



CA-CRT21

Presbyterian Polity

Unit Outline

About this Unit Outline

This unit outline contains information essential to finding your way around the unit **Presbyterian Polity**. It provides a structure for your learning, giving details of lecture topics, assessment requirements, and key resources.

SEMESTER 2 2020

Important notice

While every care has been taken to ensure accuracy in the information given below, **it is the personal responsibility of each student to check the current QTC Handbook**, a copy of which may be found in the Library.

It is very important that students plan their time carefully to ensure that reading and especially assignments receive adequate attention and so as to prevent a bottleneck of work at the end of the semester.

It is very important that all quoted material in assignments be properly footnoted and acknowledged. Although this unit is not taught for ACT credit, the attention of students is drawn to the ACT's **Academic Misconduct Policy**, as well as ACT **Late Penalties Policy** and **Extensions Policy**, all of which are available on the ACT's website. Failure to comply with the standards required will incur penalties as outlined in the relevant ACT Policies.

The attention of students is also drawn to the section in the current ACT Handbook, headed "**Guidelines for Essays in Coursework Units**" (see also the QTC Student Handbook). All essays and assignments should comply with these standards.

NOTE: Onsite delivery of this unit has been approved subject to relevant government restrictions due to Coronavirus being lifted.

Information about this unit

Unit description

This unit is an introduction to the polity (church government) practised within the Presbyterian Church. The unit touches upon the Biblical principles and historical basis for Presbyterian Church government. However, this unit primarily focuses on how these Biblical and historical principles are used both generally and specifically to form Presbyterian Church government as practised within the Presbyterian Church of Australia.

Learning Outcomes

- (a) To introduce students to the Biblical and historical basis for the practise of a Presbyterian form of polity
- (b) To introduce students to the organisational “culture” of the Presbyterian Church of Australia
- (c) To equip candidates for the ministry from the Presbyterian Church of Australia to work with understanding, efficiently and effectively within the “culture” of the Presbyterian Church of Australia

How this Unit Contributes to the Course

The Church of Jesus Christ has a visible presence upon earth. The visible church requires a structure to allow it to function as the body of Christ on earth and as it relates to the community around about it.

The nature of this structure has been debated because of differences in our understanding of the Bible, the history of the church, and the circumstances that each denomination and congregation finds itself.

This unit will be a peripheral unit for students who are not candidates for the ministry of the Presbyterian Church of Australia. It will enhance the core units of their course by exploring one of the denominational distinctives of the Presbyterian Church of Australia.

Pre-requisites and Co-requisites

This unit is a core unit for students who are ***candidates for the ministry of the Presbyterian Church of Australia***. This course is offered by the Queensland Theological College to fulfil the requirements of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Australia. Every candidate for the ministry of the Presbyterian Church of Australia must successfully complete this course. There are no pre-requisites for this unit.

How this unit is organized & what we expect of you

This unit will include two hours of lectures per week throughout the semester of 13 weeks. Students will be provided lecture outlines but it is recommended that students take relevant notes.

Students may be asked to participate in workshops during lecture periods, including being asked to discuss the strengths and weakness inherent within aspects of Presbyterian Polity.

Teaching staff

UNIT COORDINATOR

Rev Dr Andrew Bain

P 07 3062 6939

E abain@qtc.edu.au

Please feel free to contact Andrew if you have any problems or concerns about the unit.

Other Key Contacts

Registrar's office

Contact the Registrar's office for any queries about which unit to enrol in next, if you wish to change your enrolment, defer due to illness, family circumstances etc., or request an extension for your assessment (criteria apply).

P 07 3062 6939

E registrar@qtc.edu.au

Moodle functions and queries

Contact the Registrar for help if something on Moodle is not working, if you need help using Moodle etc.

P 07 3062 6939

E registrar@qtc.edu.au

Library/Resources

Contact the Librarian for help with finding resources for your assessment, finding full-text database articles, for help with logging into the library databases and catalogue, and for help with how to renew a book for longer or place a hold on a book currently out to another person. Also contact the library for any queries about audio recordings of your class on Moodle.

P 07 3062 6939

E library@qtc.edu.au

Unit timetable: topics & teaching and learning activities

WEEK	LECTURE TOPIC	READINGS / REQUIREMENTS
WEEK 1	No lectures	
WEEK 2	No lectures	
WEEK 3	No lectures	
WEEK 4	Presbyterian Polity: An Overview of the PCA, PCQ, and the key elements of Polity in the PCA	
ESSAY WRITING WEEK		
WEEK 5	PCQ Polity: Why? Theological & Biblical bases for Presbyterian Polity	
WEEK 6	The Session	PCQ Code Chapter 3
WEEK 7	Congregational Issues	PCQ Code Chapter 1, 2, 9, 10
WEEK 8	(No class: PCQ Assembly Thurs-Sat)	
WEEK 9	The Presbytery & Ministers	PCQ Code Chapters 4, 6-8
HOLIDAYS		
WEEK 10	State Assembly	PCQ Code Chapter 5
WEEK 11	PCQ Regulations	PCQ Code Regulations, Constitutions, Guidelines & Forms
WEEK 12	General Assembly of Australia	GAA Basis of Union, Articles of Agreement, Regulations, Code of Discipline
WEEK 13	Standing Orders, Overtures, Petitions	PCQ Standing Orders; PCQ Code Chapters 11-14
ASSESSMENT WEEKS		

The program above may need to be varied, in terms of which topics are covered on which dates, depending on the availability of specialist teachers within PCQ who are not based at QTC.

CA-CRT21 Assessments

Assessments are submitted online via Moodle.

In order to pass the unit, you must submit all assessment pieces and attain a mark of at least 50% for the unit as a whole.

Unless an extension has been applied for and granted in accordance with the Policy found in the QTC Handbook, where a student submits an assessment past its due date, in accordance with the ACT **Late Penalties** Policy, the assessment marks will be reduced at the rate of **3%** of the total possible marks for the assessment item **per calendar day**, up to 14 days late, after which point the mark awarded shall be zero.

Your submitted assessment items must also be within **10% of the required word limit**, and failure to meet this requirement shall result in a penalty of **10%** of the total possible mark being deducted. **Please see the QTC Handbook for full details on what is included within your total word count.** QTC seeks to prepare you for ministry, and in ministry delivering presentations on time and within an acceptable length are essential skills.

Assessments are to be submitted before 30 November 2020. Please inform Andrew Bain what due dates will best suit your schedule.

ASSESSMENT TASK	DESCRIPTION
<p>1. Scenario: What is “Presbyterian”? 25% of unit total</p>	<p>You are in your first year serving in a church after you have been licensed. A small group of newer arrivals in your church, who have been attending for a few months, are considering formally asking to become members of the congregation. They ask you to briefly explain (in terms which they will be able to understand!) how Presbyterian churches in Australia are organised and governed, and why they are organised and governed in this way (theologically and biblically). You have around ten minutes to give them an answer. Please record yourself giving a verbal answer to this imaginary group (you do not need to record yourself speaking to a real group of people from your church!) Audio recording is sufficient: video is not required. You should speak for at least 8 minutes, and no more than 12 minutes.</p>

<p>2. Session Minutes 20% of unit total</p>	<p>In your first charge, both you and the Session Clerk are new to your roles. The morning after your first Session meeting, the new Session Clerk emails you the draft minutes from last night's meeting, and (nervously!) asks you to check them, indicating that he is pretty sure that he has made some mistakes - some of which might be important. Please review the draft Session minutes (fictional minutes to be provided by the lecturer), and mark-up your edits and change in Word to correct the minutes. Where serious errors have been made, and/or errors which might have important consequences, please add a short note explaining what the problem is and any negative consequences which might have occurred if the minutes were not corrected.</p>
<p>3. Roles in a Local Charge 30% of unit total</p>	<p>After a few months serving in a Presbyterian church in 2021, it becomes clear that several key members, as well as many others, are either confused, wrong, or highly uncertain about who / which body to ask about different decisions and other matters. For example your church treasurer has recently received (and answered) several questions about the best Kids Church teaching materials to use, your Session Clerk has taken to giving approvals to some members for expenditures from the budget, and you as the new minister seem to be expected by some members (including an elder) to personally arrange and manage repairs to the church building. Confusion, tension, and arguments around the church are the result. It is agreed by the Session that you should produce a short guide for members explaining "who to see about what." Please prepare:</p> <p>a) A list of common questions/issues which members might have, and alongside each item indicate which person or body in the church they should contact about this - the minister, the Session, the Committee of Management (COM), or any others (e.g. Treasurer, etc.). You should include between 10 and 18 items in your list (notional word count: around 150 words, but you won't be held to a 10% variation on this - significantly shorter or longer will be fine, provided that your list is very clear and easy to understand).</p> <p>b) A covering note for an email which will include the above list in (a) as an attachment. Your covering note should be around 500 words, explain the basic principles involved in the list and summarise the key roles of the Session, the COM, and the Minister, and briefly indicate why this is important for the ministry and mission of the church.</p>

4. End of Semester Quiz
25% of unit total

This will be available online, in Moodle, from 3 November until 30 November 2020. It is designed to be completed after you have finished all of the classes for the unit. You will answer 20 multiple-choice questions covering a range of topics from across the unit, but with a focus on those topics not covered by the first three assessments above (e.g. Presbytery, State Assembly, Commissions and Committees). You will be able to complete the Quiz at any time you choose between 3 November and 30 November, but once you start the Quiz you will have only 60 minutes to complete the multiple-choice questions. If you have attended all of the classes (and listened to the recordings of any classes which you have missed), and engaged with what we have covered in class, you should be able to complete the quiz after only a small amount of revision.

Learning Resources

Required Textbooks

PCQ Standing Orders and Rules and Forms of Procedure - Edition 7

GAA Constitution Practice and Procedure (2013 Edition)

The (Westminster Assembly) Form of Presbyterian Church Government.

Witherow, Thomas. *The Apostolic Church: which is it?* 5th ed. Edinburgh: Free Church of Scotland, 1978.

Bradshaw, F. M. *Basic Documents on Presbyterian Polity*. Melbourne, VIC: Christian Education Committee, Presbyterian Church of Australia, 1984.

Recommended reading

Burke, David A., and Paul F. Cooper, eds. *Read in the Light: The 1901 Declaratory Statement of the Presbyterian Church of Australia*. Stanhope Gardens, NSW: Eider Books, 2019.

ACT Standards: Grades

Grades in assessment instruments are awarded in the following categories-

Grade	Score	GPA
Fail (F)	0-49%	0
Pass (P)	50-57%	1
Pass+ (P+)	58-64%	1.5
Credit (C)	65-74%	2
Distinction (D)	75-84%	3
High Distinction (HD)	85+%	4

Although this unit is not being taught for ACT Credit, students will receive a grade and score for this unit using the ACT grading categories. This Score and GPA will be recorded on their PCA Candidates Course transcript received at Graduation.