

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

**Spring Term 2019**

Professor – 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 during the Spring term at The Vancouver School of Theology.

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 significant 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 class according to VST policy
- 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 a 10 to 15-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). This paper could be used in their Certification for Ordination interview with their home Presbytery to demonstrate knowledge of Presbyterian polity and policy regarding key issues in church and society.

#### Required Texts:

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

Lischer, Richard. *Open Secrets: A Memoir of Faith and Discovery*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009.

Lockhart, Ross A. *Beyond Snakes and Shamrocks: St. Patrick's Missional Leadership Lessons for Today*. Eugene: Cascade, 2018.

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

Peterson, Eugene. *The Pastor: A Memoir*. New York: Harper Collins, 2011.

Purves, Andrew. *The Crucifixion of Ministry*. Downers Grove: IVP, 2007.

Texts will **not** be on order at the UBC Bookstore. Students are instead encouraged to order online at various booksellers (eg. Amazon) or through the Presbyterian

Resource Centre: <http://presbyterian.ca/resource-centre/> Please allow at least three weeks for delivery.

## 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 April 15, 2019. Audit students are expected to participate fully in the attendance and participation adding to the richness of our time together.

### Class Outline

#### **Tuesday, January 22, 9 am to 12 pm**

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

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

#### **Tuesday, January 29, 9 am to 12 pm**

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

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

#### **Tuesday, February 5, 9 am to 12 pm**

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

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

#### **Tuesday, February 12, 9 am to 12 pm**

**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

#### **Tuesday, February 19, 9 am to 12 pm**

*The Presbytery & Synod*

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

Homework Assignment: Take Home Quiz #2

**Tuesday, February 26, 9 am to 12 pm**

Polity, Mission and Leadership

Please read and discuss Labberton *Called*.

Reading Week – March 4 to 8<sup>th</sup>.

**Tuesday, March 12, 9 am to 12 pm**

*General Assembly & The Judicial Process*

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

Homework Assignment: Take Home Quiz #3

Please read and discuss Peterson *Pastor*.

**Tuesday, March 19, 9 am to 12 pm.**

Wednesday, March 11 – *Appendices*

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

**Tuesday, March 26, 9 am to 12 pm.**

Starting Well – E 37 Assessment

Read and Discuss Lischer's *Open Secrets*.

**Tuesday, April 2, 9 am to 12 pm**

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

Read and discuss Purves' *The Crucifixion of Ministry*.

**Tuesday, April 9, 9 am to 12 pm**

## Ancient/Future Missional Leadership in the Church

Read and discuss Lockhart's *Beyond Snakes and Shamrocks*.

### **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.
- Proeschold-Bell, Rae Jean and Jason Byassee. *Faithful and Fractured. Responding to the Clergy Health Crisis*. Ada: Baker Academic, 2018.
- Clifford, N. Keith. *The Resistance to Church Union in Canada: 1904-1939*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1985.
- Clarke, Brian and Stuart Macdonald. *Leaving Christianity: Changing Allegiances in Canada since 1945*. Montreal & Kingston: McGill/Queens Press, 2017.
- 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.
- Lockhart, Ross. *Lessons from Laodicea: Missional Leadership in a Culture of Affluence*. Eugene: Cascade, 2016.
- 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](http://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. *Attendance will be expected for all classes.*

### **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.*