sacraments</i>	XVI, XXI-XXIII	65-82	IV-V, XIX-XXII	XXI, XXVI-XXIX		36-37, 48-52
<i>Resurrection & 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
PRING 2018, LOUISVILLE PRESBYTERIAN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Part 1 – Decently and in Order: Presbyterian Polity

- Thurs. Introduction to the course: showing and discussion of the film, “Division and
2/1 Reunion: Reflection on American Presbyterianism,” and exploring the *Brief Statement of Faith*
and the Presbyterian Family Tree. **Note: every time we read a document from the Book of
Confessions, please also read the introduction to it.**
- Tues. “The Foundations of Presbyterian Polity” for a Missional Church, *Book of Order, Foundations of*
2/6 *Presbyterian Polity, chapters 1-3; Wilton, chapters 2-4, pp. 11-26*
What biblical image would best reflect a Presbyterian understanding of our ecclesiology and
why?
- Thurs. Introduction to the Form of Government and Presbyterian Leadership through Polity (CK)
2/8 *Book of Order: Preface, Table of Contents, and Index; Wolfe, Parliamentary Procedure; Lambeth*
Bible Study (on CAMS); and Wilton, chapter 1, pp. 3-10.
- Tues. The Congregation as the Basic but not Sufficient Form of the Church and the role of Ruling and
Teaching Elders (CK)
2/13 *Form of Govt., ch. 1,-2; Wilton, chapters 6-7, pp. 50-76 and chapter 10, pp. 97-114.*
In your own words, what does the Form of Government means when it claims that the local
congregation is the “basic” but “not sufficient form of the church?”
- Thurs. The Councils of the Church: Session, Presbytery, Synod, and General Assembly and the Church
Ecumenical (CK)
2/15 *Form of Govt., ch. 3 and 5; Wilton, ch. 11, pp. 115-139.*
(Should the PCUSA eliminate synods? Why or why not?)
- Tues. Decently and In Order: Finances, Property, and Church Discipline (CK)
2/20 *Form of Govt., ch. 4 and Rules of Discipline, ch. 1-3 and 6.*
For what purpose has Jesus Christ granted to the church the exercise of discipline?
- Thurs. Introduction to Worship and Sacraments in American Presbyterianism (CK)
2/22 Directory for Worship. Introduction to new *Book of Common Worship*
Assembly Approves Directory for Worship Revision at <https://www.layman.org/assembly-approves-directory-worship-revision/>
What are two major changes being proposed in the theology and practice of worship in the
Revised Directory for Worship?

Tues. No class in Presbyterian Heritage and Polity. Students are expected instead to participate in the
2/27 Black Church Studies Consultation at LPTS that afternoon.

Thurs. Holding a Mock General Assembly (CK)

3/1 Acting on proposals coming to the 223rd General Assembly from presbyteries, synods, and
General Assembly entities.

Part Two: The Confessional Heritage of the Church

Tues. Emergence of Reformed Protestantism (Calvin in Geneva)

3/6 *Elwood, ch. 1-4, Nicene Creed, and Apostles' Creed* (AP)

Calvin did not want to reform everything. How were the reforms he sought consonant with "the faith that the ancient catholic and apostolic church had held" (Elwood, p. 15)?

Thurs. Historical Spread of the Reformed Movement across Europe (AP)

3/8 *Elwood, ch. 5; Scots Confession*

How does the Scots Confession's understanding of civil authority reflect its historical context?

Research and Study Week

Tues. Reformation Era Confessions, cont. (AP)

3/20 *Heidelberg Catechism; Second Helvetic Confession*

How does the treatment of the 10 Commandments in the Heidelberg Catechism (4.092-4.115) an example of the "third use of the law"?

Part Three: The American Presbyterian Experience

Thurs. The Westminster Confession and American Revisions (AP)

3/22 *The Westminster Confession*; Yoo, pp. 5-14; D. Hart and J. Muether, "Turning Points in Presbyterian History" http://www.opc.org/new_horizons/NH05/08c.html

In the Westminster Confession, is Ch. XXXV (6.187-6.193), which was added by the UPC in 1903, theologically compatible with Ch. III (6.014-6.021)?

Tues. American Reformed Protestantism 18th-19th centuries (AP)

3/27 *Yoo, 15-24, 37-39, 44-51*

Easter Break

Tues. Themes in American Presbyterianism from the Civil War to the First World War: Race-Slavery
4/3 and the Fundamentalist/Modernist Controversy (AP)

Yoo, 59-76, 89-100, 118-122; *The Auburn Affirmation*, <http://www.opc.org/cce/AuburnAf.html>
George Armstrong says that “The Church and State has each its own appropriate sphere of operation assigned it of God” (Yoo, p. 72). How does this teaching, known as “the doctrine of the spirituality of the church,” support pro-slavery arguments?

Thur. Neo-Orthodoxy and Karl Barth (AP)

4/5 *The Barmen Declaration*; Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics: A Selection with Introduction*, pp. 53-65; J. S. Conway, “*The German Church Struggle*,” in *The Church Confronts the Nazis*, pp. 93-111 (See also Brief Glossary for this article.) (on CAMS)

What was the Confessing Church’s primary argument against the Nazis? What do you think of this argument?

Tues. *The Confession of 1967* and the new Book of Confessions (AP)

4/10 inclusive language version of C-67 can be found at

<http://www.creeds.net/reformed/confess67.pdf>

Confession of 1967; Yoo, 123-141; “*The Confessional Nature of the Church*” in *Book of Confessions, Study Edition*, pp. v-xxv (also on CAMS)

How are Jesus Christ and the Holy Scriptures related as sources of revelation in C’67 (9.27-30)?

Thur. *The Belhar Confession* (CK)

4/12 *The Belhar Confession*

What is the significance of the *The Belhar Confession* for North American Presbyterians?

Thurs. Gender and Gender Orientation in the PCUSA and Global Presbyterianism

4/17 Yoo, 77-89, 104-108; “Presbyterians give Final Approval for Same-Sex Marriage,”

<https://www.nytimes.com/2015/03/18/us/presbyterians-give-final-approval-for-same-sex-marriage.html>; Kenneth Culbertson, “Overture 50--One Gay Man’s Reflection,”

<https://covnetpres.org/2016/05/overture-50-one-gay-mans-reflection/>; Eric Jacobsen,

“Standing Up to Quiet Down,” <http://eco-pres.org/blog/standing-up-to-quiet-down/>; LGBTQ Affirming Overture (on CAMS)

Are the Presbyterian arguments about the role of women and LGBTQ persons in the church parallel? Why or why not?

Thurs. World Mission (CK)

4/19 Yoo, 101-104 and 109-118; “Summary of Principal Conclusions,” in *Rethinking Missions*, pp. 325-330 <https://archive.org/details/rethinkingmissio011901mbp> (scroll to 347/378); John G.

Turner, “A ‘Black-White’ Missionary on the Imperial Stage: William H. Sheppard and Middle-Class Black Manhood,” *Journal of Southern Religion* 9: <http://jsr.fsu.edu/Volume9/Turner.htm>

How does William Sheppard exemplify the ambiguities in the status of African-Americans in American Presbyterianism in late 19th-early 20th centuries?

Tues. Presbyterians and Ecumenism/Interfaith Relations (CK)

The Ecumenical and the Interfaith Stances of the PCUSA (both on CAMS)
4/24 *Association of the World communion of Reformed Churches with the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification*
Robert McAfee Brown affirms that he is ecumenical because he is Presbyterian. What is the basis for such an affirmation, and is he right?

Thurs. Pluralism in Global Presbyterianism and it Contemporary American Presbyterianism
4/26 *“The World’s Christians, Protestant Tradition” and “The Future of the Reformed Movement Worldwide”* (on CAMS); Yoo, 155-178

Tues. Presentation of Analysis of Reformed Doctrine Papers (AP and CK)
5/1

Thurs. Presentation of Analysis of Reformed Doctrine Papers (AP and CK) and Closing Reflections on
5/3 Theology and Polity
How do Presbyterian theology and polity mutually reinforce each other?

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) 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.