

**PRESBYTERIAN POLITY AND ADMINISTRATION
SYLLABUS, CM 217-2**

Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary
January Term, 2009
Clifton Kirkpatrick and David Sawyer, Professors

This online syllabus should be used to gain a better understanding of the content and focus of a course. The syllabus given out in the class may differ from this online version and its content supersedes that of the online syllabus.

Course Description

In this experiential approach, students learn to think theologically and systemically as they apply the constitution of the church to specific issues at the congregational, presbytery, synod, and general assembly levels. Attention will also be given to church 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 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 utilize prayer as both a discernment and a group-building tool in the work of governance in the church.
- Will be able to enter congregational life, bringing organizational, structural (polity), and theological reflection to the administrative and leadership roles of pastor.
- Will be familiar enough with the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to find and apply the appropriate principles, standards, and rules to the practices of ministry and administration of the church, and to be prepared for the Standard Ordination Examinations.
- Will be able to function as leaders and as participants in the basics of parliamentary procedure as practiced in the governing bodies of the PC (USA), and able to recognize and use other methods of participation and decision-making.

Course Evaluation: Students will respond to the seminary’s evaluation form for this course online 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.

Practice Ordination Exams: To prepare students for the denominational examination process, 25% of the class grade will be based on six parts of Polity Exams from past Presbyterian Standard Ordination Examinations in Polity. 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 for each class period. 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. For the final examination, all three sections are done, for which you are urged to limit yourself to three hours, and the marks for each section are then averaged and rounded up or down to the nearest whole number. For this class, the number marks will be translated directly to grades: 5 = A; 4 = B; 3 = C; 2 = D. An opportunity to take further exams is offered to anyone who wishes to try to improve a grade, and then the best two exam grades will be used. **Exams are submitted electronically to professors as assigned.**

Agendas and Moderating (20% of course grade)) based on the ability to prepare an agenda collaboratively with the professor and another student and to moderate one of the class meetings as if it were a session meeting.

Serving as Clerk (10% of course grade) based on the ability to record clearly and simply the proceedings of a particular class meeting.

Participation in class (20% 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.

A Final Exam consisting of an entire 3-part Polity Exam (25% of course grade).

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. Students unfamiliar with issues relating to academic honesty can find help from the staff in the Academic Support Center and should make use of the available resources at an early date, since violations of seminary policy on academic honesty can lead to a failing grade for the course.

Inclusive Language. The use of inclusive language in course work is a policy of Louisville Presbyterian Seminary. 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, avoid language for people that leaves out part of the population or perpetuates stereotypes. Do not assume masculine gender when the gender of the person is unknown. When referring to God, you are encouraged to use a variety of images and metaphors. See

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

Accessibility Issues

Any student who has issues of access, various learning abilities, or environmental sensitivities is invited to speak to the professor early in the term.

Class Attendance: Students are expected to attend all scheduled meetings of the course, except for illness or other valid reasons.

Required Reading

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, paper, 259 pp. (Available online at <http://www.pcusa.org/oga/publications/constitution-companion.pdf> but without introduction and appendix).

Book of Order 2007-2009. The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). (This publication is also available online at <http://www.pcusa.org/oga/publications/boo07-09.pdf>, but for preparation for the Standard Ordination Exams, it is important to be familiar with using the hard copy of this part of the Constitution.)

Book of Amendments to the Constitution for 2008. (to be distributed in class)

Curtiss, Victoria. *Guidelines for Communal Discernment*. Louisville: PCUSA Office of the General Assembly, 2007, pp. 4-12.

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

Sawyer, David R. *Work of the Church: Getting the Job Done in Boards and Committees*, Valley Forge: Judson Press, 1986, ISBN 0-8170-1116-1, paper, 105 pages.

Wolfe, Marianne L. *Parliamentary Procedures in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)*, Louisville: Office of the General Assembly, latest edition.

Assigned Documents from the PC(USA) website:

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](http://www.pcusa.org/peaceunitypurity/finalreport/final-report-revised-english.pdf).

Report of the Form of Government Task Force, pp. 3-24

<http://www.pcusa.org/formofgovernment/pdfs/foundations-draft-for-study-1008.pdf>, (Also browse the proposed new Form of Government, which can be found at

<http://www.pcusa.org/formofgovernment/pdfs/form-of-govt-draft-for-study-1008.pdf>.)

Wiley, Charles. "Ordinary and Extraordinary Discipline," PCUSA office of Theology and Worship: Church Issues Series, No. 6. <http://www.pcusa.org/oga/perspectives/april03/extraordinary.pdf>.

Another book you should have in your library but will not be assigned:

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

Presbyterian Polity Class Schedule January Term 2009

Monday First Class Meeting

Jan 5

Introduction to Course, to Lambeth Prayer, and to each other.
Assignment of moderatorial and clerking duties
Overview of the Structure of the Constitution
The Book of Order from the perspective of the particular church
Introduction to Constitutional Resources
Overview of Standard Ordination Exams

Assignments

- Book of Order Preface, Table of Contents. Index
- Companion to the Constitution, Introduction and Chapter 1, 2 and 3.

Take Home Practice Ordination Exam 1, (Aug 2007, Section One)

Due by Class Time Wednesday, Jan 7

(Limit yourself to one hour for doing each take-home exam)

Wednesday “The Work of the Session and Decent Order”

Jan. 7

Agendas and Meeting Planning
Parliamentary Procedure
Discernment as a model of decision making
Church Size and Polity
Tricks of the trade in moderating meetings

Assignments

- Book of Order G-9 and 10
- Companion: Chapters 10, 12, Appendices M, O, P, Q.
- Sawyer Ch 4
- Wolfe
- Curtiss, pp. 4-12

Take Home Exam 2 (Aug. 2007, Section Two) Due Friday, Jan 9

Friday. Jan 9 Basic Vision/Ecclesiology in our Constitution

Basic Principles and Theological Foundations for our Polity
Connections to our Confessions
Lecture/Discussion using methodology of Common Faith-Common Mission
Core Vision of our Constitution

Assignment:

- Book of Order, G-1 through G-4
- Book of Confessions, Nicene Creed, Westminster Shorter Catechism, and Brief Statement of Faith
- Companion, chapter 3
- Kirkpatrick and Hopper, chapters 3-6

Take Home Exam 3 (Aug. 2007, Section Three—choose A or B), Due Monday, Jan 12

Monday, Jan 12 “Working with Elders, Deacons, and Committees”

Organizing a Particular Church—Traditional and New Paradigm
The “parity” between elders and ministers of word and sacrament
The role of deacon
Committees
Responsibility for Worship

Assignment:

- Book of Order G-7, G-10:0100-10.0102;
- W-1.4000, 3.3101-3.3202; 6.1000-6.4000
- Companion: Chapters 6, 7, Appendices L, P, S
- Sawyer, Ch. 3

Take Home Exam 4 (Jan 07, Section One) Due Wednesday, Jan 14)

Wednesday “More Inclusive Governing Bodies”

Jan. 14 Presbytery, Synod, General Assembly
Constitutional Politics
Amendments to the Constitution

Assignment Book of Order G 11, 12, 13, 18
Companion: Chapters 10, 15
Presbyterian Planning Calendar—get familiar with pp 55-86
Proposed Amendments to the Constitution

Take Home Exam 5 (Jan 07, Section Two) Due Fri. Jan 16

Friday “Decently and in Order”

Jan 16 The Inner Wisdom of Conflict
Finances and Property, Administrative Review and Judicial Process
Review of Ordination Exams

Assignments

- Book of Order, G-8, G-9.0400, G-11.0500, D-1 through D-5
- Sawyer, chapter 7
- Companion, chapters 11 and 14, Appendices F,I, J,K
- Wiley, “Ordinary and Extraordinary Discipline”

Take Home Exam 6 (Jan 07, Section Three-- Choose A or B) Due Tuesday, Jan 20\

Monday No Class Martin Luther King Day

Jan 19

Tuesday Jan. 20 Ministers, Staff, and Officers

Ministerial limits and prerogatives
Ordination, calling, and “The Essential Tenets of the Reformed Faith”
Leadership of the laity
Personnel Functions

Assignments:

- Book of Order, W-4.400, G-6, G-7.0303-0304a, G-10.0100, 10.0103, 10.0202, G-14.0501-0553.
- Companion, Appendices G, H, T
- Sawyer, chapter 5
- <http://www.pcusa.org/constitutionalservices/ad-op/note22.htm>

Thursday Leadership, Ecclesiology and the Future of Presbyterian Polity

Jan 22

Recent Developments in Polity

Foundations and Future Trends in Presbyterian Polity

The work of the Holy Spirit

Conclusions by Sawyer and Kirkpatrick

Assignments:

- Companion, chapters 11 and 15
- PUP Report, section IV, "Resources for Peace, Unity and Purity" PP. 21-31
- Report of the Form of Government Task Force, pp. 3-24

The Final Exam will be a take home "Ordination Exam" to be assigned Jan 20 and to be turned in by Noon on Thursday, Jan 29. August 2005, All Three Sections. Limit yourself to 3 hours.