THE REFORMED (PROTESTANT) POLITICAL TRADITION AND

THE CURRENT CRISIS OF DEMOCRATIC POLITICS

a short course offered online under the auspices of the Reformed Institute of Metropolitan Washington

taught by R.Bruce Douglass

Recommended Readings

(available online unless otherwise indicated)

for Session 1 – Foundational Ideas

* Calvin, John. *The Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Bk. IV, ch. 3 (the teachers and

ministers of the church—their election and office) and ch. 20 (on civil government) (1559)

<http://www.vor.org/rbdisk/html/institutes/>

* Winthrop, John. “A Model of Christian Charity” (1630)

<https://archive.org/stream/AModelOfChristianCharity/AModelOfChristianCharity_djvu.txt>

* Rush, Benjamin. “Address to the People of the United States” (1787)

<https://archive.csac.history.wisc.edu/Benjamin_Rush.pdf>

for Session 2 – Later Developments

* Henry Ward Beecher, “The Success of American Democracy” (1862)
* <https://play.google.com/store/books/details?id=4OodAAAAMAAJ&rdid=book-4OodAAAAMAAJ&rdot=1> jkl (move to p. 242)
* Abraham Kuyper, *Lectures on Calvinism*, ch. 3, “Calvinism and Politics” (1898)

<https://sources.neocalvinism.org/.full_pdfs/kuyper/LecturesOnCalvinism.pdf> (go to p. 78)

* Karl Barth, “The Christian Community and the Civil Community”, (1946) reprinted in English translation in *Community, State and Church,* ed. by Will Herberg **(emailed attachment)**

for Session 3 – Three Versions of Democracy—Constitutional, Liberal and Populist

* Larry Diamond, “Are People Losing Faith in Democracy?” *American Interest*, March 16, 2018

<https://www.the-american-interest.com/2018/03/16/people-losing-faith-democracy/>

* George Thomas, “Madison and the Perils of Populism”, *National Affairs*, 50, Fall 2016

<https://www.nationalaffairs.com/publications/detail/madison-and-the-perils-of-populism>

* Marcia Pally, “From European Calvinism to American Evangelicalism”, 2007 (Pally website)  
  <https://marciapally.com/2020/07/from-european-calvinism-to-american-evangelicalism/>
* George Thomas, “’America is a Republic, not a Democracy’ is a Dangerous—and Wrong—Argument”, *Atlantic*, November 2, 2020

<https://www.scribd.com/article/483404188/America-Is-A-Republic-Not-A-Democracy-Is-A-Dangerous-And-Wrong-Argument>

* Jan-Werner Muller, “Populism and the People,” *London Review of Books*, May 23, 2019

<https://www.lrb.co.uk/the-paper/v41/n10/jan-werner-mueller/populism-and-the-people>

For Session 4 – Democracy, Religious Pluralism and the Idea of a Christian Nation

* Nicholas Wolterstorff, “Do Christians Have Good Reasons for Supporting Liberal Democracy?” *The Modern Schoolman* LXXVIII (2001); reprinted in Wolterstorff’s *Understanding Liberal Democracy* **(see email attachment)**
* Viktor Orban, address at Baile Tusned, July 26, 2014 (English translation

<https://budapestbeacon.com/full-text-of-viktor-orbans-speech-at-baile-tusnad-tusnadfurdo-of-26-july-2014/>

* Richard Neuhaus, “A Strange New Regime: the Naked Public Square,” a Salvatori lecture at heritage.com (Heritage Foundation)

<https://www.heritage.org/political-process/report/strange-new-regime-the-naked-public-square>

* Bryan McGraw, “The Perils and the Possibilities of Christian Political Parties”, *Comment*, August 30, 2018

<https://comment.org/the-peril-and-possibilities-of-christian-political-parties/>

* James Sleeper, “Our Puritan Heritage,” *Democracy* #37 summer 2015

<https://democracyjournal.org/magazine/37/our-puritan-heritage/>

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(for Future Study) REFORMED (PROTESTANT) POLITICAL TRADITION: FOUNDATIONAL TEXTS

Calvin, John. 1559 *Institutes of the Christian Religion,* bk. iv, ch. 20

French lawyer turned pastor/theologian; spent most of his adult life in Geneva as an

émigré

Beza, Theodore. 1575 *Concerning the Rights of Rulers over their Subjects and the Duty of*

*Subjects toward their Rulers*

French lawyer turned pastor/theologian; also an émigré in Geneva; Calvin’s successor

there

Anonymous (probable author: Mornay, Philippe). 1579 *Vindiciae, Contra Tyrannos (or,*

*Concerning the Legitimate Power of a Prince over the People, and of the People over a Prince*

French noble; Huguenot leader; murdered in the St. Bartholomew’s Day Massacre

Buchanan, George. 1579 *De Jure Regni apud Scotus (or, the Rights of the Crown in Scotland)*

Scot; academic; moderator of the Church of Scotland; tutor to James I (later to be James

VI of England)

Althusius, Johannes. 1603 *Politica—Politics Methodically Set Forth and Illustrated with Sacred*

*and Profane Examples*

German/Dutch academic; eventually became a civil magistrate in Emden (Netherlands)

Grotius, Hugo. 1625 *De jure belli ac paces libri tres (or, On the Law of War and Peace)*

Dutch lawyer and diplomat; lay theologian; exiled for his heterodox theological views

Rutherford, Samuel. 1644 *Lex Rex (or, the Law and the Prince: A Dispute for the Just Prerogative*

*of King and People)*

Scottish clergyman;took part in the Westminster Assembly; eventually martyred

Williams, Roger. 1644 *The Bloody Tenent of Persecution*

English clergyman, Puritan dissenter in New England; founder of Providence Plantation

(Rhode Island)

Milton, John. 1649 *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates—A Defense of the People of England*

English poet; staunch Puritan; political activist; official spokesman for Cromwell’s

government

Sydney, Algernon. 1698 *Discourses concerning Government*

English nobleman; member of the Long Parliament; fought in the English Civil War;

republican who came to despise the monarchy