CL 553 United Methodist Polity and Discipline

Randy Jessen
Course: CL553 W1 (SP 2009)
Title: United Methodist Polity/Discip
Hours: 2.00
Published: Yes, on 01/16/2009
Prerequisites: None

Department: Christian Leadership
Faculty: Dr. Randy Jessen

Email: randy.jessen@asburyseminary.edu
Office: BC
SPO: 946

Meetings:

During 02/09/2009 to 05/22/2009 on Monday from 4:00p to 5:50p in AD306.

Maximum Registration: 50
Catalog Description: A thorough study of the polity and discipline of The United Methodist Church. The student is equipped to meet the requirements of the Discipline for admission-on-trial into the various conferences. Required of all candidates for the United Methodist ministry.

Objectives:

Spring 2009 – 2 Hours Credit
Instructor: Randy Jessen, DMin
Meets Mondays 4:00 – 5:50
Room: TBA

My office (BC103) is located in the Beeson International Center on the Wilmore campus. Please feel free to contact Kasey Tinsley at 859-858-2254 for an appointment. You may also contact me through my office phone at 859-858-2060, my
**Course Description:**

A thorough study of the polity and discipline of The United Methodist Church. The student is equipped to meet the requirements of the Discipline for admission-on-trial into the various conferences. Required of all candidates for the United Methodist ministry.

This class is one of four courses offered at Asbury that are designed to meet denominational requirements for United Methodist students seeking ordination as a deacon or elder in the United Methodist Church. The other courses are The Theology of John Wesley, United Methodist History, and United Methodist Doctrine.

**Instructor: Randy Jessen**

I am an Ordained Elder in Full Connection with the Rocky Mountain Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church. My background includes an undergraduate degree in mental health, ten years working with emotionally disturbed children, ownership of a rural grocery store, and scattered but delightful experience as a booking agent for Carson and Barnes Wild Animal Circus (www.carsonbarnescircus.com).

I graduated from Asbury Theological Seminary with a Master of Divinity degree in 1984 and with a Doctor of Ministry degree in 1997. I served 21 years in pastoral ministry through the Rocky Mountain Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church. I currently serve as the Dean of the Beeson International Center for Biblical Preaching and Church Leadership on the Wilmore campus. I recently completed ten years of service as a member of the Board of Ordained Ministry for my Annual Conference.

My heart is in the local church but I also have a love for mission ministry with children. My wife (Sue) and I are the founders of a mission agency that provides Christian homes for abandoned children in western Romania. Global Hope (www.globalhope.org) owns and operates two Christian group homes for abandoned children in Arad, Romania. We also launched StarStone International to support pediatric HIV/AIDS care in western Romania.

**Purpose of the Course:**

This course will acquaint you with how the United Methodist Church is structured for ministry through the continuing development of the United Methodist Book of Discipline (BOD) and other formal documents. The focus will be on practical ministry with an emphasis on the mission, ministry, and doctrine of the United Methodist Church. The course fulfills the denominational requirement for study of denominational polity for those who are seeking Deacon or Elder ordination in the United Methodist Church.

**Objectives:**

Students successfully completing this course will:

- 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, and to understand the functioning of our polity in its broader scope.
- Recognize and appreciate the biblical, theological, and historical foundations for United Methodist structure.
- Be able, in a spirit of affirmation, to offer candid critique and visioning for the future of our United Methodist polity.
- Become more conversant through classroom discussion with the live issues relating to United Methodist polity.
- Discover how the Book of Discipline is useful as a tool for practical ministry and local church leadership.

**Required Reading: Book List**

1. *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church 2008*


**Course Requirements:**

Please note: All written assignments are due in hard copy form. All written assignments should be presented in a Times Roman 12 point font. The single / double space requirement is listed for each written assignment. Your written work will be returned either in class, through the SPO, or by special direct mailing arrangements.

1. Punctual and consistent class attendance is expected. Active class participation (i.e., reading pre-assigned texts, presence for the entire class session, attentive listening, note-taking, asking relevant questions, and entering into discussions) is vital. Students are allowed two unexcused absences without a grade penalty. Three points (out of 100 possible) will be deducted from your final grade for each subsequent, unexcused absence.
   
   *(Value of final grade: 10%)*


4. Prior to April 1, 2008, make arrangements to meet with a United Methodist Pastor who is currently appointed to a local church setting. Inquire about that pastor’s perspective on how the Book of Discipline impacts the overall ministry of the church. Provide a two page single spaced summary of that conversation with specific insights you gained noted in the summary.
   
   **This written assignment is due April 13, 2009.** *(Value of final grade: 10%)*

5. Attend at least one Church Council or Administrative Board meeting of an active United Methodist congregation and observe what organizational structure is assumed by the church. In light of local church structure options identified in the Book of Discipline, briefly describe the organizational / leadership dynamics of the congregation. This assignment should be two to four pages single spaced. Please reflect on the following issues:

   Is it the “basic organizational plan” described in the Book of Discipline?
   Does it use the former Administrative Board and Council of Ministries structure?
   Does it use the Administrative Council structure?
   Does it use some alternative structure?
   What leadership style did you observe from the leaders?
   What are the strengths and weaknesses of that leadership style?
What have you learned in this experience that will impact your leadership style?
This written assignment is due April 13, 2009. (Value of final grade: 10%)

6. Research Options: Choose one of the following options.

   · Write a ten page, double spaced, 12 point font, research paper on a key element of United Methodist Polity. Identify the history, theology, and impact of the polity issue. Reflect on it in light of the current state of the church with a focus on the denominational mission for the future.

   · Write your responses to the Board of Ministry questions related to becoming a probationary member of your Annual Conference. Your response should follow the guidelines for your Annual Conference. Inquire with the Registrar of your Board of Ordained Ministry to obtain the guidelines and questions they would like you to address. In general your document should be double spaced, 12 point Times Roman font, with a maximum of 30 pages total, your full name should appear on each page.

   Your research project is due Monday May 11, 2009. (Value of the final grade: 30%)

7. Comprehensive Final Exam  May 18, 2009 during our regular class time

Your final exam will evaluate your knowledge of assigned course readings, course lecture content, and any materials made available in classes. There is no real substitute for consistent class attendance, good notes, and full completion of all assigned reading in preparation for this exam. The exam is scheduled for two hours and will be an open book examination. The goal is to develop a strong and practical connection to the Book of Discipline. (Value of the final grade: 40%)

Summary of Grading Procedure:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>95-100</td>
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<td>A-</td>
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<td>B+</td>
<td>85-89.9</td>
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<td>B</td>
<td>82.5-84.9</td>
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<td>B-</td>
<td>80-82.4</td>
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<td>C+</td>
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<td>D</td>
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Summary of Grading Factors

- Class attendance and participation 10 Points
- UM pastor interview and reflection Due April 13, 2009 10 Points
- Church council visit and written reflection Due April 13, 2009 10 Points
- Research Project Due May 11, 2009 30 Points
- Final Exam May 18, 2009 40 Points
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
<th>Reading Range</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feb 9</td>
<td>First class gathering</td>
<td>Syllabus / Introduction to Polity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb 16</td>
<td>Pp. 1-20</td>
<td>Chapters 1-2</td>
<td>Historical Formation of UM Polity</td>
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<td>Feb 23</td>
<td>Pp. 21-74</td>
<td>Chapter 3</td>
<td>Constitution and Doctrine</td>
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<td>Mar 2</td>
<td>Pp. 74-86</td>
<td>Chapter 4</td>
<td>Our Theological Task</td>
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<td>Mar 9</td>
<td>Pp. 87-131</td>
<td>Chapter 5</td>
<td>Ministry of all Christians / Social Principles</td>
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<td>Mar 16</td>
<td>Pp. 133-201</td>
<td>Chapter 6</td>
<td>The Local Church</td>
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<td>Mar 23</td>
<td>Pp. 203-294</td>
<td>Chapter 7</td>
<td>The Ministry of the Ordained</td>
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<td>Mar 30 - Apr 3</td>
<td>Reading Week – No Class Meeting – Enjoy and Catch Up!</td>
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<td>Apr 6</td>
<td>Pp. 295-323</td>
<td>Chapter 8</td>
<td>The Superintendency</td>
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<tr>
<td>Apr 13</td>
<td>Pp. 473-702</td>
<td>Chapter 9</td>
<td>Administrative Order</td>
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<td>Apr 20</td>
<td>Pp. 325-472</td>
<td>Chapter 10</td>
<td>The Conferences</td>
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<td>Apr 27</td>
<td>Pp. 703-741</td>
<td>Chapter 11</td>
<td>Church Property</td>
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<td>Please Note: The interview with a UM pastor and your</td>
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<td>report from the Administrative Council meeting is</td>
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<td>See items 4 and 5 in the Course Requirements above.</td>
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<td>Apr 13</td>
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<td>Please Note: Your “Research Option” (see item 6 in the</td>
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<td>May 4</td>
<td>Pp. 743-781</td>
<td>Chapter 12</td>
<td>Judicial Administration</td>
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<td>May 11</td>
<td>General Review Session</td>
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<td>May 18</td>
<td>Final Exam</td>
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**BIBLIOGRAPHY**

**REQUIRED TEXTS**


RELATED TEXTS

Online Section Descriptions and Communication Guidelines

The Virtual Classroom is built upon the open-source Moodle platform. By logging into http://one.asburyseminary.edu and clicking on the Virtual Campus tab (upper right corner) 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 contains many features to be used throughout the semester: 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 or view online, and assignment links where you will post your assignments to me. Modules will be clearly labeled so you can follow along during the semester.

**Virtual Support Contact Information**

For technical support, library research support, library loans and virtual media contact Information Commons:

Email: Info.Commons@asburyseminary.edu
Phone: (859) 858-2233; Toll-free: (866) 454-2733

For general questions and administrative assistance regarding the Virtual program, contact Dale Hale:

Email: ExL.Office@asburyseminary.edu
Phone: (859) 858-2393

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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://private.asburyseminary.edu/information-commons](http://private.asburyseminary.edu/information-commons)

2. **Materials Requests:**

   a. To search the library catalog for available materials, click here: [http://private.asburyseminary.edu/information-commons](http://private.asburyseminary.edu/information-commons)

   b. Virtual 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. Virtual 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. Virtual 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 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).

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