

**Course Syllabus**  
**WYP2117H – Reformed Worship and Polity**  
**Wycliffe College**  
**Toronto School of Theology**  
**Summer 2025**

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***Instructor Information***

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Instructor: Chad Van Dixhoorn, PhD  
Teaching Assistant: Lyndon Jost, PhD  
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***Course Identification***

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Course Number: 2000 level  
Course Format: *In-class intensive*  
Course Name: Reformed Worship and Polity  
Course Location: St George Campus, Wycliffe College (5 Hoskin Ave), Room Number TBD  
Class Times: Tuesday, June 3 - Friday, June 6; 9:00 am - 4:00 pm  
Prerequisites: NA

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***Course Description***

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Students examine key biblical passages and their interpretations in the Reformed tradition as they bear on liturgy, ecclesiology and church governance. Students also read classic writings that illustrate the development of Reformed understandings of worship and polity. Upon completion of the course students will be better equipped to engage in tasks of pastoral care, team leadership and construction of a Reformed worship service. This course is open to all students.

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***Course Resources***

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**Required Course Texts/Bibliography**

**1. Reformed Worship**

- a. The Church of Christ, James Bannerman
  - [Rites and Ceremonies in Public Worship](#) (40 pgs)
- b. [Westminster Confession of Faith](#) Chs. 20-22, 27-29 (6 pgs)
- c. [Westminster Shorter Catechism](#) Q. 49-52, 88-97 (14 pgs)
- d. [Westminster Larger Catechism](#) Q. 107-110, 153-177 (29 pgs)
- e. [Directory for the Publick Worship of God](#), Westminster Assembly (33 pgs)

- f. [Thirty-Eight Years at Gilcomston](#), William Still (7 pgs)
- g. [Worship: Reformed According to Scripture, Hughes Oliphant Old](#) (177 pgs)
- h. [Some Answers about the Regulative Principle](#), T. David Gordon (9 pgs)

## 2. Presbyterian Polity

- a. Institutes of the Christian Religion, John Calvin
  - [Book IV, Chs. 1-12](#) (192 pgs)
- b. [An assertion of the government of the Church of Scotland](#), George Gillespie (164 pgs)
  - Part I, Chs. 1-7, 13
  - Part II, Chs. 1-8, 11
- c. [Directory for Church Government](#), Westminster Assembly (24 pgs)
- d. Reformed Government, Polly Ha (to be made available on course page) (approx 50 pages)
  - “Leveraging Historical Contingency”
  - Chapter 1 (first selection, pp. 36-69)
- e. Paradigm in Polity, ed. David Hall & Joseph Hall
  - [The Ruling Elder, Samuel Miller](#) (13 pgs)
- f. Letters on Clerical Manners and Habits, Samuel Miller
  - [Letter XI](#) (44 pgs)
- g. Pastoral Theology, Patrick Fairbairn
  - [Ch. 6](#) (35 pgs)
- h. Notes of Ecclesiology, Thomas Peck
  - [The Deacon's Office](#) (8 pgs)
- i. Collected Writings, Vol. 2, John Murray
  - [Chs. 26-30](#) (44 pgs)
- j. Order in the Offices, ed. Mark R. Brown
  - [A Brief for Church Governors, Edmund Clowney](#) (23 pgs)
- k. [Charles Hodge on Church Boards](#), A. Craig Troxel (25 pgs)
- l. [Arguments and Argumentative Fallacies](#), T. David Gordon (13 pgs)
- m. [How to Run the Session Meeting](#), Alan D. Strange (5 pgs)
- n. [The Shepherd Leader, Introduction](#), Timothy Witmer (7 pgs)

### Course Website(s)

- Quercus: <https://q.utoronto.ca/>

This course uses Quercus for its course website. To access it, go to the UofT Quercus login page at <https://q.utoronto.ca/> and login using your UTORid and password. Once you have logged in to Quercus using your UTORid and password, look for the **My Courses** module, where you'll find the link to the website for all your Quercus-based courses. (Your course registration with ACORN gives you access to the

course website in Quercus.) Information for students about using Quercus can be found at: <https://community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC-10701> .

### ***Course Learning Objectives/Outcomes***

Course Outcomes	Course Element	Program Outcomes
<b>In taking this course, students will:</b>	<b>This outcome will be achieved through these course elements:</b>	<b>This course outcome corresponds to these aspects of Wycliffe's statements of outcomes (MTS, MDiv)</b>
demonstrate that they have read and understood classic historic and modern texts on the subjects of Reformed worship and polity.	Readings notes; Verbal book review	<b>MDiv:</b> 1.4 <b>MTS:</b> 1.3
identify and assess historic Reformed articulations and developments of the church's worship and/or polity with reference to Scripture and other Christian traditions.	Final research paper	<b>MDiv:</b> 1.2, 1.5, 2.1, 2.2 <b>MTS:</b> 1.2, 2.1, 2.2, 3.1
create a worship service by drawing from the Reformed tradition including its doctrinal commitments and liturgical practices.	Annotated liturgy	<b>MDiv:</b> 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4 <b>MTS:</b> 2.1, 2.2
explain and discuss how Reformed understandings of worship and polity bear on present ecclesial practices.	Dinner discussion; Class participation	<b>MDiv:</b> 2.2, 2.3, 3.3 <b>MTS:</b> 3.2, 3.3

### ***Evaluation***

#### **Requirements**

The final grade for the course will be based on evaluations in four areas:

#### **A. Reading Notes (30%)**

**Prior to the first class**, students will submit notes of their reading. Your notes should show evidence that you have read the works and understand the main argument(s) made therein. You may offer your notes in point form, but your points should make sense to the reader (me) and not simply to the writer (you). These should normally show

a grasp of the main flow or structure of a text and its main point(s). Nonetheless, if a reading is lengthy, students (while still reading the entire assignment), may focus their notes on one part of a work only. Your submitted document containing your notes should be a minimum of 15 pages SINGLE spaced.

**Reading notes for each reading will be assigned a Pass/Fail grade with the following percentage points awarded for each reading:**

Length of Assigned Reading	% points awarded per reading	Number of Assigned Readings	Total % points
<b>1-19 pages</b>	0.5% per reading	9	4.5%
<b>20-39 pages</b>	1% per reading	6	6%
<b>40-59 pages</b>	1.5% per reading	4	6%
<b>160-199 pages</b>	4.5% per reading	3	13.5%
		Total Readings: 22	<b>Grand Total: 30%</b>

Students who submit notes for all 22 readings before the first class will be awarded full marks (30%), providing that the notes are “pass-worthy.” Students who submit partial notes will receive partial marks, in accordance with the chart above. Late submissions will be received with a 50% deduction, and can be submitted any time **until August 1, 2025.**

**1.5 / 4.5 / 4.5 / 4.5 / 2**

## **B. Annotated Liturgy (20% of grade)**

Consider your home church's liturgical practices in light of the course readings and lectures. *What is being done well? What would you like to see done differently? How might the liturgical practices and doctrinal convictions of the Reformed tradition contribute to the reshaping of your own church's liturgies?*

With these questions in mind, write out a full script for a Sunday morning liturgy, designed as an "ideal" worship script for your home church. You are welcome to make use (or not) of a traditional liturgy from a book of prayer/worship. However, it is important that you write out EVERYTHING that you plan for the liturgist to say, including introductory, explanatory, and closing remarks. (Note that this *does not include writing a sermon*, but should include everything in the worship service, leading up to and following the sermon, with an indication of what the sermon will be about.)

Your entire script should also be annotated--i.e. include comments for each section that explain why you say what you do, why you choose this or that liturgy, why you order the service in the way you do, etc. Even for those who choose to follow traditional liturgies

closely, you must demonstrate that you have done so thoughtfully. ***Your annotations should regularly make reference to course readings to explain/justify why you have ordered the service the way you have and with the content you include.***

Your Annotated Liturgy assignment should include the following:

- A. **Introduction** - A brief introduction to the worship practices of your home church, critical but appreciative (one or two paragraphs), along with an explanation of the main goals that you hope to accomplish with your liturgy script (one or two paragraphs)
- B. **Liturgical Script** - Write your liturgical script, including annotations on the side.  
\*Note: You may want to use a multi-column table, including a column for the script (what is being said), and another for your annotations (notes explaining and justifying the content and order of your liturgy).

Your assignment should be at least 4 pages long and not more than 10 pages.

**Due June 13, 2025.**

### **C. Participation (10% of grade)**

Students are expected to demonstrate active listening and thoughtful participation in class. Half of the participation grade will be based on the student's participation at a dinner discussion focusing principally on the practical and pastoral aspects of the course.

### **D. Research Paper (40% of grade)**

Students will write a research paper on some aspect of Reformed worship or government, historical, theological or exegetical in nature. Guidance on the nature of the paper will be given in class. Your research paper should be 10-15 pages in length, DOUBLE spaced, and deploy at least 10 academic or primary sources.

**Due July 4, 2025.**

### **Grading System - Basic Degree Students**

90-100 (A+)	Exceptional
85-89 (A)	Outstanding
80-84 (A-)	Excellent
77-79 (B+)	Very Good
73-76 (B)	Good
70-72 (B-)	Acceptable
0-69 (FZ)	Failure

Please see the BD handbook for more details about the grading scale and non-numerical grades (e.g. SDF, INC, etc).

**Late work (BD).** Basic Degree students are expected to hand in assignments by the date given in the course outline. [The instructor should stipulate the penalty for late work.] The absolute deadline for the

course is the examination day scheduled for the course or the last day of exam week for the semester in which the course is taught, whichever is sooner.

This penalty is not applied to students with documented medical or compassionate difficulties or exceptional reasons (e.g., a death in the family or a serious illness); students facing such difficulties are kindly requested to consult with their faculty adviser or basic degree director, who should make a recommendation on the matter to the instructor and request an SDF. The absolute deadline for obtaining an SDF for the course is the examination day scheduled for the course or the last day of examination week, whichever is sooner. An SDF must be requested from the registrar's office in the student's college of registration no later than the last day of exam week in which the course is taken. The SDF, when approved, will have a mutually agreed upon deadline that does not extend beyond the conclusion of the following term. If a student has not completed work but has not been granted an SDF, a final mark will be submitted calculating a zero for work not submitted.

**Course grades.** Consistently with the policy of the University of Toronto, course grades submitted by an instructor are reviewed by a committee of the instructor's college before being posted to ACORN. Grades are not official until they are posted to ACORN. Course grades may be adjusted where they do not comply with University Assessment and Grading Practices Policy found at <https://governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/secretariat/policies/grading-practices-policy-university-assessment-and-january-26-2012>, policies found in the TST conjoint program handbooks, or college grading policy.

## **Policies**

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**Accessibility.** Students with a disability or health consideration, whether temporary or permanent, are entitled to accommodation. Students in conjoint degree programs must register at the University of Toronto's Accessibility Services offices; information is available at <http://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/as>. The sooner a student seeks accommodation, the quicker we can assist.

**Plagiarism.** Students submitting written material in courses are expected to provide full documentation for sources of both words and ideas in footnotes or endnotes. Direct quotations should be placed within quotation marks. (If small changes are made in the quotation, they should be indicated by appropriate punctuation such as brackets and ellipses, but the quotation still counts as a direct quotation.) Failure to document borrowed material constitutes plagiarism, which is a serious breach of academic, professional, and Christian ethics. An instructor who discovers evidence of student plagiarism is not permitted to deal with the situation individually but is required to report it to his or her head of college or delegate according to the TST *Basic Degree Handbook* and the Graduate program Handbooks linked from <http://www.tst.edu/academic/resources-forms/handbooks> and the University of Toronto *Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters* <https://governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/secretariat/policies/code-behaviour-academic-matters-july-1-2019>. A student who plagiarizes in this course will be assumed to have read the document "Avoidance of plagiarism in theological writing" published by the Graham Library of Trinity and Wycliffe Colleges: <https://www.trinity.utoronto.ca/library/research/theology/avoiding-plagiarism-in-theological-writing/>

**Other academic offences.** TST students come under the jurisdiction of the University of Toronto *Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters* <https://governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/secretariat/policies/code-behaviour-academic-matters-july-1-2019>

**Back-up copies.** Please make back-up copies of essays before handing them in.

**Obligation to check email.** At times, the course instructor may decide to send out important course information by email. To that end, all students in conjoint programs are required to have a valid utoronto email address. Students must have set up their utoronto email address which is entered in the ACORN system. Information is available at [www.utorid.utoronto.ca](http://www.utorid.utoronto.ca). The course instructor will not be able to help you with this. 416-978-HELP and the Help Desk at the Information Commons can answer questions you may have about your UTORid and password. Students should check utoronto email regularly for messages about the course. **Forwarding** your utoronto.ca email to a Hotmail, Gmail, Yahoo or other type of email account is not advisable. In some cases, messages from utoronto.ca addresses sent to Hotmail, Gmail or Yahoo accounts are filtered as junk mail, which means that emails from your course instructor may end up in your spam or junk mail folder. Students in non-conjoint programs should contact the Registrar of their college of registration.

**Email communication with the course instructor.** The instructor aims to respond to email communications from students in a timely manner. *All email communications from students in conjoint programs must be sent from a utoronto email address.* Email communications from other email addresses are not secure, and also the instructor cannot readily identify them as being legitimate emails from students. The instructor is not obliged to respond to email from non-utoronto addresses for students in conjoint programs. Students in non-conjoint programs should only use the email address they have provided to their college of registration.

## **Course Schedule**

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### **Day 1**

June 3, 2025

9:00 am - 4:00 pm      Introducing Worship and Polity in the Reformed Tradition

### **Day 2**

June 4, 2025

9:00 am - 4:00 pm      Polity in the Reformed Tradition

### **Day 3**

June 5, 2025

9:00 am - 4:00 pm      Worship in the Reformed Tradition

### **Day 4**

June 6, 2025

9:00 am - 4:00 pm      Practical and Pastoral Implications