Course Description DS510 – Presbyterian Heritage, Polity & Practice  
Spring Term 2015  
Wednesdays, 9 am to 12 pm

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 Tuesday mornings from 9:00 to 12 noon throughout the term for lectures, discussion and role plays that will be based upon the assigned readings. There will be special guests invited to speak to the class throughout the term 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 The Book of Forms and its Appendices, participate in role plays 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 First Nations people.

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 a minimum of 80% of class time
- Students will complete all required readings and participate in class discussions and role plays
- 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

EVALUATION

Students will be evaluated on the basis of class attendance and participation, evidence of completing all reading assignments, successful complete of 3 quizzes, and the timely completion of a term paper.

Class Outline

Wednesday, January 21

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

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

Wednesday, January 28

**Whose Church is it anyways?** Church Union debates to 1925

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

Wednesday, February 4
**Burning, Yet Not Consumed** – The Continuing Presbyterian Church in Canada to today

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

Wednesday, February 11

**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

Wednesday, February 18 – *The Presbytery & Synod*

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

Homework Assignment: Take Home Quiz #2

Wednesday, February 25 – *General Assembly & The Judicial Process*

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

Homework Assignment: Take Home Quiz #3

Wednesday, March 4 - Spring Break – No Classes

Wednesday, March 11 – *Appendices*

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

Wednesday, March 18

Guest Speaker: Guest TBA – Speaking as a Clerk of Session

Wednesday, March 25

Guest Speaker: Guest TBA – Speaking as a Minister about Presbytery/Synods
Wednesday, April 1 – Holy Week

Guest Speaker: Guest TBA – Speaking about the General Assembly

Wednesday, April 8 – Final Class

**Reformed and Reforming** – Ministering in the Presbyterian Church in Canada

Today
Select Bibliography


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](http://www.presbyterian.ca)
