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## CL 553 X1 United Methodist Polity and Discipline

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# United Methodist Polity & Discipline

## CL 553 X1

### 2 Credit Hours

### Fall 2008

## Course Description

The purpose of this class is to provide a thorough study of the polity and discipline of The United Methodist Church. This class, along with DO 690, CH 600, and DO 670, helps participants meet the requirements for United Methodist ordained ministry.

## Personal Introduction & Welcome

Dr. S. Brian Yeich  
Adjunct Instructor  
Asbury Theological Seminary  
Ordained Elder, United Methodist Church, Louisiana Conference

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B.S. Louisiana Tech University 1991; M.B.A. Louisiana Tech University 1992; M.Div. Asbury Theological Seminary 1996; D.Min. Asbury Theological Seminary 2006; Ph.D. Candidate - Cliff College/University of Manchester

**Welcome to CL553, United Methodist Polity and Discipline!** I look forward to exploring our church's organization and structure together as you prepare for ordination in the United Methodist Church. I pray that God will bless you as you take this and many other steps toward full time ministry.

## Course Objectives

As a result of successfully completing this course, we will:

- (1) Have a working understanding of United Methodist church order and practice.
- (2) Be capable of administering and following *The Discipline* as ordained clergy or appointed pastors in a local United Methodist Church.

- (3) Be familiar with some of the representative issues presently confronting our United Methodist polity.
- (4) Be able to recognize and appreciate the biblical, theological, and historical foundations for our denomination's structure.
- (5) Be able to offer critique and vision for the future of United Methodist polity.

## Course Requirements

To successfully complete this class, each student will need to complete all assignments on time, participate actively in class discussion and build relationships with fellow classmates.

### Assignments (see schedule for due dates)

During the semester, individual grading will be based upon the following:

- (1) **Assigned Readings:** You will be responsible for all reading assignments specified in each module. Reading must be completed during the two-week period assigned in the syllabus. This will be key to your participation in discussion forums. You will submit a **reading report** at the **end of each module** (every 2 weeks), indicating the percent of the reading you completed. (15% of final grade)
- (2) **Research Paper:** You will select a topic from those covered during the semester and write an 8-10 page research paper (typed, doubled spaced) on that topic. The research paper will be due the last day of class. On questions of style with regard to paper organization and references, see Carole Slade, Form and Style: Research Papers, Reports, Theses (10th ed.; Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1997). (20% of final grade)

**Research Paper Option:** If you are preparing for probationary membership in your Annual Conference, you may write your responses to the Board of Ordained Ministry questions as your research paper.

- (3) **Interview:** Interview a United Methodist Pastor or District Superintendent to get their perspective on how the Discipline impacts the ministry of the church. **Submit a one-page summary** of your interview to the instructor. **Post** your most significant observations from your interview on Moodle (the Virtual Classroom) for discussion (see posting guidelines below). (5% of final grade)
- (5) **Final Exam:** You will be given an objective exam that will cover your knowledge of and ability to work with *The Discipline*. (30% of final grade)
- (6) **Class Participation:** You will actively and thoughtfully participate as a member of a learning community. CL 553 is not an independent study. We will be interacting with and learning from one another. (30 % of final grade)

## Grading Summary

Readings	15%
Research Paper	20%
Interview	5%
Final Exam	30%
Participation	30%
	<hr/>
	100%

Asbury Theological Seminary uses the 4.00-point system for grading and evaluation. The grading system is:

A	4.00	Exceptional work: outstanding achievement of course objectives
A-	3.70	
B+	3.30	Good work: substantial achievement of course objectives
B	3.00	
B-	2.70	
C+	2.30	Acceptable work: essential achievement of course objectives
C	2.00	
C-	1.70	
D+	1.30	Marginal work: minimal or inadequate achievement of course objectives
D	1.00	
D-	0.70	
F	0.00	Unacceptable work: failure of course objectives

## Module Agenda

The following is a broad outline of the seven modules for the course. Our course will begin on the first day of the semester at 12:00 noon (ET). On that Monday the first complete module will be accessible within *Moodle (the Virtual Classroom)*. A new module will be accessible every two weeks by 12:00 AM (ET) on the dates specified. Each module will close at 11:55 p.m. (ET) on the dates specified.

### Module 01: Introduction, Historical Statement, and Constitution

- September 2 - 14
- Assigned Reading: (A) The Book of Discipline 2004: Historical Statement and The Constitution (Part I). (B) Polity, Practice, and the Mission of The United Methodist Church: Chapters 1 and 2.
- **Reading Report due Sept. 14 by 11:55PM EST.**

### Module 02: UM Doctrinal Standards, Theological Task, and Social Principles

- September 15 - 28

- Assigned Reading: (A) The Book of Discipline 2004: Doctrinal Standards and Our Theological Task (Part II), Social Principles (Part IV). (B) Polity, Practice, and the Mission of The United Methodist Church: Chapters 3 and 4.
- **Reading Report due Sept. 28 by 11:55PM EST.**

### **Module 03: The Ministry of All Christians and the Local Church**

- September 29 – October 12
- Assigned Reading: (A) The Book of Discipline 2004: The Ministry of All Christians (Part IV), The Local Church (Part V, Chapter One). (B) Polity, Practice, and the Mission of The United Methodist Church: Chapters 5 and 6.
- **Interview Assignment due Oct. 12 by 11:55PM EST.**
- **Reading Report due Oct. 12 by 11:55PM EST.**

### **Module 04: The Ministry of the Ordained**

- October 13 - 26
- Assigned Reading: (A) The Book of Discipline 2004: The Ministry of the Ordained (Part V, Chapter Two). (B) Polity, Practice, and the Mission of The United Methodist Church: Chapter 7.
- **Reading Report due Oct. 26 by 11:55PM EST.**

### **Module 05: The Superintendency and the Conferences**

- October 27 – November 9
- Assigned Readings: (A) The Book of Discipline 2004: The Superintendency (Part V, Chapter Three), The Conferences (Part V, Chapter Four). (B) Polity, Practice, and the Mission of The United Methodist Church: Chapters 8 and 9.
- **Reading Report due Nov. 9 by 11:55PM EST.**

### **Module 06: The General Agencies and Church Property**

- November 10 - 23
- Assigned Readings: (A) The Book of Discipline 2004: Administrative Order (Part V, Chapter 5), Church Property (Part V, Chapter 6). (B) Polity, Practice, and the Mission of The United Methodist Church: Chapters 10 and 11.
- **General Conference Assignment due Nov. 23 by 11:55 EST.**
- **Reading Report due Nov. 23 by 11:55PM EST.**

### **Module 07: Judicial Administration and Conclusion**

- November 24 – December 7

- Assigned Readings: (A) The Book of Discipline 2004: Judicial Administration (Part V, Chapter Seven). (B) Polity, Practice, and the Mission of The United Methodist Church: Chapters 12 and Conclusion.
- **Research paper due December 7 by 11:55PM EST.**
- **Reading Report due December 7 by 11:55PM EST.**

**Final Exam: will be posted December 8 and close December 12.**

## Expectations

What you can expect of me:

1. Prompt replies to questions and Forum postings.
2. Interaction, participation, and direction in ongoing discussions.
3. Prompt feedback and evaluation of assignments.
4. Occasional bloopers as I continue to learn this mode of teaching and interact with the class.

What I expect of you:

1. Active participation in online discussion through *Moodle (the Virtual Classroom)* Forums.
2. On time completion of assignments.
3. Your honest questions when you don't understand the material or the instructions.
4. Your patience as we work together in this emerging learning environment.

## Guidelines

1. Assignments: All assignments are due by the stated due dates. Late assignments will result in one letter grade deduction per day. For example, a B paper turned in one day late becomes a C, etc.
2. Forum Postings: should be limited to between 50 and 75 words. Please use good grammar, spelling and punctuation. Please avoid the use of text abbreviations/shorthand.
3. Discussion: A **crucial element** of this course is the dialogue that we enter into with each other. All discussions are to be in the vein of encouragement, gentleness, patience, persistence, and hope. This does not mean that we will not challenge, confront, or question each other. It does mean that these things will be undertaken for the purpose of growth and stimulation to think and understand the subject at hand more deeply and more intimately.

## How to Submit Your Work

Please submit your assignments and responses to the appropriate assignment links and forums. **When you name the file be sure to use your last name in the title.**

## Required Textbooks

These textbooks may be obtained from the Asbury Theological Seminary's Cokesbury Bookstore. You may e-mail your request to [exlbooks@asburyseminary.edu](mailto:exlbooks@asburyseminary.edu) or call (859)-858-4242.

- The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church, 2004.
- Frank, Thomas Edward. Polity, Practice, and the Mission of The United Methodist Church, Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2006.

### Optional

- Tuell, Jack M. The Organization of the United Methodist Church 2005-2008, Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2005.

## Recommended Resources/Books

This list is certainly not exhaustive, but it might be a helpful way to find some basic information about The United Methodist Church on the Internet:

United Methodist Homepage	<a href="http://www.umc.org">http://www.umc.org</a>
Annual Conference Finder	<a href="http://archives.umc.org/interior.asp?ptid=1&amp;mid=461">http://archives.umc.org/interior.asp?ptid=1&amp;mid=461</a>
Council of Bishops	<a href="http://archives.umc.org/interior.asp?ptid=21&amp;mid=5855">http://archives.umc.org/interior.asp?ptid=21&amp;mid=5855</a>
Division of Ordained Ministry	<a href="http://www.gbhem.org/ordmin2.html">http://www.gbhem.org/ordmin2.html</a>
General Boards and Agencies	<a href="http://archives.umc.org/interior.asp?ptid=1&amp;mid=2650">http://archives.umc.org/interior.asp?ptid=1&amp;mid=2650</a>
Judicial Council Decisions	<a href="http://archives.umc.org/interior_judicial.asp?mid=263">http://archives.umc.org/interior_judicial.asp?mid=263</a>
UMC Communications	<a href="http://www.umcom.org/">http://www.umcom.org/</a>
UMC Connections	<a href="http://gbgm-umc.org/connections/">http://gbgm-umc.org/connections/</a>
The Upper Room	<a href="http://www.upperroom.org/">http://www.upperroom.org/</a>

## Online Section Descriptions & Communication Guidelines

The Virtual Classroom is built upon the open-source Moodle platform. By logging into <http://virtual.asburyseminary.edu> you will have access to this course and be able to collaborate with participant-colleagues and me throughout the course. The following are functions with which you should familiarize yourself:

1. The Course Information Center, in the center of your screen, contains many features to be used throughout the semester, including:
  - a) Course News and Announcements, where I will post items important for the entire class;
  - b) Syllabus, where a copy of the syllabus is provided;
  - c) To Professor, which is a way for you to post a message directly to me and we can discuss an issue privately;
  - d) Course Questions, which is a public forum where you can publicly post any questions you have regarding the course so others may see your message and respond. Anytime you have a question or comment about the course, the schedule, the assignments, or anything else that may be of interest to other participants and me you should post it to the Course Questions Forum;
  - e) Prayer Forum, which is a public forum where you can post prayer concerns and praises for all to see. This is a way for us to build community;
  - f) Open Forum, which is a public forum where you can post anything that is not course-related for all to see. Examples include someone getting married, an upcoming birthday, discussions on topics not course-related, etc. This is a way for us to build community.
2. Modules, which are located below the Course Information Center, will contain forums where group discussions will take place, documents or other files to download, and assignment links where you will post your assignments to me. Modules will be clearly labeled so you can follow along during the semester.
3. Resources, a section located on the left side, provides links to items you will want to use often in the semester.

### **HELP!**

The team of people who are most able to help you with any of your questions regarding ExL are listed below. Their mission is to be helpful to you. For technical and ExL

administrative matters regarding this course contact the following for your particular need:

### **ExL Support Contact Information**

For **general questions and administrative assistance regarding the ExL program**, contact Dale Hale: [ExL\\_Office@asburyseminary.edu](mailto:ExL_Office@asburyseminary.edu) Phone: (859) 858-2393

For **technical support, library research support, library loans, and ExL media** contact Information Commons: [Info\\_Commons@asburyseminary.edu](mailto:Info_Commons@asburyseminary.edu) Phone: (859) 858-2233; Toll-free: (866) 454-2733

### **Accessing Information Commons Materials**

#### 1. General Questions:

a. The Information Commons is a "one-stop shop" for all student research, circulation and technical needs. The Information Commons hours are posted here: <http://www.asburyseminary.edu/information/hours.htm>

#### 2. Materials Requests:

a. To search the library catalog for available materials, click here: <http://www.asburyseminary.edu/information/index.htm>

b. ExL Students may request books, photocopies or emailed attachments of journal articles/portions of reference books from Asbury Seminary's Library. Please allow 3-10 business days for all requests to be filled. Contact the Information Commons for costs and instructions on how to make requests.

c. ExL students are encouraged to make use of local library resources. Students who live within a 50 mile radius of either the Florida or the Kentucky campus should come to campus to obtain their materials.

#### 3. Research Questions:

a. ExL students are encouraged to contact the Information Commons for research assistance including help determining the best sources to use for a paper, finding book reviews, or research questions about using the online databases or any other library materials.

#### 4. Online Databases:

a. To access the online library resources including the library catalog and full-text journal databases, go to <http://www.asburyseminary.edu/information/index.htm> and enter your 10-digit student ID# number in the login box. Your student ID# is provided on the biographical information section of the student registration webpage. Add a 2 and enough 0's to the front to make a 10-digit number (20000XXXXX where XXXXX = your student id).

## Copyright Policies

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**Buying Books.** Address an e-mail to ATS Bookstore. Type in on the "address" line of a new e-mail, [ATS\\_Bookstore@asburyseminary.edu](mailto:ATS_Bookstore@asburyseminary.edu). This will send your message to our local Cokesbury bookstore on the Wilmore campus. You may also call the Cokesbury bookstore toll free at 1-866-855-8252.

**New Online Resource.** There is a new online library of resources available from Cokesbury. These include dictionaries, handbooks, and encyclopedia commentaries; worship, sermon, and lectionary material; teaching resources; Bible translations, and more. You may access this material through the Information Commons link on the Asbury webpage. Go to <http://www.asburyseminary.edu/icommons/index.shtml>, enter your borrower ID, and scroll down to iPreach, and you are in. A link to this will be placed in Moodle (the Virtual Classroom).

For questions regarding the syllabus or our course, post them in the Course Questions forum in the Course Information Center. If you have a particular question, it is likely others in the class will have a similar question and will benefit from the exchange. We want to "iron out any wrinkles" that may inhibit the learning process.

Revised 1/08

## Important Dates

**September 2** – Classes begin

**September 5** – Last day to drop a course with a refund

**October 12** – Interview Assignment due by 11:55PM EST.

**December 7** – Research paper due by 11:55PM EST.

Final Exam will be posted **December 8 and close December 12.**

Reading Reports are due **at the close of each module** (see schedule for dates)