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PM 604 United Methodist Polity and Discipline

H. O. Thomas

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FALL 2001
PM604 UNITED METHODIST POLITY AND DISCIPLINE
Wednesday, 2:30-4:20pm, Room: M202

The Rev. H.O. (Tom) Thomas, Ph. D.
Office Hours: (located in SMin Office on ground floor of Crary-McPheeters)
Tuesday 1:30-3:00p.m. ♦ Friday 1-2:00p.m.
Please call Claire Williams at 858-2224 for an appointment.

WELCOME from Tom Thomas:

Welcome to UNITED METHODIST POLITY AND DISCIPLINE! This class, PM604, fulfills the disciplinary requirement for all United Methodist students seeking ordination as a deacon or elder in the United Methodist Church.

You will know you are in the right course if you realize The Book of Discipline is not a manual on getting your child to behave. Whether you have been a United Methodist for years or just a short time, do not feel bad if you are not familiar with the term “polity.” Most of us are not. Several years ago when my local church parishioners knew I would be teaching polity, they asked, “What is polity? Is it church politics?”

I’m going to try to work hard at not letting you have the experience I overheard one student having. One time when polity was offered as an intensive week course, he was overheard saying, “The redeeming feature of this course was that it only lasted one week!” I want you to discover what we have been discovering in previous classes: polity is a living and engaging concern in our beloved United Methodist Church. Further, the Church is absolutely bristling with fascinating issues related to United Methodist polity! What a charge to keep we have!

Purpose of the Course: This course seeks to acquaint you with how the United Methodist Church orders and structures itself in its total life, doctrine, ministry and mission. The course purposes to fulfill the denominational requirement for polity for you who are seeking ordination in the United Methodist Church.

Objectives:

- To enable you to have a working understanding of church order and practice and the practical discipline of the United Methodist Church and The Book of Discipline. This course seeks to ready you to use the Discipline as an ordained minister in a local United Methodist church.
- Where relevant, we will explore and become familiar with, analyze and evaluate the biblical and theological assumptions and historical developments that have given rise to and support our church’s structure.
- In a spirit of affirmation, you will offer candid critique and visioning for the future of our United Methodist polity.
- To enable you to become more conversant through classroom discussion with the live issues relating to United Methodist polity.

Course Requirements:

1. Punctual class attendance is expected. Active class participation (i.e., reading pre-assigned texts, attentive listening, note-taking, asking relevant questions, and entering into discussions) is vital. Realizing that if anything can go wrong it may, each student will be allowed only one unexcused absence. Points will be deducted from your final grade for each subsequent, unexcused absence. The **only** absences excused and the only criteria for delinquencies on due assignments and failures to show for an exam is bed-ridden illness, hospitalization, genuine emergencies, or death! For those with extenuating circumstances, make-up work will be arranged with the professor. (Value of the final grade – 3%. Default may result in up to 3% -- 3 points – deduction from the final grade.)
2. Read the entire Book of Discipline (2000). Please type and submit to the professor by each reading due date on the course calendar **two** observations/reflections taken from your assigned weekly reading. An observation is a reference to a particular sentence or paragraph in the Discipline (please cite) and your reflection should be approximately 2 paragraphs in length (not to exceed 3/4 page in length) single-spaced. (Value of the final grade: 15% -- 15 points.)
3. Read Polity, Practice and the Mission by Thomas Frank. Please type and submit to the professor by each reading due date on the course calendar an approximately two-paragraph summary (not to exceed 3/4 page in length) of **each** chapter to be read that week. (Value of the final grade: 12% -- 12 points.)
4. Satisfactorily do one of the following: (Value of the final grade: 70% -- 70 points.)
 - Take the final examination.
 - Submit a ten-page paper on an issue related to United Methodist polity. The following format must be followed or a point reduction results.
 1. Typed on 8 ½” x 11” paper, double spaced with one-inch margins.
 2. Format of the paper:
 - a. Title Page (Title, name, professor’s name, course, and date)
 - b. Introduction: Briefly give an introductory explanation of what you intend to do in the paper.
 - c. Main Body. In writing your paper:
 - State the issue and the historical development which have precipitated the issue.
 - Analyze conflicting views or positions regarding the issue by stating each one’s biblical, theological, philosophical, and scientific premises. Note how terms are defined and used.
 - Argue for a position or build a case of resolution. Persuade the reader, giving reasons why this is the reasonable argument. Demonstrate the strength of your case.
 - d. Conclusion
 - e. Footnotes: Be careful to acknowledge sources either in footnotes or endnotes. These must be placed either at the bottom of each page or at the back of the paper.
 - f. Bibliography: Please include only those sources which you have consulted in your research paper.
3. Additional Comments:

- Copy edit (correct and revise) the first draft. Spell-check and read over for correct grammar, syntax, proper expressions, and logical flow. Expect to write two drafts before finalizing the third. Proof-read the final draft.
- Put completed paper in manila envelope.
- Failure to turn in completed research paper on May 2 results in a 5% point reduction for each week late.

**For additional information on form, please consult Carole Slade's *Form and Style: Research Papers, Reports and Theses* (This book is available at the Library Circulation Desk).

5. Class Devotionals. Students are invited to lead the opening class devotionals (three minutes). In your devotional, you may incorporate the United Methodist Hymnal and/or the Book of Worship or other sources as you choose.

Summary of Grading Procedure:

A = 93-100	B = 80-92	C = 70-79	D = below 70
A	4.00	Exceptional work: outstanding/surpassing achievement of course objectives	
A-	3.70		
B+	3.30		
B	3.00	Good work: strong, significant achievement of course objectives	
B-	2.70		
C+	2.30		
C	2.00	Acceptable work: basic, essential achievement of course objectives	
C-	1.70		
D+	1.30		
D	1.00	Marginal Work: minimal or inadequate achievement of course objectives	
D-	.70		
F	0.00	Unacceptable work: failure of course objectives	

Extra Credit:

For extra credit, using at least three of the publications listed below, identify five current issues relating to United Methodist polity. On paper, you will state the issue exemplified and summarize it (approx. ½ page) and submit it with a supporting copy of the article from which the issue is drawn to the professor by May 9th. (Value is 2% -- 2 points.)

UM Publications:

United Methodist Reporter

Circuit Rider

Interpreter

Quarterly Review

Newscope

Good News magazine

www.umc.org

How to Study for this Course:

The best way to study for this course in addition to reading and familiarizing yourself with the required texts is to pay particular and close attention to the lectures. Taking complete and careful notes will go a long way to helping you do well on the exam.

About the Professor:

The Rev. H. O. (Tom) Thomas, Jr. has known personally and walked with Jesus for over thirty years. He has pastored six local churches in southern California and England. He received his Ph.D. degree from Bristol University, Bristol, England, where he lived in John Wesley's Chapel "The New Room" and studied the theology of John Wesley. He has been married to his wife Pamela for twenty-four years. They have two children, Karissa, 11 and John who is almost 4 years old. Dr. Thomas is on the Board of Ordained Ministry and a supervising mentor in the California-Pacific Annual Conference.

His plea is, "God, be merciful to me, a sinner."

SPRING 2001 Calendar for PM604

DATE	Reading from <u>Discipline</u> *	TOPIC of Class and Reading from Frank*
Feb. 7		Syllabus and Introduction to Polity
Feb. 14	Pp. v-20	Historical Considerations in the Formation of UM Polity Chs. 1, 2
Feb. 21	Pp. 21-74	Constitution and Doctrinal Standards Ch. 3 <i>Guest: Dr. George Strunk, Superintendent of the Lexington District of the United Methodist Church</i>
Feb. 28	Pp. 74-86, 95-122	Our Theological Task and Social Principles Ch. 4
Mar. 7	Pp. 87-94, 123-152	The Ministry of All Christians Ch. 5 <i>Class Evaluations</i>
Mar. 14	Pp. 152- 181	The Local Church Ch. 6
Mar. 21	Pp. 182- 228	The Ministry of the Ordained Ch. 7 <i>Guest: The Rev. Al Gwinn, Pastor of First UMC in Lexington</i>
Mar. 28	Pp. 228- 265	The Ministry of the Ordained Ch. 7 <i>Guest: Jim Heidinger, Good News Magazine</i>
April 4	Pp. 267- 294	The Superintendency Ch. 8
April 11		Reading Week – Nothing Due
April 18	Pp. 295- 349	The Conferences – General, Jurisdictional, and Central Ch. 9
April 25	Pp. 349- 425	The Annual Conferences and General Agencies Ch. 10 <i>Guest: Dr. Maxie Dunnam, President of Asbury Theological Seminary</i>
May 2	Pp. 426- 685	Church Property Ch. 11 Optional Research Paper Due (in Professor's Office)
May 9	Pp. 687- 799	Judicial Administration Ch. 12 and Conclusion Extra Credit Due
May 14-18		FINAL EXAM WEEK (Exam date: Wednesday, May 16, 8-10am)

***Please note: The readings listed for each date should be completed before coming to class.**

BIBLIOGRAPHY

REQUIRED TEXTS

- The Book of Discipline (1996) (United Methodist Publishing House)
 Thomas Edward Frank, Polity, Practice, and the Mission of the United Methodist Church (Nashville: Abingdon, 1997)
 Tuell, Jack M., The Organization of the United Methodist Church, Abingdon, 1997

RELATED TEXTS

- Campbell, Dennis, The Yoke of Obedience: The Meaning of Ordination (Nashville, Abingdon, 1988)
Decisions of the Judicial Council, UMC (1968-1996) (United Methodist Publishing House)
 Harmon, Nolan B., The Organization of the Methodist Church (Nashville, Abingdon, 1962)
 Heitzenrater, Richard, Mirror and Memory: Reflections on Early Methodism (Nashville: Abingdon, 1989)
 Hickman, Hoyt, ed., The Worship Resources of the United Methodist Hymnal (Nashville: Abingdon, 1989)
 Hunt, Richard, et al, Ministry Inquiry Process (Nashville: General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, 1997)
 Kohler, Robert F., and Garcia, Joaquin, The Christian As Minister, 4th ed., (Nashville:)
 O'Malley, J. Steven, Pilgrimage of Faith: The Legacy of the Otterbeins (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow, 1973)
 Richey, Russell E., The Methodist Conference in America (Nashville: Abingdon, 1996)
 Richey, Russell E., Perspectives on American Methodism (Nashville: Kingswood Books, 1993)
 Tigert, John J., A Constitutional History of American Episcopal Methodism (Nashville: Publishing House of the M.E. Church South, 1894), p. 27.
 Wesley, John, The Works of John Wesley, ed. By Thomas Jackson, 3rd ed., 14 vols., vol 8: Addresses, Essays, Letters, p. 250ff.

OTHER RESOURCES

- Bromily, G., Children of Promise: The Case of Baptizing Infants, Eerdmans, 1979
 Campbell, D., Yoke of Obedience: The Meaning of Ordination, Abingdon, 1988
 Colaw, Emerson, Beliefs of a United Methodist Christian, Tidings, (3rd ed.)
 Green, M., Baptism, Downers Grove, 1987
Guidelines for Leadership in the Local Church 1985-1988, Abingdon Press, Printed in the USA.
 Harmon, Nolan B., Understanding the United Methodist Church, Abingdon, 1983
 Harper and Wilson, Faith and Form, Zondervan, 1988
 Heidinger, United Methodist Renewal: What Will It Take, Bristol, 1986
 _____, ed., Basic United Methodist Beliefs: An Evangelical View, Bristol, 1986
 Hunt, E., A Bishop Speaks His Mind: A Candid View of United Methodism, Abingdon, 1987
 Hunt, Hinkle, Malony, Clergy Assessment and Career Development, Abingdon, 1990
 Johnson and Waltz, Facts and Possibilities: An Agenda for the United Methodist Church, Abingdon, 1987
 Madsen, N., This We Believe: The Articles of Religion and Confession of Faith, Graded Press, 1987

- Naglee, D., From Font to Faith: John Wesley on Infant Baptism and the Nurture of Children, Lang 1987 (a very expensive book)
- Rowe, K., United Methodist Studies, Basic Bibliographies, Abingdon, 1987
- Stokes, Mack B., The Bible in Wesleyan Heritage, Abingdon, 1981
- Stokes, Mack B., Major United Methodist Beliefs, Abingdon Press, 1983
- Thomas, Jr., H. O., "John Wesley's Understanding of the Theological Distinction between 'Essentials' and 'Opinion'", Methodist History, 33, no. 3 (April 1995), pp. 139-148.
- Willimon, W., Remember Who You Are, Upper Room, 1980
- Willimon and Wilson, Rekindling the Flame, Abingdon, 1988

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