



PT611
Church Polity for the
Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church
Reformed Theological Seminary, Charlotte
Fall Semester 2015

Course goals

- To grasp the biblical basis for the Presbyterian form of church government
- To become familiar with historic theological writings related to church polity
- To understand the historical background of the A.R.P. Church as it applies to modern church practice and theology
- To become familiar with the ARP Standards, especially the Form of Government and Book of Discipline
- To prepare students to apply Biblical principles of polity within a congregation, presbytery, and the General Synod of the A.R.P. Church
- To equip students for teaching principles of church polity to both church officers and members in general of a local congregation

Book List

Required:

- ARP Synod - *Standards of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church* (arpchurch.org/documents/)
 - Form of Government
 - Book of Discipline
 - Manual of Authorities and Duties
- Brown, Mark (editor) *Order in the Offices: essays defining the roles of church officers*
- Chapell, Bryan *Preparing for Licensure and Ordination Exams* [pamphlet]
- Lauterbach, Mark. *The Transforming Community: The Practise [sic] of the Gospel in Church Discipline.*
- Lucas, Sean Michael *What is Church Government?* [pamphlet]
- Van Dam, Cornelius *The Elder: today's ministry rooted in all of Scripture*
- Wray, Daniel E. *Biblical church discipline* [pamphlet]

Recommended:

(Some are out of print; some will be on reserve in the library. I do not endorse the content of every book – they are listed for research purposes. Older titles may be found at www.archive.org or on books.google.com)

- Hall, David & Joseph Hall *Paradigms in polity: classic readings in Reformed Presbyterian Church Government*
(I list this first because it is a resource every Presbyterian pastor should have on his bookshelf! But you are not required to buy it for class.)
- Adams, Jay E. *Handbook of Church Discipline*
- Akin, Daniel (*et. al.*) *Perspectives on church government : five views of church polity*
- Campbell, Peter Colin *Theories of Ruling Eldership*
- Eyres, Lawrence *Elders of the Church*
- Hodge, Charles *The church and its polity*
- Hodge, Charles *What is Presbyterianism?*
- Irons, Lee *Theories of eldership: a study in Presbyterian polity*

- Jones, O. Garfield *Parliamentary procedure at a glance (in reference section)*
- Kuiper, R.B. *Glorious body of Christ*
- Leeman, Jonathan *Church discipline*
- Leeman, Jonathan *Church membership*
- Mack, Wayne A. *Life in the Father's House: a member's guide to the local church* [2nd ed.]
- MacNair, Donald J. *Practices of a healthy church*
- Miller, Samuel *An essay on the warrant, nature, and duties of the office of the ruling elder*
- Miller, Samuel *Presbyterianism, the truly primitive and apostolical constitution of the Church of Christ*
- Moeller, Robert *Love in action: healing conflict in your church*
- Newton, Phil *Elders in congregational life*
- Sittema, John R. *With a Shepherd's Heart: reclaiming the pastoral office of elder*
- Smyth, Thomas *Ecclesiastical catechism of the Presbyterian Church*
- Smyth, Thomas *Theories of Eldership*
- Strauch, Alexander *Biblical Eldership: an urgent call to restore Biblical leadership*
- Susek, Ron *Firestorm: preventing and overcoming church conflict*
- Waters, Guy *How Jesus runs the church*
- Witherow, Thomas *The apostolic church: which is it?*
- Wray, Daniel *The importance of the local church*

Class Schedule & Assignments (subject to change by professor!)

*****NOTE: This course runs only for the first half of the semester.**

You do not want to fall behind on assignments!

*****NOTE: Don't panic about the reading – many of the chapters are short, especially later in the list. Some (so noted) are listed as optional as well.**

Quizzes on readings will be given **each week**; if you keep up with the readings, you won't have any problems. **Assignments listed are to be read before that day, not after!**

DATE	TOPIC	READING ASSIGNMENT
August 20	Biblical basis for presbyterian church government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Paradigms in Polity</i>, Ch. 2 – Hall (pp.12-19 only) • “The Presbytery-led Church” by Robert Reymond in <i>Perspectives on Church Government</i> (pp. 87-95, 109-138) • <i>Order in the Offices</i>, Ch. 2 – Clowney (pp. 43-65)
August 27	Survey of writings on polity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Order in the Offices</i>, Ch. 7 – Boer (pp. 135-154) • <i>Paradigms in Polity</i>, Ch. 5 – Calvin (pp. 62-73) • <i>Paradigms in Polity</i>, Ch. 29 – Miller (pp. 422-434) • <i>Paradigms in Polity</i>, Ch. 6 – Miller (pp. 74-102) (optional) • <i>Order in the Offices</i>, Ch. 3 – Hodge (pp. 67-79)
September 3	Later writings on polity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Theories of the Eldership</i> – Irons, p.1-25 (library reserve) • <i>Order in the Offices</i>, Ch. 12 – Rayburn (pp. 219-234) • <i>Order in the Offices</i>, Ch. 13 – Reynolds (pp. 235-256) • <i>What is Church Government?</i> – Lucas (all – pp. 5-28)
September 10	Form of Government (the Church, congregation, ministry, membership, officers)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FOG, Chapters 1-8 • Ware & Gettys, <i>Second Century</i>, pp. 378-388 • Mack, Wayne. <i>Life in the Father's House</i>, [2nd ed.] chapter 2. • Sittema, John. <i>With a Shepherd's Heart</i>, chapter 26. - First exercise sheets for FOG due
September 17	Form of Government (ministers, presbytery, mission churches, Synod, committees, etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FOG, Chapters 9-14 • MacNair, Donald. <i>Practices of a Healthy Church</i>, chapters 5-7 • Van Dam, <i>The Elder</i>, chapters 1 & 6 - Second exercise sheets for FOG due
September 24	Church discipline in general and the A.R.P. Book of Discipline in particular	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>A.R.P. Book of Discipline</i> (skim well) • Lauterbach, Mark. <i>The Transforming Community</i>, chap. 1-3 • Adams, Jay. <i>Handbook of Church Discipline</i>, chap. 1-3 • Wray, Daniel E. <i>Biblical church discipline</i> (all – pp. 5-31) • Mack, Wayne. <i>Life in the Father's House</i>, [2nd ed.] chap. 8. (chapter 9 optional) • Sittema, John. <i>With a Shepherd's Heart</i>, chapter 27. (optional) - Church conflict project due
October 1	Running meetings & parliamentary procedure; creating church policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sittema, John. <i>With a Shepherd's Heart</i>, chapter 28. • MacNair, Donald. <i>Practices of a Healthy Church</i>, chapter 9 • A.R.P. Manual of Authorities and Duties (skim well)
October 5-9	READING WEEK	Proctored final exam on the Form of Government (may be taken any time that week on campus during library hours)
October 15		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Paper on the Offices of the Church due (2) Reading report due

Course Requirements (other than readings listed above)

Readings: (15% of grade)

You must complete and turn in the attached reading report form by **October 15, 2015**. Failure to turn in the form will result in **0% credit** for this portion of the class. The readings are important to class discussion (see next...).

Class participation (10% of grade)

This is a class that will have a great deal of interaction. Participation does not mean showing you know all the answers – in fact, I'm more interested in people knowing the best questions to ask.

This also includes completion of Exercise Sheets on the ARP Standards.

***NOTE: If an assignment says 3-4 pages, that means a 3-page minimum!**

Daily Quizzes (5% of grade)

Each quiz is based on the ***required*** readings (not the optional extra readings) due for that day.

Church conflict/discipline project (3-4 Pages, double-spaced) (15% of grade)

Due Sept. 24 (Thursday)

You will need to decide upon a church conflict problem (real or hypothetical) to deal with (get approval of topic first). For the problem, you need to show:

1. A summary of the issues involved
2. Outline a plan of action with supporting Biblical basis
3. List a short bibliography of sources relevant to the action plan.

Term Paper on Offices of the Church (8-10 Pages, double-spaced) (30% of grade)

Due Oct. 15 (Thursday)

For this paper, use the resources listed in this syllabus and any others you desire. You will need to do four basic things in this paper:

1. Discuss the differences between the 2, 2 ½, & 3 office view and the main people who (denominations & theologians) who adhere to each view
2. Identify the implications, pro & con, of each view for the life of the Church
3. Identify which view you think is the most Biblical & why (document your reasons from Scripture & the secondary literature)
4. Based on the above, which view do you think the current as well as draft ARP Forms of Government espouse, and discuss whether this is what ends up happening in practice
5. Don't forget your **bibliography** on a separate sheet – this does NOT count toward your 8-10 pages. ***I want to see a minimum of 5 sources.***
6. Use footnotes, not endnotes. Err on the side of too many footnotes rather than on plagiarism.

This is a more formal paper, so **use as your style guide:**

Kate L. Turabian. *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses & Dissertations*. c2013, 8th ed. University of Chicago Press. [REF LB2369 .T8 2013]

Final Exam on ARP Standards (25% of grade)

Includes questions similar to those on the exercise sheets. Covers the Form of Government. A list of all potential questions will be distributed in advance. Exam may be taken any time (proctored) during Reading Week. **CLOSED BOOK.**

The McMullen Style Guide

All papers handed in must follow the following style guidelines to be acceptable:

- **white paper** - no weird colors; black ink
 - **margins**: top & bottom 1 inch; sides 1.25 inches
 - **font**: Times New Roman or Calibri, 12 point - no large or fancy fonts (this sentence is in Times New Roman 12 pt)
 - **no handwritten papers** – I hope this is assumed by now, but....
 - hand in papers **stapled**, upper left – no report covers!
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A.R.P. Church Polity
Fall Semester 2015

Reading Report

Due in Prof. McMullen's box by 5:00 PM, Thursday, October 29, 2015.

Name: _____

I attest that I have read the following amount of the required readings for this course as listed in the course syllabus (check one):

100% _____

95% _____

90% _____

less than 90% _____

Signed: _____

Course Objectives Related to MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes

Course: **3PT611 / Church Polity – ARP (1 credit hour)**
 Professor: Rev. Kenneth McMullen
 Campus: Charlotte
 Date: Fall 2015 semester

<u>MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes</u> <i>In order to measure the success of the MDiv curriculum, RTS has defined the following as the intended outcomes of the student learning process. Each course contributes to these overall outcomes. This rubric shows the contribution of this course to the MDiv outcomes.</i> <i>*As the MDiv is the core degree at RTS, the MDiv rubric will be used in this syllabus.</i>		<u>Rubric</u> ➤ Strong ➤ Moderate ➤ Minimal ➤ None	<u>Mini-Justification</u>
Articulation (oral & written)	Broadly understands and articulates knowledge, both oral and written, of essential biblical, theological, historical, and cultural/global information, including details, concepts, and frameworks.	Moderate (written)	1. Students must be able to articulate various views on polity by writing a research paper.
Scripture	Significant knowledge of the original meaning of Scripture. Also, the concepts for and skill to research further into the original meaning of Scripture and to apply Scripture to a variety of modern circumstances. (Includes appropriate use of original languages and hermeneutics; and integrates theological, historical, and cultural/global perspectives.)	Moderate	1. Students must investigate Scriptural and theological foundations for church polity.
Reformed Theology	Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards.	Moderate	1. Students are asked to read various Reformed confessions and creeds as they relate to church polity.
Sanctification	Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student's sanctification.	Minimal	1. In the overall course, students are encouraged to grow in their love for Christ and His Church rather than merely seeing polity as a technical issue.
Desire for Worldview	Burning desire to conform all of life to the Word of God.	None	
Winsomely Reformed	Embraces a winsomely Reformed ethos. (Includes an appropriate ecumenical spirit with other Christians, especially Evangelicals; a concern to present the Gospel in a God-honoring manner to non-Christians; and a truth-in-love attitude in disagreements.)	Minimal	1. One section of the course deals with effective church discipline properly applied.
Preach	Ability to preach and teach the meaning of Scripture to both heart and mind with clarity and enthusiasm.	None	
Worship	Knowledgeable of historic and modern Christian-worship forms; and ability to construct and skill to lead a worship service.	None	
Shepherd	Ability to shepherd the local congregation: aiding in spiritual maturity; promoting use of gifts and callings; and encouraging a concern for non-Christians, both in America and worldwide.	Strong	1. Students learn ARP polity and other governing standards. 2. Students study local church governance and discipline.
Church/World	Ability to interact within a denominational context, within the broader worldwide church, and with significant public issues.	Strong	1. Students learn the process and value of being part of a wider denomination, both historically and in contemporary practice.