

PRESBYTERIANISM: PRINCIPLES, PRACTICES, and SOCIAL TEACHING

June 29-July 7, 2012 – Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE 220th MEETING OF THE PC(USA) GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Sponsoring Seminaries:

**San Francisco Theological Seminary
Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary**

General Assembly Agency Sponsors:

**Office of the General Assembly
Committee on Theological Education
Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy**

Faculty David Tomlinson (SFTS)
Clifton Kirkpatrick (LPTS)
Jack Rogers (SFTS)
Teresa Chavez Saucedo (SFTS and ACSWP)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This class will study the ecclesiastical history and structure of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the working of the General Assembly - including the election process for the moderator and stated clerk - and action related to current issues to be decided by the denomination. It will also engage students in study and analysis of key issues before the General Assembly. There will also be a special area of concentration around the Church's Social Teaching.

The course will consist of preparatory classes June 29 and 30 (**beginning promptly at 9 AM on Friday, June 29**), and an immersion in the General Assembly, June 30-July 7, 2012, in Pittsburgh, PA. It can be taken for either 1.5 or three credits.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

We expect that as a result of this course students will develop a deeper understanding of:

- The polity and ecclesiology of the Presbyterian Church (USA) that will more fully equip them for ministry in this denomination
- A hands-on understanding of how the General Assembly works and how Presbyterians are connected through it to the wider ministry of the church
- An overview of the social teaching of the PCUSA to equip them for social witness and ministry
- A particular topic or area of concentration critical to the life and ministry of the PCUSA and how that topic is formed and shaped by the General Assembly

TEXTBOOKS

- Robert H. Bullock Jr. (editor), Presbyterians: Being Reformed, Reflections on What the Church Needs, Today Louisville: Geneva Press, 2006.
- Jack Rogers, Claiming the Center: Churches and Conflicting Worldviews. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1995.
- Elizabeth Hinson-Hasty and Rebecca Todd Peters, To Do Justice. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox
- The Foundations for Presbyterian Polity and the Form of Government from the PCUSA Book of Order
- General Assembly Materials (available, on-line from the Office of the General Assembly, after you register)

Students selecting a concentration in the Church's Social Teaching will also be expected to read portions of the Social Witness Policy Compilation (which can be found online).

CLASS SCHEDULE: 9:00 am, Friday, June 29, 2012 to Saturday, July 7, 2012 (*subject to slight modification*)

Friday:	A.M.	Introductions Course Overview Community Building Lecture/ Discussion on History related to the G.A.
	Afternoon-Evening	Lectures/discussion: on Polity and history and development of Social Policy related to the G.A. Discussion: surviving a G.A. meeting!
Saturday:	A.M.	Introduction to General Assembly – Discussion: issues, process, Finding your way around
	P.M.	Opening Worship and Communion Observe General Assembly in plenary and Moderator's Election
Sunday	A.M.	Worship and lunch in local congregations
	P.M.	Assembly Plenary: Stated Clerk nomination Moderator's Reception
		In classroom session: Debriefing of Moderator Election Lecture/Discussion: Social Policy in the PC (USA) Review Assignments and Procedures
	Eve.	Opening G. A. Committee sessions (NOTE: the class sessions for this day will be somewhat flexible to conform to the G. A. daily schedule)
Mon-Tues.:		Observe/reflect/follow issues in Committees Debriefing in small groups over lunch

- Wednesday:** Ecumenical Worship
Morning debriefing session in small groups
Seminary lunches
Observe General Assembly Plenary
- Thursday:** Observe General Assembly Plenary
Small group Debriefing lunch, and report back session
- Friday:** Observe General Assembly Plenary and Stated Clerk's Election
- Extended Debriefing lunch for
- Final Reflections on Experience
 - Discussion of theological, polity, and justice actions of 220th General Assembly
 - Discussion of how to share experience/learnings "back home"
 - Final touch base on papers and assignments
- Group Dinner, Worship, and Commissioning for all students
Observe evening plenary
- Saturday:** Observe Final General Assembly Plenary
Closing Worship

TOPICS FOR PREPARATORY CLASSES WITH FACULTY, JUNE 29 & 30 IN PITTSBURGH

A Review of Presbyterian History and Theology; and the Current Ethos in the Church:

Read: Claiming the Center [All]

Read: Presbyterians: Being Reformed [All]

Read: To Do Justice [All]

Assembly operations, Institutional, Organizational, and Procedural
Materials available, in class

Committee and Task Force Reports:

Read: GA materials; (especially those related to each student's assigned topic).

Read: Selected portions of the General Assembly Social Witness Compilation (for those in the Social Teaching concentration)

Overtures:

Read: GA materials

ACTIVITIES AT THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

As Participant Observers each student will have an opportunity:

- 1) to monitor the activity of a General Assembly Committee and report its actions to the group;
- 2) to learn about special interest groups and how they work;
- 3) to explore the range of General Assembly and related booths in the exhibit area;
- 4) to see firsthand how social witness policy is developed and implemented
- 5) to observe the election of a new moderator, plenary debate on issues, and many special events;
- 6) to participate in regular worship and holy communion,
- 7) to experience the full richness and diversity of persons and programs which comprise the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.);

- 8) To meet with representatives of your seminary, and students from many other seminaries.

ASSIGNMENTS

- 1) Complete the assigned readings in **Claiming the Center, Presbyterians: Being reformed; Reflections on What the Church Needs, Today, To Do Justice_and General Assembly materials**. All students will be expected to take an active part in all preparatory class sessions.
- 2) All students will be expected to fulfill observation assignments and be present at daily debriefing sessions.
- 3) Audit and Credit Students will keep a daily log of two to three pages in a notebook or on computer of significant activities at the Assembly, **due July 6 in class**.
- 4) For students taking the course for 1.5 semester hour's credit, they will write a brief reflection paper (**3-4 pages**) on the assigned readings in relation to the actions of the General Assembly and the learning goals of the course, due **August 10, 2012**.
- 5) For students taking the course for 3 semester hour's credit, they will write a substantial **10-15 page research paper** on a topic before the General Assembly.
 - a. Due: **August 10, 2012**.
 - b. Each paper must include:
 1. Your perspective on the issue(s) assigned prior to the course;
 2. An analysis of GA materials on the issue(s) and its relation to the context provided in the assigned texts;
 3. A record of relevant committee and plenary discussion and/or personal interviews conducted at the Assembly related to the issue(s);
 4. A statement of the Assembly's action on the issue(s);
 5. Your reflection on the significance of the Assembly's action on the assigned issue(s) for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

Credit and Tuition

- 1) Students registered with their seminaries should make arrangements for course credit with their seminary liaison or registrar (with credit and grades being transferred through the SFTS registrar) and notify Dr. Tomlinson, in writing, of the arrangements made.
- 2) Students at Presbyterian seminaries may register at their own institution (along with sending in a registration form to SFTS, if not an SFTS student). Normal tuition may be paid to the student's PC (USA) degree granting institution according to prior agreement of the Committee on Theological Education. **Such students must also pay a \$350 participation fee to cover incidental costs of the course to SFTS.**
- 3) Students registering for the course through SFTS will be charged the tuition for either the 1.5 or 3 unit course (**\$750 or \$1500**). **Auditors will be charged an audit fee of \$500.**
- 4) All Students will also be charged a fee for the provision of materials as General Assembly meeting observers and for the two meals that the class will have together. **That fee is \$120.**

NOTE: The class is limited to 50 participants and Preference will be given to students enrolling in the course for credit.

Preparatory Class and Administrative Details

- 1) All students **must** attend the preparatory classes in Pittsburgh at the General Assembly site on June 29 from 9:00 AM - 9:00 PM, and June 30 from 8:30 – noon; followed by the convening of the Assembly
- 2) All students should arrange their transportation and housing directly with the Office of the General Assembly, once they have registered for the course **and received their General Assembly registration information from OGA.**
- 3) The class will meet and eat lunches (which you will secure on your own) in the classroom during the full week of the Assembly (with the exception of Wednesday when seminary luncheons are held). The class will also have group dinners together on the two Friday evenings, the costs for which are covered in the course fees.
- 4) Students enrolled in the class may not attend the Assembly as Commissioners, YADs, or TSADs. Students should also not schedule any other meeting or event that coincides with scheduled class times or with committee or plenary sessions that are equally a part of the overall course requirements.