COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. To introduce students to the history, polity and ethos of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A).
2. To prepare students for the Standard Ordination Exams in Church Polity, Worship and the Sacraments. (There will be discussion on Bible Exegesis exam, Theological Competence and Bible Content, but it is assumed that other courses have prepared students for these).
3. To help students apply their theological training to the current demands of ministry in the PC(USA).
4. To familiarize students with the resources available to assist in ministry in the PC(USA).
5. To give guidance regarding the placement process of the PC(USA).

It is assumed that all students have received permission from their Presbytery if they intend to take the standard ordination exams in January or August. While attention will be given to material covered on the exams, we will also be studying the history and the current issues affecting ministry in the Presbyterian Church today. At the end of the course our focus will be on PIF preparation, practical advice on pastoral ministry, the preparation and defense of one’s own personal statement of faith and tips on how to negotiate terms of call.

Required texts

- Book of Order, 2011/2013 version
- Book of Confessions
- Companion to the Constitution: Polity for the Local Church, Frank A. Beattie (All three of the above may be available as a free download at http://www.pcusa.org/oga/constitution)

- Presbyterian Polity for Church Officers, Joan S. Gray and Joyce C. Tucker
- Parliamentary Procedures in the Presbyterian Church, by Marianne L. Wolfe (through pcusa.org)
Recommended texts

- Robert’s Rules of Order
- Book of Common Worship, Theology and Worship Ministry Unit for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
- Introduction to the Reformed Tradition: A Way of Being the Christian Community, John Leith
- Presbyterian Creeds: A Guide to the Book of Confessions, Jack Rogers

Other Presbyterian Resources


Class Schedule
This is an independent study course. The times and dates will be arranged with the instructor. It will meet a minimum of 5 times during the semester with the instructor. It is anticipated that there will be one meeting in February, two in March, and two in April.

Requirements and Grading
It is expected that the student will read all of the textbooks or the amount specified in the class schedule (optional texts not included). Material from the reserve shelf and denominational literature should also be read. 300 pages from the booklist are to be read beyond the textbooks. Extra reading should come from the reserve shelf, denominational literature or material from with in the Reformed Tradition (for questions on this check with the instructor). A reading list indicating how this assignment was completed (listing texts and page amounts) will be due the last meeting in April.

These written assignments are required in addition to the reading. Each paper shall be typed and include the student’s name, email address and GCTS box number.

1.) Write a brief, personal, statement of faith, based on the Book of Order requirements found in section G-14.0430. This should be two pages or less(one page is best)(500 word maximum for body).
Due March 16, 2012.

2.) You are to prepare either
a) a two page outline of what you would teach a confirmation class on the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper
OR
b) a two-sided brochure explaining the sacraments to new members.
Attention should be given to all Book of Order guidelines about the sacraments as well as clarity about the material you are covering.
Due April 6, 2012.
3.) Select one theological topic of interest to you, currently being discussed in the PCUSA. Write a two page paper discussing the topic, citing at least two references to the 
*Book of Confessions.*
Due April 18, 2012

4.) During the first meeting in April, there will be a one and one half hour simulated exam period. Students will be asked one question each on Polity and Worship and the Sacraments.

*Bring your copies of the Book of Order and Book of Confessions to the meeting this day.*
This will be graded just like your ordination exams and the instructor will give you feedback on your test-taking ability to prepare you for the actual exams.

5.) Attend one of two Presbytery meetings in March of 2012. Either the Presbytery of Northern New England meeting on Saturday, March 3, at 9:30am at the Haverhill Presbyterian Church in Haverhill, MA or the Presbytery of Boston meeting on Monday, March 26, 2012. Prepare a one-page summary of your thoughts of the meeting, noting at least two references from the Book of Order that you observed at the meeting. The one page summary is due two weeks from the date of the meeting you attend.

All of the above work is required for a passing grade.
This course is graded on a pass/fail basis.

* While not required, every student is encouraged to form a study group with other students preparing to take the ordination exams. According to many ord exam takers, many students who successfully pass the exams testify that this is the most effective way to master the necessary material. It also should be understood that the ordination exams require a significant amount of preparation time for which you will receive no academic credit.

**Anticipated Meeting Schedule and Material to be covered**
(Please review and have reading prepared ahead of time to aid in class participation)

**February** The *Book of Order* - Basic Principles
Read: *The Book of Order* - Form of Government Section
The *Book of Order* - Sessions, Ministers, Officers and Presbyteries
Synods, General Assembly, Current Issues/Using our Polity Effectively
Officer Training
Read: *Presbyterian Polity for Church Officers*, Gray & Tucker

**March**
Managing Conflict in the Church
The Rules of Discipline from *The Book of Order*
March
The Directory for Worship - The Church Year and The Sacraments
The Directory for Worship - Baptisms, Weddings, Funerals
Read: The Book of Order - The Directory for Worship
Review: The Book of Common Worship

Introduction - the Reformed View of the Church, it’s theology and history

The Church and Its Confessions
Read: Rogers, Presbyterian Creeds, The Book of Confessions (begin)
The Presbyterian Controversy, 3-127.

April
Test Taking Tips and Techniques, “The Mind of a Exam Reader”
Sample Ordination Exam
Finding your Call in the PC(USA), PIF Preparation,
Knowing the Mind of the PNC,

Turn in: Your reading report on outside reading.

End of PCUSA Polity Syllabus.