

**Syllabus for Presbyterian Polity Certification Course**  
**APCE Chicago Annual Event, February 7 - 9, 2022**  
**Instructor: Joyce MacKichan Walker**

**Schedule: 8 hours of online classes**

*Four Mondays, January 10, 17, 24, 31, 2022*  
11:00 a.m. (EST) – 1:00 p.m. (EST)

**7 hours of in-person time**

*Tuesday, February 8, 2022*  
1:30 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.

*Wednesday, February 9, 2022*  
9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

**Course Description**

The course in Presbyterian polity will integrate the study of the Presbyterian Constitution (*Book of Confessions* and *Book of Order*) into the context of the educator. Critical examination, guided exploration, and careful integration of this 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 Presbyterian polity will impact, guide, and influence their ministry in a Presbyterian congregation. (Excerpted from the *Educator Certification Handbook 2021*)

**Course Objectives**

Course participants will be enabled to:

1. Define the mission of the PC(U.S.A.) as it is described in the Bible and in our polity, and describe why the PC(U.S.A.) “does” mission and how the PC(U.S.A.) embodies mission
2. Define “polity” and the major types of polity, and describe Presbyterian polity and its component parts
3. Effectively use the indexes and the Table of Contents of the *Book of Order* to find relevant cites for needed information
4. Locate and state what the *Book of Order* mandates/implies/empowers regarding certified Christian educators
5. Identify foundational principles for educational ministry found in the Foundations of Presbyterian Polity
6. Explore polity related to congregations and their membership, and the work of the councils of the PC(U.S.A.), and apply it to their own congregations
7. Draw on the *Directory for Worship* as a significant resource for education and care in congregations, spiritual discernment, and worship planning – across all ages
8. Discover the purpose and use of *The Rules of Discipline*.

## Required Texts:

*Book of Order, 2019–2021 or 2021-2023 (Content is identical);* **NOTE: Both the downloaded version and the print version are required** - Free download at [https://www.pcusa.org/site\\_media/media/uploads/oga/pdf/2019-23-boo-elec\\_010621.pdf](https://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/oga/pdf/2019-23-boo-elec_010621.pdf)  
Print version <https://www.pcusastore.com/Products/OGA19001/book-of-order-20192021.aspx>

*HINT: Check with church leadership and your Presbytery in case you can get a free copy of the Book of Order. By now there may be leftover copies lying around!*

## Required reading and assignments before the course:

1. **Carefully read** the following sections of the *2019-2021/2021-2023 Book of Order*. Make summary notes for yourself if that helps you process what you are reading:
  - a) The Foundations of Presbyterian Polity: Chapters 1, 2, and 3
  - b) The Form of Government:
    - i. Chapter 1
    - ii. Chapter 2: G-2.0101 – 2.0405; 2.1101 – 1103b
    - iii. Chapter 3: G-3.0101-0106; 3.02; 3.03; 3.04; 3.05
  - c) All of the *Directory for Worship*
  - d) *The Rules of Discipline* - Chapters 1 and 2; In chapter 10: D-10.0401 b. and c.
2. **Light skim** in the Form of Government: Chapter 2.05-2.10; Chapters 4 through 6, Watch for the main topics you find there.
3. **As you read the *Book of Order*, prepare a list of ten ideas** you have for using information in these sections for educational purposes. For example, you might use the list of involvements of faithful members in G-1.0304 to organize a class for prospective members or as an adult education offering. **Bring a print copy of this list, which will be collected at 1:30 p.m. on Tuesday at APCE.**
4. Look through the *Book of Confessions*:
  - a) **Skim** the historical preambles
  - b) **Choose** one Confession or Creed to focus on. Prepare to read aloud one brief excerpt and state **one discovery about how it speaks to educational ministry/faith formation.**

## SUMMARY OF COURSE CONTENT – ONLINE CLASSES

### January 10

Personal introductions

Introduction to Polity types, terms, and characteristics.

*Book of Order* Table of Contents, Indexes, citation form and use, Four Sections design

*Book of Order* mandates related to certification of Christian educators

### January 17

Exploration of Foundations of Presbyterian Polity, especially as they relate to educational ministry (Chapters F-1, F-2, F-3 of the *Book of Order*)

## **January 24**

Examine polity related to congregations, leadership, and councils particularly relevant to the work of Certified Christian Educators (Chapters G-1, and parts of G-2 and G-3 of the *Book of Order*)

## **January 31**

Bring an excerpt from a confession from the *Book of Confessions* that applies to the work of a Certified Christian Educator in a congregational setting.

Discussion on the role of confessions in the PC(USA)

Purpose and Use of the Rules of Discipline in the *Book of Order*

## **IN-PERSON SESSIONS ONSITE AT THE APCE ANNUAL EVENT:**

### **Tuesday, February 8, 2022**

**1:30 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. (Turn in list of 10 uses of *Book of Order* in educational ministry)**

**(2 hours)** What is the “mission” of the church? What is the “program” of the church? Biblical descriptions and Book of Order descriptions examined. Small groups create session plans for a session or adults on the topics: “Why Our Church ‘Does’ Mission” and “How the PCUSA defines and embodies mission”

**(2 hours)** Exploration of the *Directory for Worship* for use as a Certified Christian Educator

**(1/2 hour)** Martha Miller – “Equip” resources, and Certification Process questions

### **Wednesday, February 9, 2022**

**9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.**

**(3/4 hour)** Katie Snyder on Presbyterian and Reformed principles behind curriculum resources; highlights of formation resources across ages for small medium and large churches; cross-generations learning; and maybe “Learning settings beyond “Church school.” Polity expectations re educational resources.

**(3/4 hour)** Assigned learning in the Exhibit Hall – polity and program and mission related

**(1 hour)** Presbyterian Polity, Program and Missions learnings for the church. Review final project.

## **FINAL PROJECT**

Prepare a paper that reflects on the information and explorations of this course, the equivalent of three pages double-spaced. Presentation options will be provided. Due date will be March 12, one month from the last day of the APCE Annual Event. Full details will be provided.

Joyce MacKichan Walker 06-14-21