

Polity, Program, and Mission of the PCUSA

Course Description:

The courses in Presbyterian polity, program, and mission will integrate the study of the Presbyterian Constitution (*Book of Confessions* and *Book of Order*) and Program and Mission of the PCUSA into the context of the educator. Scripture, polity, and the structure, mission and program of the PCUSA, as it is described and resourced by presbyteries, synods, and the General Assembly, usually provides the content for this certification course. Critical examination, guided exploration, and careful integration of those key resources provides educators an opportunity to draw upon the richness of the Presbyterian tradition as they take leadership roles in their congregations and ministries. The course will provide opportunities for educators to explore how the polity, program, and mission of the PCUSA will impact, guide, and influence their educational programs and events.

Suggested Course Objectives:

By the end of the course participants will be enabled to:

1. describe a Presbyterian theology of polity and mission
2. explain the role of the Holy Spirit in Presbyterian governance
3. describe the role of the *Book of Confessions* in the PCUSA
4. suggest specific ways the *Book of Order* might serve as a resource for the work of a Christian educator
5. identify ways that an educator might utilize the Form of Government in the *Book of Order* in her/his work with a congregation, agency, or Council of the denomination.
6. outline how a Session might bring a concern to the presbytery, synod, and the General Assembly
7. describe how *the* Directory for Worship in the *Book of Order* reflects the Reformed tradition and its implications for the various opportunities for worship in the Church
8. identify a variety of resources available through the denominational sources that might have relevance to the educator's ministry setting.
9. design a presentation to use back home, using a variety of program and mission resources of the denomination

Foundational Resources:

- *Bible*
- *The Book of Confessions*
- Current version of *The Book of Order*
- Mission Yearbook of Prayer and Study
- Current year Program Calendar of the PCUSA
- *Parliamentary Procedures* (This is a booklet that explains *Roberts Rules of Order* for Presbyterians.)

Potential Internet Resources:

- Links on the PCUSA web site to various programs, agencies, mission endeavors, and resources of the denomination.
- *The Thoughtful Christian* courses.
- *Presbyterian Leader* resources, especially those articles that relate to polity, program, and mission.

Recommended Reading:

- *Presbyterian Polity for Church Officers*, by Joan Gray and Joyce Tucker (Rev. Ed.)

Certification Exam Readiness:

By the end of the certification process, in order to successfully complete the examination, the educator will need to be able to integrate and apply learnings in this knowledge area to situations that arise in congregations.

Approved by the PC(USA) Educator Certification Committee, April 28, 2016

The Educator Certification Committee of the PCUSA provides approval for each course and course instructor on an individual basis. This document is meant to provide only an overview of this particular topic and does not provide a blanket approval for all courses.