



Fall 2017

Core Course: American Baptist History and Polity

Instructor: Rev. James L. Lufkin

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Location: First Baptist Church, Gardiner (The location of the course can be adjusted for the needs of the students.)

Time: Thursday evenings, Starting in September – 6-9

Required Text: Maring, Norman H. and Hudson S. Hudson, A Baptist Manual of Polity and Practice, Judson Press, Valley Forge, PA, 2012.

Chute, Finn, & Haykin, The Baptist Story, From English Sect to Global Movement, B&H Publishing Group, Nashville, TN, 2015.

COURSE DESCRIPTION – A study of the principles, practices, and administration of a Baptist church from a biblical and historical perspective. Special attention will be given to Baptist historical roots, development of Baptist historical diversity in America, and the place of Baptist in addressing social issues. The course will also examine the distinctives of historic Baptist churches, the governing structure and officers of a local church, the responsibility and participation of the church in society, and changing trends in church polity.

COURSE GOALS

1. Students will develop an understanding of the New Testament principles which undergird church life, i.e. to understand the historic Baptist Distinctives.
2. Students will gain an understand historically the use of these Bible principles among Baptist churches.
3. Together students will develop an appreciation and understanding of Baptist doctrine, principles, and practices. Each student should be able to present and defend the biblical basis for baptistic doctrine, principles, and practices.

4. Throughout the classes students will learn and share various methodologies of leading a congregation in an effective ministry based on these principles
5. Approaches to evaluating current trends in Baptist theology and church leadership will themselves be evaluated. There should be a close look at “doing church” and the issue of the role of pastoral ministry and local church roles and responsibilities within the local church.
6. Student papers will reflect their familiarity and comfort with each of the class topics.

COURSE APPROACH

1. Your readings outside of class and class assignments will be central to much of the class content.
2. We will discuss the class readings and appropriate Scripture references. Students will participate in the leadership of the discussion on assigned topics.
3. Questions, comments, and discussion are always appropriate.
4. Media will be used in class to supplement class readings and assignments.

OTHER RESOURCES

1. If available, a copy of your local church’s by-laws and constitution should be brought to the class.
2. Access to the internet for such resources as the ABCOM Constitution, By-laws and other policies and statements is needed.
3. Copies of the Apostles’ Creed and Nicene

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Participate in the class discussion.
2. Complete the required reading. Submit a summary of reading completed for the class, including the required and supplementary reading should be maintained and passed in at the last class.
3. Preparation of a class that you could use in your local church. Choose one of the following.
 - a. Baptist biblical distinctives
 - b. Why am I a Baptist
 - c. Historical roots of association life

Pass in completed written assignments. (These should be emailed in advance of the class, if possible.) Papers should be at least 3 typed pages of 1 ½ line spacing. If you could email the papers before the class date it will be helpful for class discussion.

- 1) Class One and Two – Early Baptist Roots
 - a) Maring – Chapters 1, - 5 (pp. 1 – 108)
- 2) Class Two
 - a) Chute – Chapters 1-4

- b) Paper Due – **Topic: Baptist Roots of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century.**
- 3) Class Three – Membership and Ministry
 - a) Maring - Chapters 6, 7, 8 (p.109 – 166)
 - b) Chute – Chapters 5 and 6
 - c) Paper Due – Chose one of the following topics:
 - i) The leadership role of women in the church, biblically, historically, and today. Back up your paper with scripture and denominational resources. (Paper should be at least 2 typed pages of 1 ½ line spacing.)
 - ii) Develop a course outline for training and preparation for local church membership.
- 4) Class Four – The Baptist Distinctives Applied
 - a) Chute – Chapters 7 & 8
 - b) Paper Due – Topic: Various model of church leadership both laity and clergy. (Paper should be at least 2 typed pages of 1 ½ line spacing.)
- 5) Class Five – Where we are today
 - a) Chute – Chapters 9 & 10
 - b) Maring – Chapters 8, 9, 10 (pp. 167 – 257)
 - c) Paper Due – Topic: Overview of the work of ABCOM and the associational life of American Baptists in Maine. (Paper should be at least 2 typed pages of 1 ½ line spacing.)
- 6) Class Six – The future of American Baptist
 - a) Chute – Chapters 11, 12, 13
 - b) Maring – Chapters 11, 12 (pp. 258 – 342)
 - c) Final Paper Due: Choose one of the following (5 typed pages of 1 ½ line spacing). Material for this paper should be gathered and prepared throughout the entire course.
 - i) What are the differences between Calvinistic and Armenian beliefs. Include a look at the Free Baptists in Maine.
 - ii) History of a local church; preferably a history of the students own church. This may be drawn from an existing local history but should connect the points covered in the class.

Class papers should display a clear knowledge of the topic and be written in a clear and concise style. Quotations sources should be noted. Please type the papers and email them, if possible, to the instructor prior to the time of the class. This will assist the instructor in critiquing the papers.

GRADING

- 1) Class participation and discussion: 40% (This will display your understanding the material that has been read.)
- 2) Class Papers: 35%
- 3) Final Paper: 25%