MC601K Reformed Ecclesiology and Polity (Directed Study)
Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary – Charlotte
Spring 2016

Instructor
Dr. S. Donald Fortson III

Contact Information
704 366-5066 (office)
dfortson@rts.edu

Schedule of Class Meetings
February 6, March 5, April 9 (Saturdays 5:00-7:00)

Course Description
This reading course provides students preparing for ordination with an understanding of Presbyterian history, polity and doctrinal standards. Readings will include studying the particular history and Book of Order of the student’s own denomination as well as general readings applicable to all American Presbyterian bodies.

Course Objectives
1. Explore the history of the Reformed Tradition
2. Understand the trajectory of this tradition in the American context
3. Study the doctrinal standards that have defined Presbyterianism
4. Review Presbyterian polity and practice

Course Requirements
1. General Reading (all students)

2. Denominational Reading (student choice in each category)
a. Denominational History. Some Reformed denominations have several histories; ask an older minister which ones have been found most useful.
b. Doctrinal Standards of the denomination (Westminster Confession, Book of Confessions, etc.). There are numerous versions of these doctrinal standards. Choose a text that is currently used in your denomination.
c. Book of Order (covering Government, Discipline, Worship) used by the denomination. These texts are typically available through the General Assembly (Synod) office of the denomination.
3. Lectures Online – students will listen to select lectures available through iTunesU.
Before the weekend of February 6 listen to these lectures:
*Foundations of Protestant Theology*
*The English Reformation*

Before the weekend of March 5 listen to these lectures:
*Presbyterianism in the 19th C. – Part 1*
*Presbyterianism in the 19th C. – Part 2*
*The Church Debates and the Civil War*
*The Plan of Reunion*

Before the weekend of April 9 listen to these lectures:
*The Battle of Modernism and Liberalism*
*Evangelism and Growth of the Presbyterian Church*
*Fundamentalism and Modernism Controversy*
*Mainline Decline*

To locate the lectures use one of these methods
1) Link to iTunes U course lectures:

2) Link to RTS Mobile, where the lectures can be listened to/downloaded:
   http://get.theapp.co/3c13 Once you download the app on Apple, Android, or Windows Phone devices you can find the lectures in the Historical Theology category under “American Presbyterianism”

4. Paper Requirements
   a. Each student will write a 10-12 page (minimum) typed paper which tells the story (history) of his/her denomination. The paper should be double spaced in 12-point font. Footnotes are not necessary.
   b. Each student will write a 10-12 page (minimum) typed outline of his/her denomination’s *Book of Order*. This is intended to function as a personal study guide for ordination exams. Outline should be in 12-point font; format of paper is at student’s discretion – whatever will be most helpful to you in studying for an exam.

5. Reading and Lecture Report – This report will indicate the amount of *Required Reading* that has been completed for this course. For denominational reading indicate titles of books read. The Reading Report form is attached to this syllabus.

Due date for both papers and the Reading and Lecture Report is **May 9** (post-marked). Mail to:

Trish King
Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary
14542 Choate Circle
Charlotte, NC 28273
Grading
Reading and Online Lectures – 60%
Denominational history paper - 20%
Book of Order outline - 20%
Grading Scale: A(97-100), A-(94-96), B+(91-93), B (88-90), B-(86-87), C+(83-85), C(80-82)
C-(78-79), D+(75-77), D(72-74), D-(70-71), F (69 – )

Class participation
It is required that students be present for all weekend class sessions on Saturdays from 5:00 until 7:00 dismissal. In an emergency (death in the family or trip to the emergency room), you may notify professor that you have been “providentially hindered” from attendance. It is expected that students will keep current in their reading and hand in assignments on time. Failure to comply with these standards will result in grade reduction.
Reformed Ecclesiology and Polity

Reading and Lecture Report

*Please state the percentage of the Required Reading and Online Lectures completed.*

### 1. General Reading

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fortson</td>
<td><em>Colonial Presbyterianism</em></td>
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<td>Armstrong, et.al.</td>
<td><em>The Presbyterian Enterprise</em></td>
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<td>Longfield</td>
<td><em>The Presbyterian Controversy</em></td>
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### 2. Denominational Reading

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<td>Denominational Doctrinal Standard</td>
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<td>Denominational Book of Order</td>
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### 3. Online Lectures

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___________________________________________            ________________________
Name                                                                                     Date
Syllabus Addendum

Academic Standards
Cheating and plagiarism are considered serious breaches of personal and academic integrity. Cheating involves, but is not necessarily limited to, the use of unauthorized sources of information during an examination or the submission of the same (or substantially same) work for credit in two or more courses without the knowledge and consent of the instructors. Plagiarism involves the use of another person’s distinctive ideas or words, whether published or unpublished, and representing them as one’s own instead of giving proper credit to the source. Plagiarism can also involve over dependence on other source material for the scope and substance of one’s writing. Such breaches in academic standards often result in a failing grade as well as other corrective measures. For more information, please consult the Student Handbook.

ADA Policy
The seminary complies with the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act. A student with a qualifying and authenticated disability who is in need of accommodations, should petition the seminary in accordance with the stated guidelines in the Student Handbook.

Cancellation of Class
In the event the seminary has to cancel a class meeting (impending storm, professor illness, etc.), the Registration Office will send out an email (via the GCTS email account) notification to all students registered in the respective course. If the cancelation occurs the day of the scheduled meeting, the Registration Office will also attempt to contact students via their primary phone contact on record. The professor will contact the students (via GCTS account) regarding makeup. If a weekend class is cancelled, the class will be made up during the scheduled Make-Up weekend (see the academic calendar for the designated dates). For more info, consult your Student Handbook.

Extension Policy
Arrangements for submission of late work at a date on or before the “last day to submit written work”, as noted on the seminary’s Academic Calendar, are made between the student and professor. Formal petition to the Registration Office is not required at this time. This includes arrangements for the rescheduling of final exams.

However, course work (reading and written) to be submitted after the publicized calendar due date, must be approved by the Registration Office. An extension form, available online, must be submitted to the Registration Office prior to the “last day to submit written work.” Requests received after this date will either be denied or incur additional penalty. For a full discussion of this policy, please consult the Student Handbook.

Grades
Grades are posted online within twenty-four hours of receipt from the professor. Students are expected to check their CAMS student portal in order to access posted grades. Those individuals who need an official grade report issued to a third party, should put their request in writing to the Registration Office. Faculty have six weeks from the course work due date to submit a final grade.
**Returned Work:**
Submitted course work will be returned to the student provided s/he provides a self addressed and postage paid envelope with his/her final work. Work submitted without the appropriate envelope will be destroyed once the grade has been assessed and issued.

**Virtual Writing Center**

Free assistance in writing papers is available to students through the Virtual Writing Center at Gordon Conwell. The Virtual Writing Center is staffed by Gordon Conwell graduates, or writing tutors with specialized knowledge in writing and/or ESL. Generally, this service is available to students who have completed or are currently enrolled in one of the following three classes:

- CT500 (Introduction to Theological Research)
- CO501 (Introduction to Counseling Research)
- IS502 (Theological Research and Writing)

If you enrolled in GCTS before Fall 2008, you were not required to take one of the three pre-requisites above, and you may request access to the Virtual Writing Center. Also, ESL writing tutors are available to ESL students even if they are not currently enrolled in a degree program. If you do not meet one of these qualifications, but feel you would benefit from using the Virtual Writing Center, contact us and we will evaluate your status.

Email writingcenter@gordonconwell.edu for more information.