



MARANATHA
BAPTIST SEMINARY

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DOCTOR OF MINISTRY
DLE 810 – Baptist Polity
Dr. Larry R. Oats
January 10-14, 2022

COURSE DESCRIPTION

A study of the historic view of the function of a Baptist church with special attention given to the Biblical principles underlying those views. Special attention will be given to current trends in Baptist polity.

COURSE TEXTBOOKS:

Edward T. Hiscox. *Principles and Practices for Baptist Churches*. Grand Rapids: Kregel Classics, 1980.

Amazon has a Kindle version for \$.99.

This is the historic standard for Baptist churches in the North. This was first written in 1894. While there are numerous details in the book that are out of date, the principles remain intact.

Mark Dever, ed. *Polity: Biblical Arguments on How to Conduct Church Life* (A Collection of Historic Baptist Documents). Washington, DC: Nine Marks Ministry, 2001.

This is available at no cost at <https://founders.org/polity/>

Dever is a Southern Baptist and the collection of articles in his book are mainly from the Southern Baptist perspective.

Kevin Bauder. *Baptist Distinctives and New Testament Church Order*. Arlington Heights: Regular Baptist Press, 2012.

This is available at Amazon.com or Regular Baptist Press.

When people identify themselves with a label like “Lutheran,” “Presbyterian,” or “Baptist,” they’re really identifying themselves with a combination of convictions. The labels help distinguish one set of convictions from another. Bauder says, “Increasingly, church members display an astonishing lack of knowledge about just what Baptists believe.” In *Baptist Distinctives*, he not only spells out the beliefs that make Baptists different from others, he shows the Biblical basis, discusses differences between Baptist groups, and explains how the Baptist distinctives affect believers’ lives, especially their church life. If the Biblical, “Baptist” convictions are worth holding, they are worth understanding and standing for.

Paul Jackson. *The Doctrine and Administration of the Church*. Arlington Heights: Regular Baptist Press, 1980.

This has been the standard polity book for the GARBC for the past three decades.

There are several used copies available at Amazon.com.

Do additional reading in Baptist Polity. Total reading for the class should be a minimum of 2000 pages. Keep track of your reading using one of the Reading Reports in the Research Module in my.mbu.edu.

PURPOSE OF THE COURSE

Doctor of Ministry Outcomes. By the time a student finishes the Doctor of Ministry degree, he should be able to demonstrate clearly and biblically the following outcomes.

1. Articulate and apply Biblical and secular models of leadership to a ministry context. Graduates will be able to formulate and describe a personal philosophy/style of Church Leadership and be able to defend it as appropriate to New Testament congregational polity.
2. Effectively communicate God's Word in both an interactive teaching venue and a public preaching setting so that Biblical content is doctrinally accurate, informative, and sustains listener engagement and attention.
3. Demonstrate the ability to effectively plan, organize and deploy Gospel outreach and discipleship ministry programs for a typical small, medium or large congregation.
4. Display essential skills and knowledge of Pastoral Leadership and preaching through the production of an integrated project that includes a motivational sermon(s), a formal article and a practical outline of a proposed program that would seek to address an issue, problem, or opportunity for improvement common to a typical Baptist church.

Course Objectives. This course is focused primarily on Outcomes Number 1. By the end of this class, the student should be able to:

1. Demonstrate an understanding of the characteristics of good polity by examining his current church structure and administration in light of the reading and discussion in class.
2. Analyze current trends in church polity and administration in light of Scripture, especially the current issues of the plurality of elders, elder rule, rejection of church membership, and the impact of continuing revelation in other denominations on the classic Baptist reliance on the sole authority of Scripture.
3. Understand how to modify his church polity and administration when it conflicts with biblical teaching.
4. In addition, the student should learn to maintain a gracious spirit toward those whose polity does agree with his own, except where those differences are predicated on the clear teaching of Scripture.

CLASS SCHEDULE and ASSIGNMENTS

1. Pre-class (Dec 13 – Jan 9):
 - a. Read through each of the textbooks. Submit a report that contains a minimum of five main ideas from each chapter of each book, excluding Hiscox; instead simply peruse Hiscox briefly. Use the Alternate Paper Template from the Research Module in the myMaranatha class. Download the template, “save as” to your computer, and then begin your work. Upload this report to myMaranatha. We will discuss this in class, so have a copy on your laptop or tablet, or print a copy to bring to class with you.
 - b. Identify one area of Polity that concerns you the most. Write a brief explanation of the problem and the reason for your concern. Again use the Alternate Paper Template from the Research Module in the myMaranatha class. Download the template, “save as” to your computer, and then begin your work. Upload this report to myMaranatha. We will discuss this in class, so have a copy on your laptop or tablet, or print a copy to bring to class with you.
2. Class (Jan 10-14)
 - a. We will meet from 8:30 am to about 4:00 pm each day, with time out for lunch and breaks, Monday through Friday. Maranatha is located a little over an hour from the Milwaukee and Madison airports. Plan your travel accordingly. If you are taking the class virtually from home, please be sure to preserve this time so that you do not miss any class. Limited housing is available on campus. Contact Guest Relations at 920-206-2370 for information on airport transportation and housing.
 - b. In class on the first day we will discuss the material from the textbooks.
 - c. On the second through the fourth day, we will discuss the key components of Baptist Polity.
 - d. On the last day of class, we will discuss the areas of contemporary concern and your concerns, if that material was not covered in the preceding days of class. You can raise any questions that are still lingering. We will also talk about your class projects.
3. Post Class (Jan 15 – April 8):
 - a. Project
 - i. Determine which area of polity you desire to study more fully. Spend some time reading to get an idea of an area of personal interest. Post your choice to the class site no later than January 28.
 - ii. Study the history, philosophy, and theology of the area of polity you chose and fully develop a series of at least four Sunday School lessons or Sunday evening sermons to

teach your people on the topic. Include the teacher's notes and handouts for the people. If you produce any other teaching aids (Powerpoints, etc.), submit them as well. Also include a plan for evaluating the effectiveness of the lessons. Submit your actual lessons, plus any additional research, handouts, or anything pertinent to the topic, to the class site no later than February 25.

- iii. No later than February 27, begin teaching or preaching through your lessons. It is permissible to begin earlier, even before you have all your lessons completed.
- iv. By March 28, submit a review of the results of your teaching. This may include an assessment you used to start your class and the results of the same assessment at the end. It may include interviews with students. It may include student evaluations. You should decide before you start the project how you will evaluate its effectiveness.
- v. During the last two weeks of class, beginning March 28, you will evaluate the lessons and results of at least two of your fellow students. Identify the strengths and weaknesses of the report and what you would do to change the process.
- vi. By the end of the class, April 8, submit a final reading report, indicating all reading done for the class. Use one of the Reading Reports in the research module. Expected reading is a minimum of 2000 pages, including the textbooks.

GRADING

Textbook Reports	10%
Reading	5%
Class Participation	5%
Project	50%
Review of Results	20%
Evaluation of Other Projects	10%

GRADING SCALE	
94-100	A
92-93	A-
90-91	B+
85-89	B
83-84	B-
81-82	C+
75-80	C

73-74	C-
64-72	D
0-63	F

ADA STATEMENT

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, the law requires that all students with disabilities be given a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact the Academic Success Program Director, in the Library, (ph. 920/206-2340) or email academicsuccess@mbu.edu.

CONTACTS

PROFESSORS:

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IT SUPPORT

920-206-2322

There is a link on my.mbu.edu to email IT Support

TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

There is a link on the class page to IT and Support. Check there for minimum expectations for connecting to the live class.

Course Calendar

Textbook Reading Summaries Due	January 9, 2022
Polity Topic Choice Due	January 28, 2022
Lessons/Any Teaching Aids Due	February 25, 2022
Review of Teaching Results Due	March 28, 2022
Evaluations of 2+ Student's Lessons/Projects Due	April 8, 2022
Final Reading Report	April 8, 2022

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Alter, James A. and Dolton W. Sidney Robertson II. *Why Baptists?* Ohio: Ancient Baptist Press, 2008.

The authors state that the book focuses on “the significance of Baptist principles in an ecumenical age. “Written by two pastors from a conservative/fundamentalist point of view.

Beck, Rosalee, Bill Pinson, James Semple, and Ebbie Smith. *Beliefs Important to Baptists*. Dallas: Baptistway Press, 2001; 2nd ed., 2011.

A Bible study with a study devoted to each of several basic Baptist distinctives. The material in this book is also available in four booklets designed for Bible study with both a student and teacher version available. They are available from Baptistway Press.

Carroll, B.H. *Baptists and Their Doctrines*. Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1995.

This is one of the volumes in the Library of Baptist Classics published by Broadman and Holman and provides a summary of doctrinal beliefs by an influential leader in the Southern Baptist Convention.

Deweese, Charles W., ed. *Defining Baptist Convictions: Guidelines for the Twenty-First Century*. Franklin, TN: Providence House Publishers, 1996.

A collection of articles by Baptist leaders, each article dealing with a particular Baptist doctrine, polity, practice, or issue.

Garrett, Jr., James Leo. *Baptist Church Discipline*, rev. ed. Paris, Arkansas: The Baptist Standard Bearer, n.d.

First published in 1962 by Broadman Press and later revised by the author, the small book discusses some of the history and practices of Baptist church discipline with a focus on the 1773 Summary of Church Discipline by the Charleston Baptist Association. Garrett was a Southern Baptist Progressive.

Garrett, Jr., James Leo. *Baptist Theology: A Four-Century Study*. Macon, Georgia: Mercer University Press, 2009.

A 743-page scholarly volume in the Baptist Series.

George, Timothy and David S. Dockery. *Theologians of the Baptist Tradition*. Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2001.

Essays by various current Baptists on Baptist theologians from John Gill to Millard Erickson.

George, Timothy and Denise, eds. *J. M. Frost: Baptist Why and Why Not*. Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1996.

A part of the Baptist Classics series, the editors have included chapters not only by J. M. Frost, but also by other leading Baptists of the late 1800s and early 1900s. The chapters deal with basic Baptist beliefs and also with issues related to Sunday School and Baptist state and national conventions.

Hammett, John S. *Biblical Foundations for Baptist Churches: A Contemporary Ecclesiology*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Kregel Publications, 2008.

Majors on Baptist distinctives in local churches. Contains helpful discussion of denominational differences in church governance.

Jeter, Jeremiah B. and others. *Baptist Principles Reset*. Richmond, Virginia: The Religious Herald Company, 1902.

Contains a series of articles by Jeter on Baptist doctrines followed by articles on various subjects by outstanding Baptists in America in the nineteenth century.

Larkin, Clarence. *Why I Am a Baptist*. Philadelphia: The American Baptist Publication Society, 1887. Reprinted by CrossReach Publications in 2017.

The author was a layman in another denomination but his study of Baptist doctrine led him to become a Baptist and eventually an American Baptist pastor. The book explains why he made this change. He became well known for his views on dispensationalism.

Maring, Norman H. and Winthrop S. Hudson. *A Baptist Manual of Polity and Practice*. Rev. ed. Valley Forge: Judson Press, 1991.

New Testament and historical sources to explore the Baptist understanding of church.

Mullins, E. Y. *Baptist Beliefs*. Valley Forge: Judson Press, 1925.

A concise discussion of major Baptist beliefs by one of Baptists most influential Progressive Southern Baptist scholars.

Nettles, Tom J. and Russell D. Moore, eds. *Why I am a Baptist*. Nashville: B & H Publishing Group, 2005.

A collection of relatively brief chapters by self-termed conservative Baptists, including pastors, professors, denominational executives, and theologians from the United States and other countries. The editors indicate that it is a response to the book by the same title from a so-called moderate Baptist point of view.

Norman, R. Stanton. *The Baptist Way*. Nashville: Broadman & Homan Publishers, 2005.

Majors on the doctrines and polities that make Baptists a distinct denomination with a focus on church.

Norman, R. Stanton. *More Than Just a Name: Preserving Our Baptist Identity*. Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2001.

A discussion of Baptist distinctives with an extensive bibliography in a relatively brief format of less than two hundred pages.

Pinson, Jr., William M. *Issues that Test Baptist Polity*. Brentwood, TN: Baptist History and Heritage Society, 2003.

Brief articles on current tests of four major Baptist polities with historical and biblical information.

Shurden, Walter. *The Baptist Identity: Four Fragile Freedoms*. Macon, Georgia: Smyth & Helwys, 1993.

Explores biblical, historical, and contemporary aspects of Bible, soul, religious, and church freedom.

Staton, Jr., Cecil P., ed. *Why I Am a Baptist: Reflections on Being Baptist in the 21st Century*. Macon, Georgia: Smyth & Helwys, 1999.

Twenty-Six Baptist leaders, female and male, Black and White, from a variety of positions and places contributed to this volume, edited by the President and Publisher of Smyth & Helwys Publishing who also served as Associate Provost for Academic Publications and Associate Professor at Mercer University.

Sullivan, James L. *Baptist Polity as I See It*. Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1998.

A long-time Baptist pastor and denominational leader sets forth his views on Baptist polity.

Tuck, William Powell. *Our Baptist Tradition*. Macon, Georgia: Smyth & Helwys Publishing, Inc., 2005.

Majors on four “traditions” of Baptists: authority of scripture, autonomy of the local church, priesthood of believers, religious liberty. Contains a selected bibliography and a leader’s guide for study.