

PRESBYTERIAN POLITY AND REFORMED WORSHIP, CM 217-3

SYLLABUS

Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary

Spring Term, 2012

Clifton Kirkpatrick and Claudio Carvalhaes, Professors

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 (5% 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.

Designing and Implementing a Reformed Worship Service (5% of grade). Based on the principles in the Directory of Worship, students will prepare and carry out a worship service that reflects the core values of the Reformed tradition.

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 (25% of course grade)
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 3:00 pm on the afternoon 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 Book

Book of Order 2011-2013, 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.)

Readings on CAMS or Online

Since we have a new Form of Government in the PCUSA most publications related to the new polity are online or available through [Presbyterianleader.com](http://presbyterianleader.com). The readings from these sources are noted in the schedule for each session. These readings can be found either on CAMS or on the web (web addresses are provided).

Other books you should have in your library:

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.

50 Word Reflections

In advance of each class session students will be asked to prepare reflection of no more than fifty words in response to a basic question related to the topic of that day. These reflections will often be shared at the beginning of each class session. They should be shared with the professors electronically no later than 3:00 pm on the day before each class. The following is a description of this methodology.

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 superfluties. 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, Topics, Readings, and Reflection Assignments
Spring Term 2012

Week 1 – February 14, 2012

Theme: Introduction to Presbyterian Polity, One Another, and the Roles of Session in Discerning God's Will

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 Vision and Structure of the Constitution
Introduction to Constitutional Resources
Review Ordination Examinations for Polity and Worship and Sacraments
Agendas and Meeting Planning
Parliamentary Procedure
Discernment as a model of decision making
Tricks of the trade in moderating meetings

Readings: Book of Order: Preface, Table of Contents and Index
Wolfe, "Parliamentary Procedures in the PCUSA,"
https://www.pcusa.org/oga/publications/parliamentary_procedure.pdf
Curtiss, pp. 4-12 , "Guidelines for Communal Discernment, (https://www.pc-biz.org/Resources/dd95a72d-310f-466f-84f0-9852958e6bd6/comm_discern.pdf)
Ellison, "Parliamentary Procedure for Presbyterians"
Elwood, "Shared Governance and the Reformed Tradition"
Kirkpatrick, "The PCUSA, A Mission in Progress"

Take Home Practice Ordination Polity Exam assigned (Limit yourself to one hour for doing each exam)

Week 2 – February 21, 2011

Theme: Basics of Reformed Worship – Directory of 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
Begin planning a Reformed Worship Service which the class will lead in the Chapel later in the semester.

Readings: *The Directory for Worship* in the Book of Order
Gambrell, David. *The Directory for Worship from 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?

Week 3 – February 28, 2012

Theme: **Presbyterian Polity Revised - Introduction to the New Form of Government**

Components: From a Polity for Governance to a Polity for Mission
Major changes to take effect with the new Form of Government
Introduction to the concept of a Missional Polity

Readings: First Reading/Browsing of the Foundations of Presbyterian Polity and the Form of Government
Barber and Wright, "The Approved New Form of Government"
Fowler, "Navigating the New Form of Government"
Hooker, "What Is Missional Ecclesiology?"
McRight, "Foundations of Presbyterian Polity"
Cargal, "COM & CPM since nFOG"

Reflection: Which two of changes to the Form of Government have most promise for the faithful witness of the PCUSA?

Take home polity exam 2 assigned to students.

Week 4 – March 6, 2012

Theme: **Congregations: The Basic but not Sufficient Form of the Church**

Components: The Mission of the Congregation
Organizing Congregations and Fresh Expressions of Christian Community
Categories and Ministries of Members
Meetings and Responsibilities of Congregation
Case Studies on New Options for Congregational Life and Relationship being proposed by the Fellowship of Presbyterians and Others

Readings: The Form of Government, Chapter One, "Congregations and Their Membership" and section 3.02 on the Session
Geckler, "Sixteen Changes Most Impacting the Local Church"
Beattie, *Companion to the Constitution*, chapter five, "The Particular Church and Its Members," pp. 41-54, <http://oga.pcusa.org/publications/constitution-companion.pdf>.
Papers growing out of the Constituting Convention of the Fellowship of Presbyterians on options for Congregations to be "Loosely Affiliated" or "Part of a New Reformed Body." (to be provided after convention in January)
Church of England, summary of "Mission Based Church"

Reflection: In your own words what does the Form of Government's mean when it claims that the local congregation is the "basic" but "not sufficient" form of the church?

Week 5 – March 13, 2012

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

Components: The complimentary roles of ministers, elders, and deacons in congregations
Development of Profiles for Deacons, Ruling Elders, Teaching Elders, and Teaching Elders serving in Validated Ministries
Ministerial limits and prerogatives
Ordination, calling, and “The Essential Tenets of the Reformed Faith”
Review of Ordination Exams

Readings: Form of Government, Chapter 2, “Ordered Ministry, Commissioning, and Certification”
Directory for Worship, W-4.4000, “Ordination, Installation, and Commissioning”
PCUSA, *Advisory Handbook on Preparation for Ministry*, pp. 30-54,
<http://www.pcusa.org/media/uploads/prep4min/pdfs/handbook.pdf>
Ellison, “Selecting and Preparing Ruling Elders and Deacons”
Lytch, “Serving as an Elder”
Kirkpatrick and Valentine, *Presbyterian Leadership* (Chapter 2, “Resources from our Tradition”)

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

Take home polity exam 3 assigned to students.

Week 6 – March 27, 2012

Theme: The Councils of the Church, Presbyterian and Ecumenical

Components: The role of session, presbytery, and synod
Changes to Councils because of the new Form of Government
Principles of Administration
Independent yet Interdependent Councils
Being Presbyterian and Ecumenical
Transferring/Uniting with Ministers and Churches of Other Communion

Readings: Form of Government, Chapter 3, “Councils of the Church,” and Chapter 5, “Ecumenicity and Union”
OGA, “Advisory Handbook for Councils,”
<http://www.pcusa.org/media/uploads/oga/pdf/advisoryhandbook-councils.pdf>
Who Does What in the PCUSA?
Joe Small, “The Travail of the Presbytery”
Wright, “Presbyterian Commitment to Ecumenism”

Reflection: Presbyterians are “in correspondence” with three groups of Christian communions. What are those three groups?

Week 7 – April 3, 2012

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
Discipline in the PCUSA

Readings: Form of Government, Chapter 4, “Church and Civil Authority”
Rules of Discipline, Chapters 1-5
Standards of Ethical Conduct, pp. 1-4, <http://oga.pcusa.org/publications/ethical-conduct.pdf>
Johnson, “Ethics for Presbyterian Officers”

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?

Take home polity exam 4 assigned to students.

Week 8 – April 10, 2012

Theme: Basic Foundations and Vision of the Church in our Constitution

Components: Basic Principles and Theological Foundations for our Polity
Connections to our Confessions
Contribution of Presbyterian Polity to Trust, Community and Mission Renewal
Polity and the Conflicts in the PCUSA
Leadership and Reformed Polity
Final Planning Session for the Reformed Worship Service in the Chapel

Readings: Foundations of Presbyterian Polity
Book of Confessions: Nicene Creed, Westminster Shorter Catechism, and Brief Statement of Faith

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?

Week 9 – April 17, 2012

Theme: The General Assembly and Potential Major Changes to our Polity

Components: Establishing, amending and interpreting the Constitution
The General Assembly as a program agency and as a council of the church
Dialogue with General Assembly leaders
Review of Major Polity/Constitutional Proposals before the 220th General Assembly

- Biennial Assemblies
- Middle Councils Commission (future of synods)
- Fellowship proposals (New Reformed Body, non-geographic Presbyteries, “loosely affiliated,” etc.)
- Heidelberg Confession
- Marriage and Ordination

Readings: Form of Government, G-3.05, “The General Assembly,” and Chapter 6, “Interpreting and Amending the Constitution”
Kirkpatrick, *Is There a Future for the PCUSA?*
http://www.ppcbooks.com/pdf/price_gwynn/PriceGwynn2008.pdf
Mock General Assembly Instructions
Materials from the Office of the General Assembly related to the business before the 220th General Assembly

Reflection: Which Proposal related to the Constitution that is being sent to the 220th General Assembly is most critical for the future of the PCUSA and why?

Take home polity exam 5 assigned to students

Week 10 – April 24, 2011

Theme: Overview of Worship in light of the Confessions

Components: Historical development of Reformed worship
Theology of our Confessions on worship and the sacraments
Discuss in class Worship and Sacraments Exam

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)
Ronald P. Byars, “Christian Worship: Glorifying and Enjoying God” (Louisville: Geneva, 2000) pp. 49-65.
Small, Joseph D., *A Church of the Word and Sacrament*,
<http://www.pcusa.org/media/uploads/theologyandworship/pdfs/op16.pdf>

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.

Week 11 – May 1, 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
Discuss Worship Exams

Readings: *The Resource Library from the Worship Planner* on PresbyterianLeader.com
<https://presbyterianleader.com/ResourceLibrary.aspx> (hit the button on the website for a seven day free trial to access this resource)
The Book of Common Worship
"Invitation to Christ,"
<http://www.pcusa.org/media/uploads/sacraments/pdfs/invitationtochrist.pdf>.

Reflection: What are major sensitivities that need to be honored in developing worship services that are both contemporary/emergent and Reformed?
At the end of the assigned section of "Invitation to Christ" there are five sets of questions. Group one should reflect on questions 1 and 5, group 2 on questions 2 and 5, group 3 on questions 3 and 5, and group 4 on questions 4 and 5.

Take home polity exam 6 assigned to students.

Week 12 – May 8, 2011

Theme: **Reformed Sacraments**

Components: Understanding the Sacraments in Calvin
Sacraments and the Confessions
Sacraments in the PCUSA

Readings: The Resource Library from the Worship Planner on PresbyterianLeader.com,
<https://presbyterianleader.com/ResourceLibrary.aspx> (hit the button on the website for a seven day free trial to access this resource)
The Book of Common Worship
The Sacrament of Baptism, David Gambrell, PresbyterianLeader.com
The Sacrament of Communion, David Gambrell, PresbyterianLeader.com

Reflection: How do the sacraments mark the identity of the reformed faith?

Take home final polity exam (in three parts) will be distributed. Completed exams are due electronically to the professors by noon on May 17, 2012.