

Church Polity (PCA)
4PT520, 1 hr. credit
Reformed Theological Seminary, Atlanta, GA
January 3-4, 2012
Dr. L. Roy Taylor, Adjunct Professor¹

Course Description:

Students examine the biblical and historical data relative to church government and the *Book of Church Order*. The organization and functions of church judicatories, including discipline and appeals are considered. A purpose of the course is for students to acquire an understanding of the polity and procedures of the Presbyterian Church in America sufficient for ordination and ministry in the PCA. Non-PCA students may study the polity of their respective denominations (for example, the *Book of Church Order* of the OPC, EPC, APRC, PCUSA, or Constitution and Canons of the Anglican Church in North America).

Class Meetings:

- Tuesday – 8:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.
- Wednesday – 8:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Professor Contact Information:

1700 N. Brown Road, Suite 105
Lawrenceville, GA 30043
Phone 678 825-1000
rtaylor@pcanet.org

Office Hours – Professor does not have an on-campus office. He will be available for conferences after class hours upon request.

Text Books:

- *Book of Church Order of the PCA*, Atlanta, Office of the Stated Clerk, 2011.
 - Students from other denominations may substitute the *Book of Church Order* of their particular denomination (ex. OPC, ARPC, EPC, RCUS, KAPC, PCUSA, ACNA, and AMiA).
 - Students from denominations or independent churches that do not have a *Book of Church* order may read equivalent documents with the permission of the professor.
- *Who Runs the Church: Four Views on Church Polity*
Paul Engle, Series Editor, Steven B. Cowan, Editor
Peter Toon, Anglican Contributor
L. Roy Taylor, Presbyterian Contributor
Samuel Waldron, Plural-Elder Congregationalism
Paige Patterson, Single-Elder Congregationalism
Zondervan Publishing Co. ISBN 0-310-24607-5. 312 pp.

Course Requirements for Atlanta Students, 4PT520, 1hr. credit:

- Attend Lectures

¹ Served 10 years on faculty of RTS-J (Professor of Practical Theology, Department Chairman, D.Min. Program Director), 16 years as a PCA pastor, Stated Clerk of the General Assembly of the PCA since 1998.

- Read both textbooks before taking exam, 20% of grade.
- Take examination, 80% of grade.

Examination: The exam will be a take-home exam. It is *not* an open-book exam.

Deadline: Exams are to be submitted to the RTS-A Director of Student Services by 4:00 p.m., Friday February 10, 2012 (HARD COPIES ONLY. So do not send me electronic copies).

Extension Policy

All assignments and exams are to be completed by the deadlines announced in this syllabus or in class.

Extensions for assignments and exams due within the normal duration of the course must be approved beforehand by the Professor. Extensions of two weeks or less beyond the date of the last deadline for the course must be approved beforehand by the Professor. A grade penalty may be assessed.

Extensions of greater than two weeks but not more than six weeks beyond the last deadline for the course may be granted in extenuating circumstances (i.e. illness, family emergency). For an extension of more than two weeks the student must request an Extension Request Form from the Student Services Office. The request must be approved by the Professor and the Academic Dean. A grade penalty may be assessed. (RTS Catalog p. 42 and RTS Atlanta Student Handbook p. 14)

Any incompletes not cleared six weeks after the last published due date for course work will be converted to a failing grade. Professors may have the failing grade changed to a passing grade by request. (RTS Catalog p. 42)

Course Objectives Related to MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes

Course: Church Polity
 Professor: Taylor
 Campus: Atlanta
 Date: January 2012

<u>MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes</u>		<u>Rubric</u>	<u>Mini-Justification</u>
<p><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></p> <p><i>*As the MDiv is the core degree at RTS, the MDiv rubric will be used in this syllabus.</i></p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Strong ➤ Moderate ➤ Minimal ➤ None 	
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.	Strong	Students are able to articulate biblical bases for ecclesiastical leadership via written examination for class and ordination exam.
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.)	Strong	Students come to understand biblical bases for ecclesiastical leadership via readings, lectures, discussion and interaction
Reformed Theology	Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards.	Strong	Students are able to understand and practice biblical polity within the Reformed tradition
Sanctification	Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student's sanctification.	Moderate	Students realize to be a minister is to be a churchman
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.)	Strong	Students learn that polity though a secondary issue is an important issue in relating to other Christians and branches of the Church
Preach	Ability to preach and teach the meaning of Scripture to both heart and mind with clarity and enthusiasm.	Minimal	Students are able to articulate biblical polity when it arise from an appropriate biblical text
Worship	Knowledgeable of historic and modern Christian-worship forms; and ability to construct and skill to lead a worship service.	Moderate	Students grasp significant parallels between confessional perspectives on worship and polity (WCF I, XXI)
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.	Moderate	Students are enabled to train and deploy church leaders
Church/World	Ability to interact within a denominational context, within the broader worldwide church, and with significant public issues.	Strong	Students learn theory and practice of church polity for their respective denominational context

