I. Course Description
A course in denominational polity is generally a prerequisite for ordination in the American Baptist Churches in the USA. This course will consider the history, polity, theology, and practice of the Baptists. Particular attention will be given to the status of the denomination at present. Discussion, interviews, independent study, tutorials, guest speakers, and group experience will be a part of the course.

II. Course Relationship to the Curriculum
This course helps students to prepare for ordination in the American Baptist Churches in the USA. Attention is given to polity, history, and practice of the ABCUSA. The course brings together theology, history, exegesis, and practical skills requisite for effective pastoral ministry.

III. Course Objective
Students will be able to have a knowledge of the history and practice of the Baptists, and will be able to function as an effective minister of the Gospel within the structure of the ABCUSA. To achieve this objective, reading, discussion, lecture, guest speakers, papers, field and group experience will be employed.

IV. Course Textbooks
Required:


Recommended:


V. Course Requirements and Grading

1. Students will complete the required reading for the course, providing a reading list at the end of the term of the pages read. A minimum of 1200 pages is required for this course.
2. Attendance and class participation are expected.
3. A fifteen to twenty page (15-20) ordination or research paper is required. Students will be allowed to submit more than one draft up to week five.
   a. Week 2: Outline of paper is due
   b. Week 4: 1st draft of paper is due if multiple drafts will be submitted, or students can submit final paper at the end of the course.
4. One page reflection paper on a.) Baptism and Membership and, b.) Parental Dedication and Infant Presentation. These two papers are due at the end of the course.
5. Students will read and bring to class a constitution and by-law statement from a Baptist Church. Attendance and participation in discussion in class sessions (20%), reading report (20%), reflection papers on Baptism and Membership and Parental Dedication and Infant Presentation (10%), ordination paper (50%). The above schedule and procedures in this course are subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances.

VI. Course Outline
Introduction to the Course
A. Theories of Baptist History
B. Baptist Beginnings
C. Discussion
Reading: Torbet 17-134; Brackney 23-91; Maring & Hudson 1-48; Lumpkin 11-17, 18-346.
American Baptist Beginnings

A. Baptists in the Colonies
B. The Unifying Factor
C. Discussion
Reading: Torbet 135-265; Lumpkin 347-376; Goodwin 1-123.
Missions: The Motive for Union

A. Missionary Leaders
B. The Triennial Convention
C. Discussion
Reading: Torbet 331-423; Brackney 165-249.
The Polity of it All

A. Congregational Government and Associationalism
B. Tensions of Theological Diversity
C. Discussion
Reading: Torbet 424-456; Brackney 255-347; Maring & Hudson 49121, 173-226; Penfield 5-63; Goodwin 273-395.
Who Are We?

A. Today --National, International Relationships
B. Ecumenical Relationships
C. Discussion
Reading: Torbet 457-533; Brackney 351-429; Maring & Hudson 227-248; Brackney, Fiddes, Briggs; Garrett and Melick.

Believers' Baptism

A. Theology of Baptism
B. ~Practice of Baptism
C. Practice of the Lord Supper
Reading: Maring & Hudson 145-172; Fiddes, Reflections.

The Pastor and Placement
A. Concerns
B. Issues
C. Discussion
The Ordination Paper shall include:

1. Bio of student
a. Christian experience
b. Call to the Ministry
2. A Statement of Theological Beliefs, being a general comprehension of Christian doctrine and practice:
   a. Doctrine of God, Christ, the Holy Spirit
   b. Doctrine of humanity
c. The Bible
d. The Ordinances
e. The purpose and place of the church in today's world
f. The last things
g. The role of ministry
h. The relationship of the local congregation to the ABCUSA
   i. Ecumenical relationships
   Note: This section generally extends to about three quarters of the paper in length.

3. A brief statement (paragraph or two) reflecting an understanding of American Baptist history and polity.
4. A statement reflecting your attitude and commitment toward the ABCUSA its ecumenical witness. The ordination paper should be written clearly and understandable to the lay reader. It is suggested that the paper have every line numbered. This will enable readers to refer to "page five, line ten" when asking a question of the candidate.

*Remember to add a Bibliography.