PT6325
Church Polity for the
Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church

[can be taken instead of PT5325 – Church Polity]

Reformed Theological Seminary, Charlotte

Fall Semester 2020 (Tue. 3:10-5:10)

Course goals

- To grasp the biblical basis for the Presbyterian form of church government
- To become familiar with historic theological writings related to church polity
- To understand the historical background of the A.R.P. Church as it applies to modern church practice and theology
- To become familiar with the ARP Standards, especially the Form of Government and Book of Discipline
- To prepare students to apply Biblical principles of polity within a congregation, presbytery, and the General Synod of the A.R.P. Church
- To equip students for teaching principles of church polity to both church officers and members in general of a local congregation

Book List

Required:

- ARP Synod - *Standards of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church* (http://arpchurch.org/governing-documents/)
  - Form of Government
  - Book of Discipline
  - Manual of Authorities and Duties
- Brown, Mark (editor) — *Order in the Offices: essays defining the roles of church officers*
- Chapell, Bryan — *Preparing for Licensure and Ordination Exams* [pamphlet]
- Lauterbach, Mark. — *The Transforming Community: The Practise* [sic] *of the Gospel in Church Discipline.*
- Lucas, Sean Michael — *What is Church Government?* [pamphlet]
- Van Dam, Cornelis — *The Elder: today's ministry rooted in all of Scripture*
- Wray, Daniel E. — *Biblical church discipline* [pamphlet]

Recommended:

(Some are out of print; some will be *****on reserve*** *in the library. I do not endorse the content of every book – they are listed for research purposes. Older titles may be found at www.archive.org or on books.google.com)*

- Hall, David & Joseph Hall — ***Paradigms in polity: classic readings in Reformed Presbyterian Church Government*
  (I list this first because it is a resource every Presbyterian pastor should have on his bookshelf! But you are not required to buy it for class.)
- Adams, Jay E. — ***Handbook of Church Discipline*
- Akin, Daniel (*et. al.)* — ***Perspectives on church government: five views of church polity*
- Campbell, Peter Colin — *Theories of Ruling Eldership*
- Eyres, Lawrence — *Elders of the Church*
- Hall, David W., ed. — ***The practice of confessional subscription*

- Hodge, Charles — *The church and its polity*
- Hodge, Charles — *What is Presbyterianism?*
- Irons, Lee — ***Theories of eldership: a study in Presbyterian polity*
- Johnson, Jeffrey D. — *The church: why bother?*
- Jones, O. Garfield — *Parliamentary procedure at a glance*
- Kuiper, R.B. — *Glorious body of Christ*
- Leeman, Jonathan — *Church discipline*
- Leeman, Jonathan — *Church membership*
- Mack, Wayne A. — ***Life in the Father's House: a member's guide to the local church* [2nd ed.]
- MacNair, Donald J. — ***Practices of a healthy church*
- Miller, Samuel — *An essay on the warrant, nature, and duties of the office of the ruling elder*
- Miller, Samuel — *Presbyterianism, the truly primitive and apostolical constitution of the Church of Christ*
- Moeller, Robert — *Love in action: healing conflict in your church*
- Newton, Phil — *Elders in congregational life*
- Robert, Henry M., III — *Robert's rules of order, newly revised* (11th ed.)
- Sietsma, K. — *The idea of office* (Paideia Press,1985)
- Sittema, John R. — ***With a Shepherd's Heart: reclaiming the pastoral office of elder*
- Smyth, Thomas — *Ecclesiastical catechism of the Presbyterian Church*
- Smyth, Thomas — *Theories of Eldership*
- Strauch, Alexander — *Biblical Eldership: an urgent call to restore Biblical leadership*
- Susek, Ron — *Firestorm: preventing and overcoming church conflict*
- Van Dam, Cornelis — *The Deacon: Biblical foundations for today's ministry of nercy*
- Waters, Guy — *How Jesus runs the church*
- Witherow, Thomas — *The apostolic church: which is it?*
- Wray, Daniel — *The importance of the local church*

Class Schedule & Assignments *(subject to change by professor!)*

*****NOTE: This course runs only for the first half of the semester.**
You do not want to fall behind on assignments!
*****NOTE: Don't panic about the reading – many of the chapters are short, especially later in the list. Some (so noted) are listed as optional as well.**
Quizzes on readings will be given each week; if you keep up with the readings, you won't have any problems. **Assignments listed are to be read *before that day, not after!***

DATE	TOPIC	READING ASSIGNMENT
August 25	Biblical basis for presbyterian church government	• ***Paradigms in Polity***, Ch. 2 – Hall (pp.12-19 only) • "The Presbytery-led Church" by Robert Reymond in ***Perspectives on Church Government*** (pp. 87-95, 109-138) • ***Order in the Offices***, Ch. 2 – Clowney (pp. 43-65)
September 1	Survey of writings on polity	• ***Order in the Offices*****,** Ch. 7 **–** Boer (pp. 135-154) • ***Paradigms in Polity***, Ch. 5 – Calvin (pp. 62-73) • ***Paradigms in Polity***, Ch. 29 – Miller (pp. 422-434) • ***Paradigms in Polity***, Ch. 6 – Miller (pp. 74-102) (*optional*) • ***Order in the Offices*****,** Ch. 3 – Hodge (pp. 67-79)
September 8	Later writings on polity	• ***Theories of the Eldership*** – Irons, p.1-25 • ***Order in the Offices***, Ch. 12 – Rayburn (pp. 219-234) • ***Order in the Offices*****,** Ch. 13 – Reynolds (pp. 235-256) • ***What is Church Government?*** **– Lucas** (all – pp. 5-28)
September 15	Form of Government (the Church, congregation, ministry, membership, officers)	• ***FOG*****, Chapters 1-8** • Ware & Gettys, ***Second Century***, pp. 378-388 • Mack, Wayne. ***Life in the Father's House***, [2nd ed.] chapter 2. • Sittema, John. ***With a Shepherd's Heart***, chapter 26. - **First exercise sheets for FOG due**
September 22	Form of Government (ministers, presbytery, mission churches, Synod, committees, etc.)	• ***FOG*****, Chapters 9-14** • MacNair, Donald. ***Practices of a Healthy Church***, chaps. 5-7 • Van Dam, ***The Elder***, chapters 1 & 6 - **Second exercise sheets for FOG due**
September 29	Church discipline in general and the A.R.P. Book of Discipline in particular	• ***A.R.P. Book of Discipline*** (skim well) • Lauterbach, Mark. *The Transforming Community*, chap. 1-3 • Adams, Jay. ***Handbook of Church Discipline***, chap. 1-3 • Wray, Daniel E. ***Biblical church discipline*** (all – pp. 5-31) • Mack, Wayne. ***Life in the Father's House***, [2nd ed.] chap. 8. *(chapter 9 optional)* • Sittema, John. ***With a Shepherd's Heart***, chapter 27. *(optional)* - **Church conflict project due**
FALL BREAK (Oct. 5-9)		
October 13	Running meetings & parliamentary procedure; creating church policies	• Sittema, John. ***With a Shepherd's Heart***, chapter 28. • MacNair, Donald. ***Practices of a Healthy Church***, chapter 9 • A.R.P. Manual of Authorities and Duties (skim well)
October 23 (Friday)		**(1) Paper on the Offices of the Church due** **(2) Reading report due (fill out in Canvas)**
October 26-30	MUST BE COMPLETED **NO LATER THAN 5:00 PM OCT. 30!**	**Proctored final exam on the Form of Government (may be taken any time that week via lockdown browser)**

Course Requirements *(other than readings listed above)*

Readings: (10% of grade)

You must complete the reading report form in Canvas by October 23, 2020.
Failure to turn in the form will result in 0% credit for this portion of the class. The readings are important to class discussion (see next…).

Class participation (10% of grade)

This is a class that will have a great deal of interaction. Participation does not mean showing you know all the answers – in fact, I'm more interested in people knowing the best questions to ask.
*This also includes completion of **Exercise Sheets** on the ARP Standards.*

***NOTE: If an assignment says 3-4 pages, that means a 3-page *minimum*!**

Daily Quizzes (5% of grade)

Each quiz is based on the *required* readings (not the optional extra readings) due for that day.

Church conflict/discipline project (3-4 Pages, double-spaced) (15% of grade)

Due Sep. 29 (Tuesday)

You will need to decide upon a church conflict problem (real or hypothetical) to deal with (get approval of topic first). For the problem, you need to show:

1. A summary of the issues involved
2. Outline a plan of action with supporting Biblical basis
3. List a short bibliography of sources relevant to the action plan.

Term Paper on Offices of the Church (8-10 Pages, double-spaced) (30% of grade)

Due Oct. 23 (Friday)

For this paper, use the resources listed in this syllabus and any others you desire. You will need to do four basic things in this paper:

1. Discuss the differences between the 2, 2 ½ , & 3 office view and the main people who (denominations & theologians) who adhere to each view
2. Identify the implications, pro & con, of each view for the life of the Church
3. Identify which view you think is the most Biblical & why (document your reasons from Scripture & the secondary literature)
4. Based on the above, which view do you think the ARP Form of Government espouses, and discuss whether this is what ends up happening in practice
5. Don't forget your **bibliography** on a separate sheet – this does NOT count toward your 8-10 pages. *I want to see a minimum of 5 sources.*
6. Use footnotes, not endnotes. Err on the side of too many footnotes rather than on plagiarism.

This is a more formal paper, so **use as your style guide**:
Kate L. Turabian. ***A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses & Dissertations***. c2018, **9th ed.** University of Chicago Press. [REF LB2369.T8 2018]

Final Exam on ARP Standards (30% of grade)

Week of Oct. 26-30

Includes questions similar to those on the exercise sheets. Covers the Form of Government . A list of all potential questions will be distributed in advance. Exam may be taken any time (proctored) during the week indicated above. CLOSED BOOK.

The McMullen Style Guide

All papers handed in must follow the following style guidelines to be acceptable:

- **white paper** - no weird colors; black ink
- **margins**: top & bottom 1 inch; sides 1.25 inches
- **font**: Times New Roman or Calibri, 12 point - no large or fancy fonts (this sentence is in Times New Roman 12 pt)
- **no handwritten papers** – I hope this is assumed by now, but….
- hand in papers **stapled**, upper left – no report covers!

RTS Charlotte Classroom Technology Usage

RTS Charlotte recognizes how essential it is for students to have reliable, campus-wide access to the internet. For that reason, we have made Wi-Fi available for our student body, not only in the library and student lounges, but also in the classrooms. We know that students need to use the internet to download class materials, access files on the Cloud, and locate other important information. However, we also recognize that internet access in the classroom provides opportunity for abuse and misuse. Some students have unfortunately used their internet access to engage in many activities that distract them from the classroom lectures (e.g., surfing the web, checking sports scores, playing games). Not only does such activity hamper a student's own seminary education, but it distracts other students who can easily view the screens of nearby students. In addition, donors and classroom guests (who often sit in the back) can see this inappropriate internet usage, which reflects poorly on RTS. Classroom etiquette includes leaving cell phones turned off, refraining from surfing the Internet or playing computer games or other distracting activities. In addition, students must respect standards set by individual professors regarding the use of technology during their class.

In order to address this issue, we must appeal to the integrity of the students as ones who are preparing for a lifetime of ministry to Christ and his church. We expect each student to take personal responsibility for proper classroom technology usage and to encourage others around them to do the same. All RTS-Charlotte students are accountable to the policies stated in the Student Handbook and Academic Catalog and are therefore expected to use technology in the classroom only for appropriate class-related activities. Student conduct is under the supervision of the Dean of Students.

Student Instructions for Exams with LockDown Browser

1. Install the LockDown Browser application on the computer you intend to use for exams, prior to sitting for the exam, using this link:
   https://download.respondus.com/lockdown/download.php?id=998253613
   - This link is ONLY for RTS students and covers Mac and Windows applications.
   - Be sure that you are able to login to your Canvas account from the LockDown Browser before scheduling a time to take your exam.
   - The LockDown Browser application is already installed on the computers in the RTS Charlotte library. (Note that if you elect to use the library computers, your proctor must still be present throughout the duration of the exam.)
   - If you use internet filtering software (for example, Covenant Eyes) you may need to disable it before beginning an exam with LockDown Browser. Some types of filtering software can block your computer's connection to Canvas. Also, please be sure to add an exception for our Canvas URL: *https://rts.instructure.com*

2. Make arrangements with a proctor to supervise the exam within the date timeframe set by the professor. The proctor cannot be a family member, current RTS student (current = taken a class within the past year but not yet graduated), or member of the library staff. Typical proctors are pastors or church staff members. The document "Procter Expectations Letter.doc" has been provided on your Canvas homepage in order to facilitate communication with your proctor. For your convenience, there will be several on-campus proctor blocks where a proctor will be available to supervise your exam. Dates and times will be posted on Canvas and announced in the weekly Semper.

3. The proctor must observe student taking exam and ensure that there are no devices or resources available other than the computer being used for the exam.

4. Access the exam during the specified date window in the syllabus or for finals, Academic Calendar:

   a. Start the LockDown Browser application using a wired or known reliable WIFI connection. We do not recommend using restaurant or coffee shop WIFI to take exams.
   b. Have your student ID number available to input into the exam.
   c. If you use internet filtering software, you may need to disable it before beginning an exam with LockDown Browser.
   d. Login to your Canvas account using your Self-Service username and password. If you need to reset your Self-Service password, you may do so at https://selfservice.rts.edu .
   e. Navigate to the exam. You will not be able to access the exam with a standard web browser. For additional details on using LockDown Browser, review this **Student Quick Start Guide (PDF)**.
   f. Time clock will begin once you open the exam.
   g. Exam must be completed in one sitting. You may not exit and return to exam later.
   h. The exam will contain questions requiring the proctor contact information, an honor pledge, and certification that your proctor was present during the entire exam period.

5. Proctors may be contacted to verify information regarding exam administration.

6. In the rare case of a technical issue (for example, if internet service goes out during exam), the proctor should contact the course TA. While the TA's may not be immediately available, the date and time of the email will document when the issue was reported. Please have your TA's contact information available for your proctor before opening the exam. Once you open the exam using the LockDown Browser, you will not be able to access other programs on your computers.

REFORMED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
SYSTEM

Course Objectives Related to MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes

Course: PT6325 / ARP Church Polity
Professor: Rev. Kenneth McMullen
Campus: Charlotte
Date: Fall 2020

MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes *In order to measure the success of the MDiv curriculum, RTS has defined the following as the intended outcomes of the student learning process. Each course contributes to these overall outcomes. This rubric shows the contribution of this course to the MDiv outcomes.* **As the MDiv is the core degree at RTS, the MDiv rubric will be used in this syllabus.*		**Rubric** • **Strong** • **Moderate** • **Minimal** • **None**	**Mini-Justification**
Articulation (oral & written)	Broadly understands and articulates knowledge, both oral and written, of essential biblical, theological, historical, and cultural/global information, including details, concepts, and frameworks. Also includes ability to preach and teach the meaning of Scripture to both heart and mind with clarity and enthusiasm.	Moderate (written)	Students must be able to articulate various views on polity by writing a research paper.
Scripture	Significant knowledge of the original meaning of Scripture. Also, the concepts for and skill to research further into the original meaning of Scripture and to apply Scripture to a variety of modern circumstances. (Includes appropriate use of original languages and hermeneutics; and integrates theological, historical, and cultural/global perspectives.)	Moderate	Students must investigate Scriptural and theological foundations for church polity.
Reformed Theology	Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards.	Moderate	Students are asked to read various Reformed confessions and creeds as they relate to church polity.
Sanctification	Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student's sanctification.	Minimal	Students are encouraged to grow in their love for Christ and His Church rather than merely seeing polity as a technical issue.
Worldview	Burning desire to conform all of life to the Word of God. Includes ability to interact within a denominational context, within the broader worldwide church, and with significant public issues.	Moderate	Students learn the process and value of being part of a wider denomination, both historically and in contemporary practice.
Winsomely Reformed	Embraces a winsomely Reformed ethos. (Includes an appropriate ecumenical spirit with other Christians, especially Evangelicals; a concern to present the Gospel in a God-honoring manner to non-Christians; and a truth-in-love attitude in disagreements.)	Minimal	One section of the course deals with effective church discipline properly applied.
Pastoral Ministry	Ability to minister the Word of God to hearts and lives of both churched and unchurched, to include preaching, teaching, leading in worship, leading and shepherding the local congregation, aiding in spiritual maturity, concern for non-Christians.	Moderate	Students learn ARP polity and other governing standards. Students study local church governance and discipline.