



MARANATHA

BAPTIST SEMINARY

GPA 614 BAPTIST POLITY
Spring 2020
Dr. Larry R. Oats

Course Description – A study of the principles and practices of a Baptist church. The course will examine the distinctives of historic Baptist churches, the governmental structure and officers of a local church, the discipline of the membership, the responsibility of a church in society, and trends in church polity in our movement.

Course Objectives

1. To gain an understanding of the New Testament principles which govern church conduct, i.e. to understand the historic Baptist Distinctives.
2. To develop an apologetic for Baptist doctrine, principles, and practices.
3. To comprehend historically the use of these principles among Baptist churches.
4. To develop methodologies to lead a congregation in an effective ministry based on these principles.
5. To establish an approach to evaluating current trends and their consistency with Scriptural principles, particularly various approaches to “doing church” and the issue of the role of elders in the local church.

Course Reading

Read the following. Read enough additional material to accomplish total reading at least 1200 pages. This may include reading for your research paper.

1. Richard V. Clearwaters, *The Local Church of the New Testament* (Minneapolis: Central Baptist Seminary, 2001). This is accessible free at <http://www.centalseminary.edu/resources/books>. This is a Kindle book. You will need to have a copy of Kindle on your computer, tablet, phone, or iPad; the Kindle app is free at <http://www.amazon.com/gp/feature.html?ie=UTF8&docId=1000493771>.
2. Edward T. Hiscox, *Principles and Practices for Baptist Churches* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, n.d.). Chapters 1-8; 11, 12. This is available free at http://books.google.com/books?id=8vmopS4_oGsC&pg=PA7&source=gbs_toc_r&cad=4#v=onepage&q&f=false.
3. Mark Dever and Paul Alexander, *The Deliberate Church: Building Your Ministry on the Gospel* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2005). Read Chapters 4-10.
4. Do sufficient additional reading to bring your total reading for the class to at least 1200 pages.

Course Requirements

1. Complete the required reading.
2. Read the weekly course notes and the textbook reading as assigned.
3. Write a research 20-25 page paper on any area of Baptist Polity that interests you. Due date will be on the Course Chart. You must use the Maranatha standard paper format and include a bibliography of at least 12 sources. Journal research is expected. Demonstrate how Baptists have historically thought through the issue; biblically defend your position.
4. Develop a teaching outline from which you could teach a series of Sunday School lessons on one of the following topics. The topic cannot duplicate the topic for your research paper.
 - a. The Requirements for the Pastor/Elder in the New Testament
 - b. The Responsibilities/Job Descriptions of Pastors in the New Testament
 - c. The Responsibilities/Job Descriptions of Deacons in the New Testament
 - d. The Responsibilities/Job Descriptions of Church Members in the New Testament
5. Complete the final exam, which will cover the reading and the class notes. It will be open book/notes.
6. Submit a summary of all reading completed for the class, including the required reading and reading for the research paper. Report the author, title (for a journal, title of article, title of journal, volume number and date), beginning page, ending page, and total number of pages read. Include a final total. Submit the reading report at the same time that you complete your final exam. There are Reading Report forms in the Research Module.
7. Late Work: You are now studying at a graduate level; expectations are, therefore, high. The Seminary expects you to perform your academic work in a timely fashion. The development of time management skills while in Seminary will greatly benefit you in the future, both in your personal life and in your ministry. Ministry involves managing numerous activities at one time. You are preparing for a life ministry which will focus primarily on serving people. This demands a serious consideration of your own schedule and the schedules of those whom you serve. To encourage you in the development and strengthening of your time management skills, the Seminary has established a Late Academic Work Policy. This policy is the minimum penalty for work not turned in on time. The professor may impose a greater penalty, but not a lesser. Work not turned in on the day it is due will have its grade reduced 4% for each calendar day that it is late. The Seminary realizes that serious extenuating circumstances, such as a lengthy illness or a death in the family, may prevent some students from completing class projects on time. Requests for appropriate extensions for these types of serious circumstances may be made to the Seminary Academic Senate, via a written petition submitted to the Seminary Office. Extensions will only be given for valid excuses. Everyone is busy; therefore, being busy is not an excuse for an extension. Projects turned in under an allowed extension will not be graded higher than a B.

Grading

Grading

Research Paper	30%
Sunday School Lesson	20%
Final Exam	20%
Reading	15%
Participation	15%

Grading Scale

94-100	A
93-92	A-
91-90	B+
85-89	B
84-83	B-
82-81	C+
75-80	C
74-73	C-
64-72	D
63-0	F

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Digital Resources: *Classic Baptist Books*, available at Logos.com, contains numerous books on Baptist polity.