

MN555 Polity and Program of the PC (USA)

Summer 2021

Instructor: Rev. Dr. Gary S. Eller

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course provides an overview of Presbyterian Church (USA) polity, both in principle and in practice. Particular emphasis will be given to the use of the constitution in the local congregation and governing bodies. The class will include lectures, discussion posts, case studies, and outside assignments.

OBJECTIVES

The primary objectives of the course are to:

- Equip students to become competent moderators of Session
- Help students become knowledgeable interpreters of Presbyterian polity for the local congregation
- Increase student's awareness of the denomination's broader missional purposes
- Instill in students an appreciation for Presbyterian connectional polity

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Regular and thoughtful participation in class discussions;
2. Timely completion of the assigned readings;
3. Attendance at a presbytery meeting (or one session meeting, with permission) during the course;
4. An analysis of an observed governing body meeting; **(A virtual meeting is an option.)**
5. Completion of the final essays;
6. Course evaluation will be based on class participation and quality of submitted work.

REQUIRED TEXTS

- Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) *The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Part I, The Book of Confessions, 2019-2021* (with index).
- Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), *The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Part II, The Book of Order, 2019-2021*
- Goodwill, Gregory A., *A Guide to Parliamentary Procedure in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)* (This is a PDF document at http://www.pcusa.org/media/uploads/oga/pdf/parliamentary_procedure.pdf)
- Gray, Joan S. and Joyce Tucker, *Presbyterian Polity for Church Leaders* (Fourth Edition)
- Hooker, Paul K., *Faith, Hope, Love, and Witness: The PC(USA) Form of Government* (Leader's Guide and Participant's Book, *Being Reformed Series*)...**No Longer Available**
- Wilton, Carlos E., *Principles of Presbyterian Polity*

RECOMMENDED FOR FURTHER STUDY

- Beattie, Frank A., *Companion to the Constitution: Polity for the Local Church*
- Chapman, William E., *History and Theology in the Book of Order: Blood on Every Page*
- Olsen, Charles, *Transforming Church Boards into Spiritual Communities*
- Robert, Henry M., *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised*, (most recent edition)
- Rogers, Jack., *Presbyterian Creeds: A Guide to the Book of Confessions*