

PRESBYTERIAN HERITAGE

SPRING 2008

CHRISTOPHER ELWOOD

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T/W/Th, 8:30 am – 9:50 am

Hundley Hall (plenary)

Hundley Hall and Gardencourt 213 (discussion)

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 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.

The course assumes a basic knowledge of Christian theology and of church history as a prerequisite. The completion of *Faith Seeking Understanding* (FQI) or equivalent previous course work in theology is required to participate in this intermediate level of instruction and learning.

Objectives:

Students will explore both the diversity and the common witness of expressions of Reformed faith across time, examine the nature of a religious tradition and its ethos, and develop the analytical and interpretive skills necessary to participate faithfully in the ongoing witness of the church today.

Requirements:

- 1. Preparation and participation.** Your preparation and thoughtful contribution to class discussion (especially on discussion section days) will represent **15%** of your final grade.
- 2. Short discussion papers:** You are asked to write 5 one-page (single-spaced) papers as indicated in the Calendar of Lectures and Discussion Topics for 2/20, 3/5, 3/19, 4/2, and 4/15. They are to be handed in (via the digital dropbox on the Blackboard course site—<http://fishersnet.blackboard.com/webapps/login>) before class time on the day indicated in the syllabus. *No late papers will be accepted.* These papers will represent 25% of your final grade.
- 3. Analysis of a point of Reformed doctrine in the *Book of Confessions*.** You will prepare a 10-12 page (double-spaced) paper analyzing Reformed confessional positions as reflected in *The Book of Confessions* on the topic you are assigned (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 12. This paper and your leadership in the assigned discussion period will represent 35% of the final grade.

The chart on page 7 of 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, or the Brief Statement of Faith 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 www.lpts.edu/content/documents/OrdExams.pdf 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 you should spend some time indicating how you would answer 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, answer the ordination exam question that you devise for class discussion.

4. Midterm

A midterm exam will be given on April 1. The midterm exam will count as 25% of your final grade.

Required Texts:

James H. Smylie. *A Brief History of the Presbyterians* (Geneva Press). (Referred to in the syllabus as *Smylie*)

Christopher Elwood. *Calvin for Armchair Theologians* (W/JK). (Referred to in the syllabus as *Elwood*)
PCUSA. *The Book of Confessions, Study Edition* (W/JK). (Referred to in the syllabus as BOC)

Milton J Coalter, John M. Mulder, Louis B. Weeks. *The Re-Forming Tradition: Presbyterians and Mainstream Protestantism* (W/JK). (Referred to in the syllabus as Re-Forming Tradition)

Other readings are on e-reserve at the Blackboard site for this course (R), or available on the web through links in the syllabus, as indicated. It is recommended that students make themselves a copy of each assigned reading.

Calendar of Lectures and Discussion Topics

* indicates discussion section (see groups and meeting locations on p. 9)

<u>Date</u>		<u>Assignment</u>
Th	2/7	Introduction
T	2/12	*Nicene and Apostles' Creeds <i>"The Confessional Nature of the Church,"</i> <u>BOC</u> , pp. 351-369 <i>Nicene Creed and Apostles' Creed, BOC.</i> Note: Please read the introduction that accompanies each document in the Study Edition of the <u>BOC</u> .
W	2/13	Emergence of Reformed Protestantism <i>Elwood, ch. 1-4</i>
Th	2/14	*Heidelberg Catechism <i>Heidelberg Catechism, BOC</i> Elwood, "Some Notes on the Translation of the Heidelberg Catechism" (R)
T	2/19	Scottish Reformation Hans Hillerbrand, <i>The Reformation</i> , pp. 298- 304; 356-69 (R)
W	2/20	*Scots Confession Discussion paper 1: <i>What authority is given to Scripture in this confession? Does this set up Reformed churches to be contentious? Explain.</i> <i>Scots Confession, BOC</i>
Th	2/21	*II Helvetic Confession <i>II Helvetic Confession, BOC</i>
T	2/26	Calvinism in a Confessional Age <i>Elwood, ch. 5</i> Samuel T. Logan, "The Context and Work of the Assembly," in <i>To Glorify and Enjoy God</i> , pp. 29-46 (R)
W	2/27	*Westminster Confession <i>Westminster Confession, BOC</i>
Th	2/28	Puritanism <i>Westminster Catechisms, BOC</i>
T	3/4	Colonial Presbyterianism !!Note: Class meets today in Nelson 119 <i>Smylie, chapters 4-6</i>

<u>Date</u>			<u>Assignment</u>
W	3/5	*Subscription Controversy Discussion paper 2: <i>What should the church learn from the controversies over subscription in American Presbyterianism? Respond to both New Wineskins and Stacy Johnson.</i> !!Note: Class meets today in Nelson 119 and Gardencourt 213	New Wineskins Association of Churches, available at http://www.newwineconvo.com/documents/Essential_Tenets_of_the_Reformed_Faith.doc http://www.newwineconvo.com/documents/White_Paper_on_Subscription.doc William Stacy Johnson, "Revisiting the Confessional Nature of the Church" <i>Presbyterian Outlook</i> , Feb. 4, 2002, available at http://www.pres-outlook.com/HTML/stacy012902.html
Th	3/6	Trends in 19 th -c Presbyterianism	<i>Smylie, chapter 7</i>
T	3/11	Old School Presbyterianism	<i>Smylie, chapter 8</i> Katie Cannon, "Surviving the Blight," in <i>Inheriting our Mothers' Gardens</i> , pp. 75-90 (R)
W	3/12	Presbyterians and Race	Francis J. Grimke, "Victory for the Allies and the United States a Ground of Rejoicing, of Thanksgiving" (R) Joel Alvis, "A Presbyterian Dilemma," and Gayraud S. Wilmore, "Identity and Integration," chs. 8-9 in <i>The Diversity of Discipleship</i> , pp. 187-233 (R)
Th	3/13	Presbyterian Women	Rosemary Radford Ruether and Rosemary Skinner Keller, <i>Women and Religion in America: Vol. 1 The Nineteenth Century</i> . pp. 13-18, 25-27, 33-39, 208-217, 229-238 (R)
T	3/18	Religious Cultures, Denominations, and Incorporation	<i>Re-Forming Tradition, chapters 3 and 7</i>
W	3/19	Expanding Traditions: Mission and Global Encounters Discussion paper 3: <i>In what ways does the experience and practice of William H. Sheppard reflect opportunities and challenges for Reformed witness in the late-19th/early-20th century?</i> Midterm study questions distributed today	<i>Westminster Confession, BOC</i> 6.187-6.193 William H. Sheppard, "Light in Darkest Africa" (R) John G. Turner, "A 'Black-White' Missionary on the Imperial Stage: William H. Sheppard and Middle-Class Black Manhood," <i>Journal of Southern Religion</i> 9: http://jsr.fsu.edu/Volume9/Turner.htm
Th	3/20	Easter Recess	
	3/24-28	Research and Study	
T	4/1	Midterm exam	
W	4/2	Modernist/Fundamentalist Controversy	<i>Re-Forming Tradition, chapter 4</i>

<u>Date</u>		<u>Assignment</u>
	Discussion paper 4: <i>Should the Church define precisely “essential and necessary articles” (or tenets)? Discuss this question in light of the actions of the 1927 PCUSA General Assembly, in the wake of the Fundamentalist-Modernist controversy.</i>	<i>Smylie, chapter 9, 10</i> “The Auburn Affirmation” available at http://www.opc.org/cce/AuburnAf.html J. Gresham Machen, “The Truth about the Presbyterian Church,” <i>Selected Shorter Writings</i> , pp. 243-249, 262-266 (R)
Th	4/3	Neo-orthodoxy and other 20 th -century trends
		Karl Barth, <i>Church Dogmatics: A Selection with Introduction</i> , pp. 53-65 J.S. Conway, “The German Church Struggle,” in <i>The Church Confronts the Nazis</i> , pp. 93-111 (See also Brief Glossary for this article.) (R)
T	4/8	*Barmen Declaration
		<i>Barmen Declaration, BOC</i> Smylie, chapter 10
W	4/9	No class
Th	4/10	*Confession of 1967
		<i>Confession of 1967, BOC</i> See an inclusive language version at http://www.creeds.net/reformed/confess67.pdf Smylie, chapter 11
T	4/15	Presbyterian Evangelism and Mission GUEST LECTURER: MARIAN MCCLURE <i>FORMER DIRECTOR, WORLDWIDE MINISTRIES, PC(USA)</i> Discussion paper 5: <i>Respond to negative stereotypes about Christian missions with a Reformed perspective on mission and evangelism.</i>
		<i>Guthrie, “Evangelism in a Pluralistic Society: A Reformed Perspective” (R)</i> Banker, “Of Missionaries, Multiculturalism, and Mainstream Malaise” <i>Journal of Presbyterian History</i> (Summer 2003): 77-99 (R)
W	4/16	Ecumenism and Interfaith Relations
		Daniel Migliore, <i>Faith Seeking Understanding</i> , 306-329 “Formula of Agreement”: http://www.elca.org/ecumenical/fullcommunion/formula/official_text.html “A Theological Understanding of the Relations between Christians and Jews”: http://www.pcusa.org/theologyandworship/issues/christiansjews.pdf “Presbyterian Principles for Interfaith Dialogue”: http://www.pcusa.org/interfaith/study/principles.htm
Th	4/17	Postmodernism and Pluralism in Contemporary Presbyterianism
		Barbara Wheeler, “Strange Company,” and Richard Mouw, “Hanging in there”(<i>Christian Century</i> , 1/13/04), pp. 18-25 (R) Visit the websites of these PCUSA advocacy groups:

<u>Date</u>			<u>Assignment</u>
			Presbyterians for Renewal www.pfrenewal.org/ Confessing Church Movement http://www.confessingchurch.homestead.com/index.html Covenant Network http://www.covenantnetwork.org/home.htm That All May Freely Serve www.tamfs.org/
T	4/22	*Brief Statement of Faith	<i>Brief Statement of Faith, <u>BOC</u></i>
W	4/23	<u>Student Presentations Begin</u> Scripture, Trinity	Read pertinent sections of the <u>BOC</u> for Scripture and Trinity (or the doctrine of God)
Th	4/24	Creation and Providence; Sin and Covenant	Read pertinent sections of the <u>BOC</u> for Creation and Providence, and Sin and Covenant
T	4/29	Election; Law and Gospel	Read pertinent sections of the <u>BOC</u> for Election, Law and Gospel
W	4/30	Jesus Christ; Justification, Sanctification and Repentance	Read pertinent sections of the <u>BOC</u> for Jesus Christ, Justification, Sanctification and Repentance
Th	5/1	Faith and Works and the Christian Life, Holy Spirit	Read pertinent sections of the <u>BOC</u> for Faith and Works and the Christian Life, and the Holy Spirit
T	5/6	Church, Worship and Sacraments	Read pertinent sections of the <u>BOC</u> for Church, Worship and Sacraments
W	5/7	Resurrection and Last Things, State	Read pertinent sections of the <u>BOC</u> for Resurrection and Last Things, and the State
Th	5/8	Concluding Reflections	<i><u>Re-Forming Tradition</u>, chapter 9</i>

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

Discussion Groups (for days marked with an asterisk (*))

Gardencourt 213

Kerri Allen
Burnetta Barton
Clancy Cherry
Sallie Cunningham
Breanne Harmon
Derick Johnson
Josh Robinson
Katie Strednak
Susie Wiggins
Eric Wright

Hundley Hall

Roger Au
Andrew Black
Andrew Clark
Melissa Gee
Lisa Herman
Gail Monsma
Nancy Strapp
Paula Tibbs
Karin Wright