

**Course Description DS510 –
Presbyterian Heritage, Polity & Practice**

**Spring Term 2017
Weekend Format**

Instructor – The Rev. Dr. Ross A. Lockhart

“But everything should be done decently and in order.”
- 1 Corinthians 14: 40

PURPOSE

To introduce students to the heritage, polity (governance) and practice of life and ministry within The Presbyterian Church in Canada.

COMPETENCE OBJECTIVES

1. To gain an appreciation for the heritage of the PCC, as well as a working knowledge of the polity (governance) and practice (mission) of the church, especially The Book of Forms (the “constitution” of the PCC): its theological and biblical basis, its historical development, its purpose and its practical application in the work of the church.
2. To understand and be able to apply the rules and procedures of the Book of Forms to a number of real life situations which arise in congregations and courts of the church including the minister’s role as Moderator of Session.
3. To be able to articulate the major themes and principles of the Book of Forms and other recently legislated policies and procedures.
4. To gain an appreciation for the mission of the PCC in a post-Christendom Canadian context

FORMAT

The class will meet over two weekends:

Thursday, February 16 6 to 9 pm, Friday, February 17, 9 am to 4 pm, Saturday, February 18, 9 am to 4 pm.

Thursday, March 9, 6 to 9 pm, Friday, March 10, 9 am to 4 pm, March 11, 9 am to 4 pm.

There will be special guests invited to speak to the class on life and leadership within the PCC.

CONTENT

The course will begin with a brief overview of the Presbyterian heritage in Canada in order to offer a better background for the unique nature of our Presbyterian governance rather than a congregational or episcopal model. The Book of Forms will be a main focus of our time together: its background, its theological and biblical basis, its rules for Congregations, Sessions, Presbyteries, Synods and General Assembly. Students will read The Book of Forms and its Appendices, participate in role-play and discussions of its content, and complete three take-home quizzes on where to find answers to questions that might arise in the life of the church. It will also contain an introduction to some more recent policy revisions and additions to the rules of the church related to such issues as women in ministry, freedom of conscience, human sexuality and reconciliation with Indigenous peoples.

In the course of this work together we will make frequent use of The Book of Forms, the Acts and Proceedings of the General Assembly and such policy statements as: *Leading with Care: A Policy for Ensuring a Climate of Safety for Children, Youth and Vulnerable Adults (2005)*, *Growing in Christ: Seeing the Image of God in Our Neighbour: A Policy for Dealing with Allegations of Racial Harassment (2009)*, and *the Policy for Dealing With Sexual Abuse and Harassment (2010 edition)*. All of these documents should be ordered by the students or downloaded prior to the first class.

EXPECTATIONS OF THE STUDENT

- Students will attend all of the class time given the intensive weekend format
- Students will complete all required readings and participate in class discussions and role playing
- Students will complete 3 take home quizzes on The Book of Forms
- Each student will write an eight to ten page term paper outlining the history, scriptural, subordinate standard links, polity and missional implications of one of the following topics: PCC & Creation, PCC & Evangelism, PCC & Human Sexuality, PCC & First Nations, PCC & Women, PCC & Global Mission (or another topic of the PCC & _____ approved by the instructor). To help students get a “feel” for the nature of the paper imagine being stopped at a local coffee shop by a member of the community who asks, “What does your church believe about _____?”

Required Texts:

Labberton, Mark. *Called: The Crisis and Promise of Following Jesus Today*. Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 2014.

Lockhart, Ross A. *Lessons from Laodicea: Missional Leadership in a Culture of Affluence*. Eugene: Cascade Books, 2016.

Moir, John S. *Enduring Witness, A History of The Presbyterian Church in Canada*. Toronto: Presbyterian Church in Canada, 1987.

EVALUATION

Students will be evaluated on the basis of class attendance and participation, evidence of completing all reading assignments, successful completion of 3 quizzes, and the timely completion of a term paper due by March 31, 2016. Audit students are expected to participate fully in the attendance and participation adding to the richness of our time together.

Class Outline

Thursday, February 16, 6 to 9 pm

From Calvin to Canada: An overview of our Presbyterian Heritage to 1875

Please read *Enduring Witness*, pp. 1 – 145.

Whose Church is it anyways? Church Union debates to 1925

Please read *Enduring Witness* pp. 146-223.

Friday, February 17, 9 am to 5 pm

Burning, Yet Not Consumed – The Continuing Presbyterian Church in Canada to today

Please read *Enduring Witness* pp. 224-275.

The Medium is the Message: Introduction to Presbyterian governance

A study of the Book of Forms – *Session and Congregations*

Please read *The Book of Forms* Sections 1 – 175.

Homework Assignment: Take Home Quiz #1

Saturday, February 18, 9 am to 5 pm

The Presbytery & Synod

Please read *The Book of Forms* Sections 176-276.

Homework Assignment: Take Home Quiz #2

Thursday, March 9, 6 to 9 pm

Polity, Mission and Leadership

Friday, March 10, 9 am to 5 pm

General Assembly & The Judicial Process

Please read *The Book of Forms* Sections 277-434.

Homework Assignment: Take Home Quiz #3

Saturday, March 11, 9 am to 5 pm.

Wednesday, March 11 – *Appendices*

Please read *The Book of Forms* Section 444 to Appendix J 13.

Starting Well

Reformed and Reforming – Ministering in the Presbyterian Church in Canada

Select Bibliography

Airhart, Phyllis D. *A Church with the Soul of a Nation: Making and Remaking The United Church of Canada*. Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's Press, 2014.

Allen, Richard. *The Social Passion: Religion and Social Reform in Canada 1914-28*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1973.

Bosch, David Jacobus. *Transforming Mission: Paradigm shifts in the theology of Mission*. Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1991.

Clifford, N. Keith. *The Resistance to Church Union in Canada: 1904-1939*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1985.

Congram, John. *This Presbyterian Church of Ours*, Winfield, BC: Wood Lake Books, 1995.

Grant, John Webster. *The Church in the Canadian Era*. Toronto: McGraw-Hill

Ryerson, 1972.

Klempa, William ed. *The Burning Bush and a Few Acres of Snow: The Presbyterian Contribution to Canadian Life and Culture*. Carleton: University Press, Ottawa, 1994.

Leith, John *The Reformed Imperative: What the Church Has to Say that No One Else Can Say*. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1988.

Milloy, John S. *A National Crime: The Canadian Government and the Residential School System, 1879-1986*. Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1999.

The Presbyterian Church in Canada, *Church and Nation: A Study for Congregations*. Don Mills, Ontario, 1982.

PCC, *Enkindled by the Word: Essays on Presbyterianism in Canada*, Toronto: Presbyterian Publications, 1966.

PCC, *The Acts and Proceedings of the General Assembly*.

PCC, *The Book of Forms*.

PCC, *The Social Action Handbook*

PCC, Statements of policy on Leading with Care, Racial Harassment, First Nations and Sexual Abuse and Harassment, all available at www.presbyterian.ca

Smith, Neil G. *A Short History of the Presbyterian Church in Canada*. Toronto: Presbyterian Publications, 1967.

World Council of Churches: Faith and Order *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*, Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1982.

Attendance

Attendance is specified by VST requirements, which requires 100% attendance for weekend courses. *Attendance will be expected for all six days.*

Assignment and Course Evaluation

Course evaluations at VST combine a letter grade system with a competence model of assessment. Individual assignments within a course are given narrative evaluations, that is, APP (Approved) or INC (Incomplete) or NAPP (Not Approved) with narrative comments, based on the competencies and expectations set for that

assignment. No number or letter grades or weights of assignments are calculated for assignments. One re-write is allowed on any assignment which is INC or NAPP within a course. The re-written assignment is due two weeks after the work is returned. The final evaluation for an assignment can be APP or NAPP after a re-write.

In all cases, all work for the course, including any re-writes, is due by the last day of term unless an extension for medical reasons is granted by the Dean.

The final grade for a course is reported both as a letter grade and as a narrative evaluation on the basis of a student's overall fulfillment of the competencies and expectations of the course, which are stated in the course syllabus. No number grades are assigned. Final grade designations are: A+, A, A-, B+, B, B-; NAPP. No re-writes are allowed to improve a letter grade given as a final grade for a course.

Policy on Late assignments

Submission of assignments on time is a part of academic, professional and pastoral competence and a part of every course at VST. All assignments in courses are due on the dates specified in the syllabus for each course. Failure to submit an assignment on time will be noted in the narrative evaluation of an assignment. Repeated failure to submit assignments on time may affect the final grade for the course.

Five written assignments are due this term on the dates specified. If three or more assignments for the course are submitted late, the final grade will be reduced by one mark (a B+ becomes a B). In any case where two or more assignments are more than one week late, additional reductions may be taken in the final grade.