

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

**Spring Term 2020**

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
- Students will complete 3 take home quizzes on The Book of Forms
- Each student will write a 3,000-word paper outlining the history, scriptural, subordinate standard links, polity and missional implications of one of the following topics:
  - Presbyterian Church in Canada & Creation;
  - Presbyterian Church in Canada & Evangelism;
  - Presbyterian Church in Canada & Human Sexuality;
  - Presbyterian Church in Canada & Indigenous Peoples;
  - Presbyterian Church in Canada & Women's leadership;
  - Presbyterian Church in Canada & Global Mission;
  - Presbyterian Church in Canada & Ecumenical Relations;
  - Presbyterian Church in Canada & Social Justice;
  - Presbyterian Church in Canada & the Han Ca Presbyteries;
  - Presbyterian Church in Canada & Theological Education;
  - Presbyterian Church in Canada & Catechesis;
  - Presbyterian Church in Canada & Eldership; or
  - Presbyterian Church in Canada and another topic approved by Professor Lockhart

This paper could be used in student's 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.

\*\*\*Please note that Enduring Witness is increasingly difficult to get in stock and is available online for free here: <https://presbyterianarchives.ca/historical-publications/>\*\*\*

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

Consistent and timely attendance is required. This includes the completion of a reading summary based on questions from the instructor due at the beginning of each class (electronically submitted to [rlockhart@standrews.edu](mailto:rlockhart@standrews.edu)) where noted in the syllabus. Reading summaries should be in 12-point font, doubled spaced with 1-inch margins and a minimum of 500 words per assignment. By submitting these summaries students will provide evidence of completing all reading assignments, as well as 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. If a student is unable to attend a class, the Instructor is to be informed by email. Smart Phones can be disruptive to the learning experience of other students. Please set all phones to silent or turn them off during class. Exceptions can always be made for medical or family issues that require being in constant contact. Laptops may be used during class but for note taking only. Surfing the internet is not permitted while class is in session unless it is part of a small group activity. Sending texts and emails will be limited to break time.

## Class Outline

### **Tuesday, January 21, 9 am to 12 pm**

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

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

*(What was the most significant learning for you in today's reading regarding Presbyterian history? What lessons might we learn from our heritage about how to handle conflict and disagreement over theology and practice of ministry? Select one famous person discussed in today's reading from our Presbyterian heritage and describe their impact on the PCC in your own words)*

**Tuesday, January 28, 9 am to 12 pm**

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

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

*(What surprised you the most from today's reading on the church union debates? What would have been lost if all of the Presbyterians joined The United Church of Canada on June 10, 1925? How has the Church Union debate impacted the identity of the Presbyterian Church in Canada since 1925?)*

**Tuesday, February 4, 9 am to 12 pm**

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

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

*(What were the most significant challenges facing the Continuing Presbyterian Church in Canada after 1925? Name one the most significant leaders of the continuing Presbyterian Church in Canada and what impact they had. What lessons from this historical overview could you apply to pastoral ministry today?)*

**Tuesday, February 11, 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 18, 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 25, 9 am to 12 pm**

Polity, Mission and Leadership

Watch Darrell Guder's lecture on polity and mission (just Dr. Guder's lecture, do not feel the need to watch the discussion):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aydwpXGyz6E>

Please read and discuss Labberton's *Called*.

*(What is the author's main thesis regarding the need to return to "the first thing?" How would you use the practice section of this book in a local church setting? Offer one critique of this book for the practice of ministry.)*

Reading Week – March 3 to 7.

**Tuesday, March 10, 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*.

*(Which chapter did you identify with the most and why? Name three ways that ministry has changed since Peterson began his church planting with PC-USA? What did you learn about the role of Pastor to apply to your own ministry from this book?)*

**Tuesday, March 17, 9 am to 12 pm.**

*The Apology to Indigenous Canadians 1994 (accessible here: <https://presbyterian.ca/healing/>)*

*The "Do's and Don'ts" of being an Interim Moderator*  
*"Calling a Minister" (<https://presbyterian.ca/resources/resources-ministry/>)*

*Learning to love 50 Wynford Drive – an overview of the national office*

*Canadian Ministries, Cyclical and the Evangelism Network*

*Justice Ministries –(including the download of the Social Action Handbook:  
<https://presbyterian.ca/justice/>)*

*Presbyterian World Service & Development*

*Leading with Care and SASH – Sexual Abuse and Sexual Harassment Policy*

*Appendices of the Book of Forms*

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

**Tuesday, March 24, 9 am to 12 pm.**

Starting Well – E 37 Assessment

Read and Discuss Lischer's *Open Secrets*.

*(What was one example of not starting well in this book? What was a key learning that the pastorate of New Cana taught Lischer? How might you begin a new ministry differently in light of reading this book?)*

**Tuesday, March 31, 9 am to 12 pm**

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

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

*(What did you find the most challenging part of this book? What does the author mean by saying there is "nothing redeemable about my ministry?" Explain the title of the book in your own words)*

**Tuesday, April 7, 9 am to 12 pm**

Ancient/Future Missional Leadership in the Church

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

*(What parallels do you see between Patrick's ministry context and our own in Canada today? What part of Patrick's story interested you the most, and why? What is the most important lesson that Patrick's witness has to offer our own contemporary ministry leadership?)*

**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.*