

**CH 330- Presbyterian Church (USA) History, Worship and Polity**  
United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities  
Spring 2009

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**DESCRIPTION**

This course is designed to equip students to become effective presbyters as ordained ministers of Word and Sacrament. It addresses Presbyterian Church (USA) history, worship, polity, and contemporary issues affecting the life of the Church. Students are expected to enroll during the year prior to taking ordination examinations.

**OBJECTIVES**

By the end of this course, students

- will have begun to develop an overview of the history and character of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), in a way that deepens understanding of the present state of the denomination
- will have a basic grounding in the three parts of the *Book of Order*
- will have developed an appreciation for the *Book of Common Worship*
- will have worked with the material needed for ordination examinations in polity and worship

**TEXTBOOKS**

- The Theology and Worship Ministry Unit. *Book of Common Worship*. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993.
- *The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)*. Part II: Book of Order, 2007-2009. Louisville: Office of the General Assembly, PCUSA Item # OGA07001
- Gray, Joan S. and Joyce C. Tucker. *Presbyterian Polity for Church Officers*. Third edition. Louisville: Geneva Press, 1999. ISBN-13: 9780664500184
- Smylie, James H. *A Brief History of the Presbyterians*. Louisville: Geneva Press, 1996.

**REQUIREMENTS**

- Assigned readings will be discussed on date assigned; expect to be involved in in-class discussions of readings and course material
- All written assignments must be completed to pass course. Papers must be double-spaced, typed, and properly footnoted, following Student Handbook guidelines; in addition, note the definition of “plagiarism.” I will not read or grade material that has not been properly prepared and edited. I will not accept late papers unless arrangements are made in advance or if the lateness is due to an emergency and I am appropriately contacted..
- Evaluation will be based on attendance and class participation, engagement in discussions, and completion of assignments. More than 2 absences will affect your course evaluation.
- Extensions beyond the end of the semester will be approved *only under extraordinary circumstances* (e.g., family or personal death or severe illness). See end of syllabus for policy.

**ASSIGNMENTS**

- Lead the class in a worship service, using a service from the *Book of Common*

*Worship.* Please keep service to 20 minutes or less.

- A 4-5 page paper offering a critique of a Service of Worship for the Lord's Day which you attended recently. (If possible, select a service where one of the sacraments is being celebrated.) The basis for the critique will be the Directory for Worship. The critique should reflect an analysis of the total worship experience, not merely the order of service. It will include an assessment of the areas in which the worship experience enacted the provisions of the Directory for Worship in an exemplary way, and the areas in which it fell short of the expectations set out in the Directory. Please attach a copy of the worship bulletin for the service you analyze. (You may refer to the *Book of Common Worship* as appropriate) **Paper due March 2th**
- Attend the meeting of the Presbytery of the Twin Cities area on Saturday, March 14, 2009 at Faith Presbyterian Church, Minnetonka, 9am-3pm. Bring notes to March 28<sup>th</sup> class to discuss how the Presbytery meeting met the constitutional requirements of the Book of Order 2002-2003, as well as other observations you have.
- Attend a meeting of a particular congregation's session, and then **write a 3-4 page paper** outlining how the session meeting you attended met the constitutional requirements of the Book of Order 2002-2003, as well as other observations, such as the work of the moderator, the ethos of the meeting, and the use of Robert's Rules. **Due March 28th**
- **Complete a final exam to be given on April 20th.** This exam will have some similarity to the standard ordination exams in Polity and Worship.

## **COURSE SCHEDULE**

February 2<sup>th</sup>    **Church Polity and Theology**

*Read: Book of Order G-1 through 4*

Gray and Tucker, Chapters 1 and 9

February 9    **Worship for the Lord's Day and Sacraments**

*Read: Book of Order W-1 through 3*

Gray & Tucker, pp. 171-181

Also bring to class: *Book of Common Worship* and a church bulletin from a Presbyterian Church's "Service for the Lord's Day"

February 16    **Worship in congregational and personal life**

*Read: Book of Order W-4 through 7*

Gray & Tucker, pp. 181-187

**How to prepare for and take ordination exams**

February 23    **Membership, Officers, Congregations, Property**

*Read: Book of Order G-5 through 8*

Gray & Tucker, chapters 2, 4, 5, 11

March 2    **The Session, Presbytery, Synod and General Assembly**

*Read: Book of Order G-9 through G-13*

Gray & Tucker, chapters 6, 8, 10 and 12

*Due: Worship paper (will discuss in class)*

- March 9        **Ordination, relations with other churches, amendments**  
*Read: Book of Order G-14 through 18*  
                  Gray & Tucker, chapters 3 and 6
- March 14 Saturday **Attend Presbytery of the Twin Cities Area meeting**  
Faith Presbyterian Church, Minnetonka, 9am-3pm (plan on attending at least 9:00  
through lunch).
- March 16        No class (reading week)
- March 23        **What happened at Presbytery?**  
                  Bring notes from Presbytery meeting  
**Rules of Discipline**  
*Read: Book of Order D-1 through D-14*  
                  Gray & Tucker, chapter 13
- March 30        **How do Sessions really work?**  
*Due: Session observation paper*  
**PCUSA historical overview: one perspective**  
*Read: Smylie, A Brief History of the Presbyterians*
- April 6         **History, continued**
- April 13        No class (Easter Monday)
- April 20        **Ordination exams** (practice exams in Polity and Worship)
- April 27        **Review of exams** taken April 20th
- May 4
- May 11