

# LEADERS FOR A CONNECTIONAL CHURCH: CONGREGATIONS AND THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

January 12 – 16, 2009

*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

This seminar will provide an opportunity for seminarians to explore the structure, program, and mission of the Presbyterian Church (USA) and its relationship with local congregations. Through encounters with national leadership and interactive encounters with various program areas of the denomination, participants will gain an understanding of the mission, structure, and programs of the PCUSA. Each participant will have the opportunity to engage in an area of the denomination's ministry and reflect on it.

## Course Outcomes

The course will allow each participant to:

1. experience being a part of a connectional church;
2. develop relationships with national staff for the sharing of vision and an emerging sense of shared ministry;
3. describe the organization of the General Assembly and demonstrate understanding of how its various divisions and entities function and understand how the General Assembly relates to other governing bodies;
4. develop a model for involvement of Presbyterians in mutual mission based on resources and programs available through program areas of the General Assembly Council and the Office of the General Assembly;
5. articulate ways to engage sessions and members of congregations in the PC(USA) connectional system;
6. explore in depth one area of interest in regard to the resources and programs provided by the denomination.

## Teaching/Learning Methodology:

The Presbyterian Center will provide a learning laboratory for students to learn through participation, observation, reading, reflecting, shadowing, and building relationships with denominational leaders. Students will have an opportunity to focus on one area of interest as they relate to GA staff and do assigned work tasks. These areas of interest are related to the five program goals of the General Assembly Council.

- **Evangelism:** The General Assembly Council will proclaim in word and deed the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
- **Justice:** The General Assembly Council will join God in transforming societies to reflect God's intention for a just, peaceful, and compassionate world.
- **Discipleship:** The General Assembly Council will equip people from the youngest of children to the most mature of Christians, to deepen their relationship with Jesus Christ and to follow, learn, and live God's new way in the world.
- **Stewardship:** The General Assembly council will commit itself and inspire people to live in grateful response to God's abundant grace and gifts.

- **Vocation:** The General Assembly Council will encourage people to hear and respond to God's call to witness and service in the church and the world.
- **Church Government:** The Office of the General Assembly is called to address opportunities and concerns which clarify the role and responsibilities of connectedness and communication in the life of the PC(USA).

### **Leadership**

Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary: Garnett Foster, Director of Field Education  
 Committee on Theological Education: Lee Hinson-Hasty, Coordinator for Theological Education & Seminary Relations  
 Denominational Leadership at the Presbyterian Center

### **Means of Evaluation:**

Each student's grade in the course will be determined in relation to the following:

1. Participation in all meetings of the class, including work at the Presbyterian Center (50%).
2. A presentation/brochure/model/lesson plan/etc. that could be used by congregations and/or presbyteries to increase understanding of our connectional system and the visibility of General Assembly and its resources/programs (25%). At least a draft of this work will be presented to the class at their last meeting.  
(Any final work will be due by February 5, 2009.)
3. A paper of approximately 10 pages which includes reflections on learning and how the work of the denominational offices impacts a local congregation (25%). Dialog your experiences and assigned readings.  
(This will be due by February 5, 2009.)

### **Bibliography**

**Only the readings under Presbyterian Church USA are required.** Because the church in the U.S. is in a time of transition, there are few resources available on the role of a denomination. You will serve a denomination very different from what has been known for the last fifty years, and you need resources for theological reflection on the role of the congregations, middle governing bodies, and denomination. Therefore, your challenge is to **peruse the various books among the other lists** and use the insights from them to develop your own theology of the mission of the national offices of the Presbyterian Church (USA). Use the books to dialogue with your experience of the PCUSA and stimulants for "creative mulling." **Before January 12**, read from the choices indicated below. Add the insights you gain from them to group discussion and to your reflection paper – and to your future ministry.

*Presbyterian Church USA* (read all)

1. Coalter, Mulder, and Weeks, editors, The Organizational Revolution: Presbyterian and American Denominationalism, Read Chapters 1, 2, 11, and 12 and one or two other chapters in areas in which you have interest.
2. Book of Order, Chapters I – IV, IX and XIII
3. Joan Gray and Joyce Tucker, Presbyterian Polity for Church Officers, Forward and chapters 1 and 10

*Ecclesiology* (Choose one)

1. Deitrich Bonhoeffer: Life Together
2. Sherron George: Called as Partners in Christ's Service
3. Shirley Guthrie: Always Being Reformed
4. Brian McLaren: The Shape of things to Come
5. Parker Palmer: The Company of Strangers
6. Jim Deotis Roberts: Bonhoeffer And King: Speaking Truth to Power
7. Letty Russell: Church in the Round
8. Charles A. Wiley, et al: Theology in Service of the Church

*The Church and the Future* (Choose one)

1. James Echols: I Have a Dream: the Future of Multicultural America
2. Eric Law: The Wolf Shall Dwell with the Lamb: A Spirituality for Leadership in a Multicultural Community
3. David Esterline and Ogbu U. Kalu, Shaping Beloved Community

*Change Theory* (Choose one)

1. Ronald A. Heifetz and Marty Linsky, Leadership on the Line: Staying through the Dangers of Leading
2. Margaret Wheatley, Leadership and the New Science: Discovering Order in a Chaotic World

**Credit:** 3 hours or 1½ hours (work load will be reduced), or audit

**Costs:** \$322 per credit hour (three credits - \$966; one and a half credits - \$483; Audit fee \$200.

Only a \$100 cross registration fee to LPTS will be required of students from other PC(USA) seminaries with tuition paid to your seminary of enrollment.

**Participants:** Maximum of 24

**Diversity and Inclusiveness:**

*The Presbyterian Church (USA) shall give full expression to the rich diversity within its membership and shall provide means which will assure a greater inclusiveness leading to the wholeness in its emerging life. Persons of all racial ethnic groups, different ages, both sexes, various disabilities, diverse geographical areas, different theological positions consistent with the Reformed tradition, as well as different marital conditions (married, single, widowed, or divorced) shall be guaranteed full participation and access to representation in the decision making of the Church. (Book of Order G-4.0403)*

As in all activities of the General Assembly of the PCUSA, the LPTS and GA staff providing leadership for the course and all participants are expected to abide by the denomination's commitment to diversity and inclusiveness and be faithful to the perspective of the "Guidelines and Definitions on Inclusive Language" which the General Assembly has adopted as policy. These documents may be found at <http://www.pcusa.org/theologyandworship/issues/inclusive.htm>

## **School and Class Policies:**

### **Confidentiality**

Professional ethics in ministry helps us understand confidentiality as the trustworthy use of information to assure appropriate care of those who seek our assistance. In other words, confidentiality is not synonymous with keeping a secret. (Lebacqz, *Professional Ethics*, 1985). Rather, it is being accountable for honoring another's trust while assuring the best possible care for them. Accountability may warrant consultation when we need further information.

### **Classroom Discussion**

For ours to be an open classroom where freedom and respect are assured regarding one another's point of view, we need to agree that comments and expressions of belief that may be at variance with the those of the instructors, another student, or our own must be respected and heard and treated fairly.

### **Use of Inclusive Language**

Learning is fundamentally concerned with communication, self-expression, and personal and social transformation. Learning respects individuals, their feelings, their value and worth, and their particular potential for contribution to common knowledge and community virtue. Learning is fundamentally and intentionally inclusive. Since all learning is inherently ethical and political, and theological discourse traditionally has been patriarchal and gender exclusive, the Seminary has established a policy, in the interest of the construction of an inclusive and egalitarian community that the language (symbols, metaphors) used in our class discussions and written work will be gender inclusive and respectful of all persons and groups as valued human creatures of God.

Racism and white privilege, homophobia, and prejudice toward people with disabilities also permeate our society and are detrimental to any learning environment. We need to use language, symbols, and metaphors that honor our commitment to being a community respectful and welcoming of difference and opposed to all forms of social oppression.

## **From the Dean's Office:**

### **Attendance**

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. Two or more absences for each semester may result in a low or failing grade in the course.

### **Plagiarism and Documentation Policy**

According to the MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers, plagiarism is defined as using "another person's ideas or expressions in your writing without acknowledging the source" (Gibaldi, MLA Handbook, Fourth ed., p. 26). Students in this course are required to abide by the Seminary's academic honesty policy and are directed to observe the guidelines cited in the above-mentioned MLA Handbook, which include matters of proper documentation and citation, use of work from a previous course, and

collaborative work (pp. 22-29). "...where citations are required, they shall follow the form of the latest edition of Turabian/Chicago Manual of Style.

## TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

The following tentative schedule will give you feel for the flow of the week. It is subject to change in the leadership at the Center has to change times they work with the group.

### Monday, January 12

		<u>Leader</u>	<u>Location</u>
	<i>Activity</i>		
<b>9:00 AM</b>	Welcome, Schedule Overview	<i>Lee Hinson-Hasty</i>	<i>Conf. Room A</i>
	Worship	<i>Garnett Foster</i>	
<b>9:45 a.m.</b>	Group Building	<i>Garnett Foster</i>	
	Break		
	Exploration of understanding of PC(USA )	<i>Lee Hinson-Hasty</i>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mission of 6 PC(USA) entities</li> <li>• Reflections on PC(USA) Readings</li> </ul>		
<b>12:30 PM</b>	Lunch		<i>Center Cafeteria</i>
<b>1:30 PM</b>	Discovering the Environment of the Presbyterian Center		<i>Center Cafeteria Lobby Area</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guided Tour</li> <li>• Further Reflections on Readings</li> </ul>		
<b>2:45 PM</b>	Break		
<b>3:00 PM</b>	The Office of The General Assembly	<i>Stated Clerk, Grayde Parsons &amp; OGA Staff</i>	
<b>4:30 PM</b>	Stop for the Day		
<b>5:30-7:30</b>	Dinner Together	<i>Lee Hinson-Hasty</i>	<i>Map and details to be distributed</i>

### Tuesday, January 13

<b>9:00 AM</b>	Morning Prayer	<i>Student</i>	<i>Conf. Room A</i>
	Debrief previous day	<i>Lee Hinson-Hasty</i>	
<b>9:45 – 4:30 PM</b>	Introductions with Lab Leaders	<i>Lee Hinson-Hasty</i>	<i>Conf. Room A</i>
<b>11:45 AM</b>	Worship with the Center Staff	<i>Center Designees</i>	<i>Center Chapel</i>

<b>12:15 PM/ After Worship</b>	Lunch with Individual Lab Leaders	<i>Lab Leaders</i>	<i>Meet in Assigned Office Area</i>
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**Wednesday, January 14**

<b>9:00 AM</b>	Morning Prayer	<i>Student</i>	<i>Conf. Room A</i>
	Debrief previous day	<i>Garnett Foster</i>	
<b>9:45 – 11:45 AM</b>	“Learning Laboratories” with assigned Center Staff	<i>Lab Leaders</i>	<i>Meet in Assigned Office Area</i>
<b>11:45 AM</b>	Worship with Center Staff	<i>Center Designees</i>	<i>Center Chapel</i>
<b>12:15 PM/ After Worship</b>	Lunch with learning lab		
<b>1:00 – 4:30 PM</b>	“Learning Laboratories” with assigned Center Staff	<i>Lab Leaders</i>	<i>Meet in Assigned Office Area</i>

**Thursday, January 15**

<b>9:00 AM</b>	Morning Prayer	<i>Student</i>	<i>Conf. Room A</i>
	Debrief previous day	<i>Garnett Foster</i>	
<b>9:45 AM</b>	Class Designed Conversations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Linda Valentine (Tentative)</li> <li>• Others TBD by class and availability</li> </ul>	<i>Lee Hinson-Hasty</i>	
<b>11:45 AM</b>	Worship with Center Staff	<i>Center Designees</i>	<i>Center Chapel</i>
<b>12:15 PM/ After Worship</b>	Lunch on your own		
<b>1:00 PM</b>	What in the World are you doing through PC (USA)	<i>Jon Brown</i>	<i>Conference Room A &amp; B</i>
<b>2:00 PM</b>	Panel with GAC Mission Staff Leader	<i>Tom Taylor &amp; Ministry Area Directors</i>	
<b>4:15 PM</b>	Reception for J-Term Students	<i>Rob Fohr</i>	<i>Mezzanine Lobby</i>

**Friday, January 16**

<b>9:00 AM</b>	Morning Prayer	<i>Lee Hinson-Hasty</i>	<i>Conf. Room A</i>
<b>9:15 AM</b>	Presentation of designs developed to increase awareness of our connectional system/ student presentations with staff participants invited	<i>Garnett Foster</i> <i>Lee Hinson-Hasty</i>	<i>Conf. Room A</i>
<b>10:45 AM</b>	Debriefing of learning	<i>Lee Hinson-Hasty</i>	<i>Conf. Room A</i>
<b>11:15 AM</b>	Evaluation	<i>Garnett Foster</i>	<i>Conf. Room A</i>
<b>11:45 AM</b>	J-Term class leads Worship with Center Staff		<i>Center Chapel</i>
<b>12:15 PM</b>	Lunch and depart for home	<i>Lunch on your own</i>	

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