



HT6120 - History of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church

Reformed Theological Seminary, Charlotte
Fall Semester 2026 (Wed. 2-3 PM)

Course goals

- To understand the historical/theological origins of the A.R.P. denomination
- To gain a working knowledge of the key issues which have shaped the historic development of the A.R.P. Church from the 18th century to the present
- To understand how the historic background of the A.R.P. Church continues to affect modern church practice and theology

Required reading (you are not required to purchase any):

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ARP Synod • ARP Synod • King, Ray. • Lathan, Robert. • Purves, Jock • Ware, Lowry • Ware, Lowry & James W. Gettys. • Other supplemental readings as assigned | <p>Standards of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church
(arpchurch.org/governing-documents/)</p> <p>Directory of Public Worship (arpchurch.org/governing-documents/)</p> <p>History of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church (Canvas)</p> <p>History of the Associate Reformed Synod of the South, 1782-1882.
[library reserve – also https://archive.org/details/historyofassocia00lath/page/n6]</p> <p>Fair Sunshine: Character studies of the Scottish Covenanters. [library reserve; also https://archive.org/details/fairsunshinechar0000purv]</p> <p>The ARP Church in the 20th Century [library reserve & Canvas]</p> <p>The second century: a history of the Associate Reformed Presbyterians, 1882-1982. [library reserve & Canvas]</p> |
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Recommended:

(some are out of print; most will be in the library; check also Google Books)

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ARP Synod • Beeke, Joel • Erskine, Ebenezer • Erskine, Ralph • Erskine, Ralph • Fisher, Edward • MacEwen, A.R. • MacMillan, Samuel • Myers, Stephen G. • Ruble, Randall T. • Simpson, Robert • Smellie, Alexander • Thompson, Ernest Trice • Thomson, Andrew • Ware, Lowry | <p>The Associate Reformed Presbyterian Magazine
(back issues in the library)</p> <p>The Beauties of Ebenezer Erskine</p> <p>Works of Ebenezer Erskine</p> <p>Select sermons of Ralph Erskine</p> <p>Works of Ralph Erskine</p> <p>The Marrow of Modern Divinity (Christian Focus edition)</p> <p>The Erskines</p> <p>The Beauties of [Thomas] Boston</p> <p>Scottish Federalism and Covenantalism in transition: the theology of Ebenezer Erskine</p> <p>Bicentennial history of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church, 1950-2003.</p> <p>Martyrland : the perils of the persecution [historical fiction]</p> <p>Men of the Covenant</p> <p>Presbyterians in the South (3 vols.)</p> <p>Thomas Boston: His Life and Times</p> <p>Robert Lathan's Historical Articles, 1886-1892, as taken from the Associate Reformed Presbyterian</p> |
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Class Schedule & Assignments

Quizzes on readings may be given any 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!***

Turn in assignments via Canvas.

DATE	TOPIC	READING ASSIGNMENT
Aug. 19 & 26	Scottish backgrounds	- Joel Beeke – introduction to <i>The Beauties of Ebenezer Erskine</i> (Christian Focus edition), pp. i-liii. (that's 53 pp. in case you can't read Roman numerals!) (in Canvas) - Ray King – <i>History of the ARP Church</i>, chaps. 1, 2 & 3 - VanDoodewaard article on Marrow controversy - optional (in Canvas)
Sep. 2 & 9	American foundations	- Jock Purves – <i>Fair Sunshine</i> (*see assignment details below) - Ray King – <i>History of the ARP Church</i>, chaps. 4 Fair Sunshine summary paper due [Sep. 2]
Sep. 16 & 23	Historical topic - union proposals / changing presbyteries /slavery	- Ray King – <i>History of the ARP Church</i>, chaps. 5 - Ware & Gettys, <i>Second Century</i>, pp. 249-263 (re:unions) (in Canvas) - Ware, <i>ARP Church in the 20th Century</i>, pp. 1-10, 32-36, 50-57.
Sep. 30 & Oct. 14	Historical topics – Music, Psalms, and worship / education	- Ray King – <i>History of the ARP Church</i>, chap. 6 - Ware & Gettys, <i>Second Century</i>, pp. 61-69; 227-245 (re: psalmody) (in Canvas) Directory of Public Worship of the ARPC (http://arpchurch.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/I-Directory-of-Public-Worship.pdf) - Ware, <i>ARP Church in the 20th Century</i>, pp. 15-31.
Oct. 21 & 28	Historical topics – Inerrancy /Ordination of women to office	- Ware & Gettys, <i>Second Century</i>, pp. 300-322 (re:inerrancy) & 322-328 (re:women's ordination) - Ware, <i>ARP Church in the 20th Century</i>, pp. 43-49. History paper due [Oct. 28]
Nov. 4 & 11	WWII to the present Historical topic – missions / future trajectories of ARP	- Ware, <i>ARP Church in the 20th Century</i>, pp. 11-14, 37-42. - Wm. Evans – “<i>Things which become sound doctrine – ARP confessional and theological identity in the 21st century</i>” (in Canvas) - Wm. Evans – “<i>Whither or Wither?</i>” (in Canvas) Report of the Vision Committee to the 2007 Synod (in Canvas)
Nov. 18	ARP Position statements. Oral presentation of paper.	Future of the ARP paper due [Nov. 18]
Dec. 1		Reading report due (fill out in Canvas)

Course Requirements (other than readings listed above)

(1) Fair Sunshine – Covenanter biography summaries (3-4 pages, double spaced) (20% of grade)

Due Sep. 2

Choose 3 chapters to read from Jock Purves' book, *Fair Sunshine*. For each chapter, write a 1-page summary of the person(s) discussed along with what spiritual trait they demonstrated that most impressed you. (You're welcome and encouraged to read the whole book, but I do not require it!)

(2) ARP history paper (5-7 Pages, double-spaced) (35% of grade)

Due Oct. 28

ARP history is far too long to cover completely in a short paper. Pick a period or topic of ARP history to write your paper on - something that interests you which is manageable enough to write the paper on. Use Ray King's history or the "red books" (see resource list - your church &/or pastor should have these, or use the copies on reserve in the library). You can also use back issues of *the Associate Reformed Presbyterian* magazine (in the library).

Hand in a list of your sources (bibliography) on a separate sheet (not as part of the 5-7 pages).

(3) Future of the ARP Paper (20% of grade)

Due Nov. 18

Write a 3-5 page paper detailing what you believe to be three of the greatest challenges for the ARP denomination as it heads into the remainder of the 21st century. In so doing, you must anchor your reasons in the past and present history of the denomination – no random or generic speculations.

NOTE: You will also present your paper orally the last day of class. More detail will be provided closer to that date.

(4) Class participation & Readings (15% 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. **Reading report is due no later than Dec. 1st.**

(5) Weekly quizzes on Readings (10% of grade)

You will be given a quiz each week on the readings listed for that day.

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

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, either 10 or 12 point - no large or fancy fonts (this sentence is in Times New Roman 10 pt)
- **no handwritten papers** – if you don't have a PC, type it in the library or on a friend's PC (if you own a MAC, well, maybe there's still hope for you...)
- hand in papers **stapled**, upper left – no report covers; this isn't high school

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.

McMullen Technology Policy

No use of laptops or other devices allowed. I provide lecture notes after each class.

McMullen Policy regarding AI technology

The use of sites such as ChatGPT or other similar AI sites is not allowed for any work related to this course. Students should be aware that bibliographies generated by such sites will almost always contain references to books and articles which do not even exist.



Course Objectives Related to MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes

Course: HT6120 - History of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church

Professor: Rev. Kenneth McMullen

Campus: Charlotte

Date: Fall 2026

<u>MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes</u> <i>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.</i> <i>*As the MDiv is the core degree at RTS, the MDiv rubric will be used in this syllabus.</i>		<u>Rubric</u> • Strong • Moderate • Minimal • None	<u>Mini-Justification</u>
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	Students must interact with historical data through readings as well as research and written assignments.
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.)	Minimal	Students will look at historical debates on topics from a scriptural standpoint.
Reformed Theology	Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards.	Moderate	The class will examine denominational roots in the Scottish Reformation and later. Historical treatment and views on doctrinal standards will be discussed.
Sanctification	Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student's sanctification.	None	
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.	None	
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	Consideration is given to being able to disagree on doctrines within a denomination in a biblical manner.
Pastoral Ministry	Ability to minister the Word of God to hearts and lives of both church and unchurched, to include preaching, teaching, leading in worship, leading and shepherding the local congregation, aiding in spiritual maturity, concern for non-Christians.	Minimal	As students grasp some aspects of church history, it informs current pastoral practice.