



Birmingham Theological Seminary  
2200 Briarwood Way  
Birmingham, Alabama 35243  
(205) 776-5650

## **Presbyterian Church History**

### **Syllabus**

**Semester:** Fall 2025

**Course:** HT 1308

**Day & Time:** Monday's 7:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.

**Professor:** Jeffrey McDonald, PhD, FRHistS

**Credits:** 2

**Email:** jsmcdonald47@gmail.com

**Phone:** 402-682-1439

**Course Note:** This is a Video Conference course (VC).

**Course Description:** The goal of this course will be to help the student gain a better understanding of Presbyterian history and tradition. The student will learn about the broader Presbyterian tradition, but will also grasp the historical/theological issues that led to the current state of Presbyterianism.

### **Course Objectives:**

- The student becomes familiar with the key events, decisions, people and places in the history of Presbyterianism.
- The student can articulate how Presbyterianism developed historically.
- The student acquires intercultural skills by listening to Christians of the past, patiently hearing their voices and evaluating their paths.
- The students sees himself or herself as a member of Christ's one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church.
- The student begins to make decisions by applying wisdom from past historical situations to current ministry and cultural context.

### **Required Texts:**

- Nathan P. Feldmeth, S. Donald Fortson III, Garth M. Rosell, Ken Stewart, *Reformed and Evangelical Across Four Centuries: The Presbyterian Story in America* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2022)-329 pages of reading.
- J. Gresham Machen, *Christianity and Liberalism* (new edition, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009)-depending on the version approximately 175 pages.
- Jeffrey S. McDonald, *John Gerstner and the Renewal of Presbyterian and Reformed Evangelicalism in Modern America*, Princeton Theological Monograph Series (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2017)-263 pages of reading.

### **Collateral or Recommended Texts:**

- A. Donald MacLeod, *W. Stanford Reid: An Evangelical Calvinist in the Academy* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2004)
- D.G. Hart, *Defending the Faith: J. Gresham Machen and the Crisis of Conservative Protestantism in Modern America* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1994), also later published by Baker and P & R Publishing.
- Bradley Longfield, *The Presbyterian Controversy: Fundamentalists, Modernists, and Moderates* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991)
- **Course Requirements and Assessments:**

- Three Short Papers, 2 pages each. 25% of Final Grade (these papers can be on any topic in Presbyterian history)
- One Research Paper, 15-page paper. 50% of Final Grade (this paper can be on any topic in Presbyterian history)
- One Page Reflection Paper on John Gerstner book. 5% of Final Grade
- Attendance and Participation. 20% of Final Grade.

### **BTS Format, Style, and Writing Standards:**

All research papers must be formatted in accordance with Turabian Chicago standards including the title page. All papers are to be #12 font Times New Roman and Double-Spaced. Any paper not conforming to these standards will automatically be dropped one letter grade. Please see the BTS Turabian Style Guide for more information on turning in papers and assignments.

The BTS Turabian Style Guide and other resources are available on the BTS Writing Center webpage: <https://www.btswritingcenter.net/>

In addition, the Writing Center runs 2-3 Writing Workshops every semester. They are very helpful and highly recommended.

### **BTS Plagiarism / Generative AI Policy**

In addition to the BTS plagiarism policy, BTS is implementing a new Generative AI policy. Unless clearly directed by the instructor, the students should submit their own work, independent of artificial intelligence tools. Use of generative AI to write papers or to write significant portions of assignments is considered an ethical violation of our Student Code of Conduct and to be a violation of general academic integrity, which could result in a zero on the assignment and/or a lowered letter grade for the course by the professor. If determined to be an egregious violation, it could lead to further sanctions administered through the Academic Committee, including expulsion from BTS.

### Course Schedule:

- Lecture Outline-----Reading Plan-----Primary Assignment due dates  
Sept. 9<sup>th</sup>: Introduction to class

Sept. 16 <sup>th</sup> : Origins	<i>R &amp; E</i> , p.1-33 [ <i>Reformed and Evangelical</i> book]	First Paper Due
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Sept. 23<sup>rd</sup>: Westminster  
& the Restored Monarchy

Sept. 30<sup>th</sup>: New Developments *R & E*, p. 65-98

Oct. 7<sup>th</sup>: A Great Awakening      *R & E*, p. 99-129      Second Paper Due

Oct. 14<sup>th</sup>: Missions & Theology *R & E*, p. 130-161Oct, 21<sup>st</sup>: Slavery and the Civil War *R & E*, p. 162-196

Oct. 28<sup>th</sup>: Darwin and a New Society *R & E*, p. 197-229 Third Paper Due

Nov. 4<sup>th</sup>: Germany, Modernism, and the Defense of the Faith *R & E*, p. 230-262

Nov. 11<sup>th</sup>: Expansion and Modern Culture *R & E*, p. 263-303

Nov. 18<sup>th</sup>: Marginalization and Resurgence *R&E* p. 304-329      Reflection Paper Due

Nov. 25th: Class Discussion on Machen's *Christianity and Liberalism*Dec. 2<sup>nd</sup>: Student Presentations on Final PapersDec. 9<sup>th</sup>      Final Class Final Paper Due

### **Attendance Policy:**

Students are expected to demonstrate punctuality and attend all class sessions. Any absences should be communicated to the professor beforehand. Students may miss up to three classes with impunity.

[NOTE: Standard BTS Attendance Policy is that students may not miss any more than three classes without a course penalty. Given the reality of distance-based students and video conference options, if students **clearly identify at the beginning of the semester that they will primarily be asynchronous students (depending on the digital recording of class because of a conflict with their schedule)**, then the student may attend without incurring a penalty for their “absences,” providing they are turning in all

their work on time. Please see the BTS Faculty Handbook for more information on synchronous and asynchronous video conference students and policies and the commitments a faculty member agrees to when they teach a video conference or a live hybrid class]

### **Class Policies and Procedures:**

- BTS highly recommends using handwritten note taking methods in class and keeping computer usage to a minimum.
- Other electronics should be used sparingly.
- All assignments must be submitted by email by 11:59 (CDT/CST) on the due date.
- Late assignments will incur a -3 point deduction per weekday after the due date, except in cases of emergency communicated to the professor.
- Missed tests/exams may only be made up with an excused absence, preferably in advance of class. Excused absence tests/exams must be made up before the final day of the semester.

### **Video Conference Policies and Procedures:**

- Please utilize the BTS “Best VC (Video Conference) Practices” information for the course.
- Laptops/Desktops are the preferred method of attending a video conference course. Information will be shared on the screen, so phones will be less useful.
- In Video Conference, it is preferable for the student to keep their video on (when possible) so that students and faculty may engage with one another. Extended periods of dark screen will result in follow-up and potential removal from class.
- Other electronics should be used sparingly.

### **Course Bibliography (by topic) [compiled by Dr. Ken Stewart]**

#### **Reference Works:**

Nigel M. Cameron, ed. *Scottish Dictionary of Church History and Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1993)

D.G. Hart, ed. *Dictionary of the Presbyterian and Reformed Tradition in America* (1999: reprinted Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2005)

Tim Larsen, ed. *Biographical Dictionary of Evangelicals* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2003)

William Yoo, *The Presbyterian Experience in the United States* (documents), (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 2017)

#### **Swiss Reformation:**

Bruce Gordon, *The Swiss Reformation* (Manchester: University of Manchester Press, 2002)

William Monter, *Calvin's Geneva* (New York: Wiley, 1967)

William Naphy, *Calvin and the Consolidation of the Reformation in Geneva* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003)

### **Scottish Reformation:**

J.H.S. Burleigh, *A Church History of Scotland* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1960)

W. Ian Hazlett, *The Reformation in Britain and Ireland: An Introduction* (London: T&T Clark, 2003)

W. Ian Hazlett, ed. *Companion to the Reformation in Scotland* (Leiden: Brill, 2022)

Felicity Heal, *The Reformation in Britain and Ireland* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005)

Jane Dawson, *John Knox* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016)

William Maxwell, *The Liturgical Portions of John Knox's Genevan Service Book* (London: Faith Press, 1931)

James Kirk, *Patterns of Reform* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2000)

### **Scottish Church Government/Leadership**

W.L. Ainslie, *The Doctrines of Ministerial Order in the Reformed Churches of the 16th and 17th Centuries* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1940)

James K Cameron, ed. *The First Book of Discipline* (1560) (Edinburgh: St. Andrew Press, 1972)

James Kirk, ed. *The Second Book of Discipline* (1578) (Edinburgh: St. Andrew Press, 1980)

G.D. Henderson, *The Scottish Ruling Elder* (London: James Clarke, 1935)

### **Presbyterian Worship, Approach to Liturgy**

Louis F. Benson, *The English Hymn: Its Development and Use in Worship* (1915: reprinted Richmond, VA. John Knox Press, 19962).

Gordon Donaldson, *The Making of the Scottish Prayer Book of 1637* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1954)

William Maxwell, *The Liturgical Portions of John Knox's Genevan Service Book* (London: the Faith Press, 1931)

Donald Macleod, *Presbyterian Worship: Its Meaning and its Method* (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1966)

William McMillan, *The Worship of the Scottish Reformed Church 1550-1638* (London: James Clarke,

1931)

James Melton, *Presbyterian Worship in America: Changing Patterns Since 1787* (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1967)

Millar Patrick, *Four Centuries of Scottish Psalmody* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1949)

James Hastings Nichols, *Corporate Worship in the Reformed Tradition* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1968)

Greg Soderberg, *As Often as You Eat This Bread: Communion Frequency in English, Scottish and American Churches* (Berlin: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 2022).

### **The Puritan Age in Britain and America**

John Coffey and Paul C.H. Lim, eds. *The Cambridge Companion to Puritanism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008)

Polly Ha, *English Presbyterianism 1590-1640* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2011)

David D. Hall, *The Puritans: A Transatlantic History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2019)

### **Westminster Assembly, Confession, Catechisms**

Robert Letham, *The Westminster Assembly: Reading Its Theology in Context* (Phillipsburg, N.J., P&R, 2009)

Robert S. Paul, *The Assembly of the Lord: Politics and Religion in the Westminster Assembly* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1985)

Chad Van Dixhoorn, *God's Ambassadors: The Westminster Assembly and the Reformation of the English Pulpit* (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage, 2017)

### **Scottish Immigration to America**

T. M. Devine, *To the ends of the earth: Scotland's global diaspora, 1750-2010*. (London: Penguin 2012)

T.M. Devine. *The Scottish Clearances: A History of the Dispossessed, 1600–1900* (London: Allen Lane. 2018)

Michael Fry, *How the Scots Made America* (New York: Thomas Dunne, 2005)

### **Colonial Presbyterians**

Don Fortson, *Colonial Presbyterianism: Old Faith in a New Land* (Eugene, OR.: Wipf and Stock, 2007)

Leonard Trinterud, *The Forming of an American Tradition: A Re-Examination of Colonial Presbyterianism* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1949)

Ernest Trice Thompson, *Presbyterians in the South* (3 vols) (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1963-1972)

### **The Great Awakening**

Richard Bushman, *The Great Awakening: Documents of the Revival of Religion* (New York: Atheneum, 1969)

Edwin Gaustad, *The Great Awakening in New England* (New York: Harper & Row, 1957)

Thomas Kidd, *The Great Awakening: Roots of Evangelical Christianity in Colonial America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009)

Joseph Tracy, *The Great Awakening* (1841: reprinted Edinburgh: Banner, 1989)

### **Frontier Christianity**

Robert Caldwell, *Theologies of the American Revivalists: From Whitefield to Finney* (Downer's Grove: IVP, 2017)

Timothy Smith, *Revivalism and Social Reform on the Frontier* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1957)

Keith Hardman, *Charles Finney: Revivalist and Reformer* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1987)

Charles E. Hambrick-Stowe, *Charles Finney and the Spirit of American Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996)

### **The Civil War Era**

Luke E. Harlow, "The Civil War and the Making of Conservative American Evangelicalism" in Heath W. Carter and Laura Rominger Porter, eds. *Turning Points in the History of American Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2017)

Randall M. Miller, Harry S. Stout, and Charles Reagan Wilson, eds. *Religion and the American Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998)

Mark Noll, *The Civil War as a Theological Crisis* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006)

### **Tensions Arising from Higher Criticism and Theological Modernism**

Annette Aubert, *The German Roots of American 19th Century Theology* (New York: Oxford University

Press, 2013).

Matthew Bowman, *The Urban Pulpit: New York City and the Fate of Liberal Evangelicalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014)

D.G. Hart, *Defending the Faith: J. Gresham Machen and the Crisis of American Protestantism* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994)

William R. Hutchison, *The Modernist Impulse in American Protestantism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1976)

Lefferts Loetscher, *The Broadening Church* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1954)

Bradley Longfield, *The Presbyterian Controversy* ((New York: Oxford University Press, 1991)

Edwin Rian, *The Presbyterian Conflict* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1940)

Ned B. Stonehouse, *J. Gresham Machen: A Biographical Memoir* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1954)

### **Presbyterian Division and Reunion**

Don Fortson, *Liberty in Non-Essentials: The Story of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church* (Livonia, MI: EPC, 2016)

D.G. Hart and John Muether, *Fighting the Good Fight: A Brief History of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church* (Willow Grove, PA: OPC, 1995)

Bradley Longfield, *Presbyterians and American Culture* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 2013)

Sean Lucas, *For a Continuing Church: The Roots of the Presbyterian Church in America* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2015)

George P. Hutchinson, *The History Behind the Reformed Presbyterian Church Evangelical Synod* (Cherry Hill, N.J.: Mack Publishing, 1973)

### **Presbyterian Theological Education**

David B. Calhoun, *Princeton Seminary: Faith and Learning & The Majestic Testimony 2 vols* (Edinburgh: Banner, 1996)

David B. Calhoun, *Our Southern Zion: Columbia Theological Seminary 1828-1927* (Edinburgh: Banner, 2013)

James Moorhead, *Princeton Seminary in American Religion and Culture* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans,

2012)

John Muether, *A Mind for Truth: A Heart for God. The First Fifty Years of Reformed Theological Seminary* (Jackson: RTS, 2016)

### **Presbyterian Foreign Missions**

Bruce Hunt, *For a Testimony* (London: Banner of Truth, 1966)

W.R. Wheeler, *A Man Sent from God: A Biography of Robert E. Speer* (Westwood, NJ: Revell, 1956)

R, Pierce Beaver, *All Loves Excelling: American Protestant Women in Foreign Mission* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968)

William R. Hutchison, *Errand to the World: American Protestant Thought and Foreign Mission* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987)

### **Presbyterian Biography (listed in the alphabetical order of the subject, not the author)**

Lefferts A. Loetscher, *Archibald Alexander: Facing the Enlightenment and Pietism* (Westwood, CT: Greenwood Press, 1983)

Margaret Barnhouse, *That Man Barnhouse* (Wheaton: Tyndale House, 1983)

Stewart Brown, *Thomas Chalmers and the Godly Commonwealth* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983)

Donald Fraser, *Thomas Chalmers* (New York: Armstrong, 1882)

Hugh Watt, *Thomas Chalmers and the Disruption* (Glasgow: Thomas Nelson, 1947)

Jeffrey McDonald, *John Gerstner and the Renewal of Presbyterian and Reformed Evangelicalism in Modern America* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2017)

Henry Justin Ferris, *Francis Grimke: Portrait of a Black Puritan* (1970).

See also chapters in: Thabiti Anyabwile, *The Faithful Preacher: Recapturing the Vision of Three Pioneering African-American Preachers* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2007),

and Hugh T. Kerr, ed. *Sons of the Prophets: Leaders in Protestantism from Princeton Seminary* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963)

Anthony Carter, *Black and Reformed: Seeing God's Sovereignty in the African-American Experience* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2016)

Paul Gutjahr, *Charles Hodge: Guardian of American Orthodoxy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011)

Andrew HOFFECKER, *Charles Hodge: The Pride of Princeton* (Phillipsburg: P&R, 2011)

Collin Hansen, *Timothy Keller: His Intellectual and Spiritual Development* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2023)

Jane Dawson, *John Knox* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016)

Elizabeth Whitely, *Plain Mr. Knox* (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1961).

D.G. Hart, *Defending the Faith: J. Gresham Machen and the Crisis of American Protestantism* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press)

Ned B. Stonehouse, *J. Gresham Machen: A Biographical Memoir* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1954)

David B. Calhoun, *Pleading for a Reformation Vision: William Childs Robinson* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 2013)

Stephen Nichols, *R.C. Sproul: A Life* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2021)

### GRADING CRITERIA AND ASSESSMENT RUBRIC

A to A-	B to B-	C to C-	D to D-
Correct spelling and grammar/punctuation	Minor errors in spelling or grammar/punctuation	Multiple errors in spelling or grammar/punctuation per page	Difficult to read due to English writing errors
Smooth writing that provides for effective and efficient reading	Writing is acceptable, but not as organized and coherent	Writing is not smooth, sometimes confusing and inconsistent	Writing lacks clarity, focus, structure, and is incoherent
Person and format are proper for assignment	Person and format are inconsistent	Person and format are not appropriate	Person and format are totally inappropriate
Scripture, paraphrases, quotes, and summaries are appropriately used, cited, and clearly supports main argument	Scripture, paraphrases, quotes, and summaries are appropriate but need more depth and use of critical thinking	Scripture, paraphrases, quotes, and summaries are inadequate for main argument and do not reflect understanding	Scripture, paraphrases, quotes, and summaries are improperly used, over used, under used, or cited in error
Paper completely conforms to Turabian's <i>Manual for Writers</i>	Paper generally conforms to Turabian's <i>Manual for Writers</i>	Paper somewhat conforms to Turabian's <i>Manual for Writers</i>	Paper does not conform to Turabian's <i>Manual for Writers</i>

## BTS Outcomes Evaluation

Please rank each outcome on a scale of 1-5

**1: this outcome is not covered in this class**

**2: this outcome is only touched on in this class**

**3: this outcome is discussed in conjunction with class material**

**4: this outcome lightly assessed as part of course assessment (one assignment)**

**5: this outcome is fully integrated into the assessment of this course (multiple assignments)**

1. Scripture: Students will effectively articulate the truth of Scripture and Scripture as truth, engaged with learning biblical knowledge and reformed principles of the supremacy of Scripture as God's word.
2. Reformed Theology: Students will be able to engage and reproduce the primary and essential elements of Reformed Theology.
3. Local Church: Students will be engaged in applied ministry projects in the local church
4. Wisdom: Students will grow in character; increasing in their demonstration of wisdom and its fruits.
5. Discipleship: Students will be able to understand and articulate the nature and importance of discipleship—both ordinary (means of grace) and extraordinary (biblical counseling).
6. Communication: Students will grow in the efficacy of their communication (articulation, teaching/speaking, and preaching—respective to various departments) both in content knowledge and rhetorical strategies.
7. Worldview: Students will demonstrate a growing ability to apply God's word to all spheres of life, evidenced through class discussion and other assigned assessments.
8. Leadership: Students will grow in their understanding of godly leadership and ability to lead others in service of the local church.

Outcome	Rank	Rationale (one sentence)
Scripture	3	While Scripture is referenced for evaluating historical and theological developments, the primary focus is on Presbyterian history rather than direct biblical exegesis.
Reformed Theology	5	The course is deeply rooted in Presbyterian and Reformed theological heritage, engaging with doctrinal distinctives and their historical formation.
Local Church	3	The role of the local church life is discussed. The students sees himself or herself as a member of Christ's one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church.
Wisdom	4	Students are encouraged to draw wisdom from historical case studies and apply it to current ministry and cultural contexts.
Discipleship	3	Discipleship is discussed indirectly through historical examples and the application of Reformed ecclesiology, but not as a primary focus.
Communication	3	Students practice articulating historical and theological developments in writing and discussion, though formal communication skill-building is secondary.

Worldview	4	The course helps students shape a Reformed worldview through historical reflection on church unity and doctrinal development.
Leadership	3	Leadership lessons are drawn from historical Presbyterian figures and decisions, but leadership skill development is not the main emphasis.