PM 604 United Methodist Polity and Discipline

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United Methodist Polity and Discipline (PM604) is a required course for all United Methodist students who are seeking ordination as a deacon or elder in the United Methodist Church.

**Purpose of the Course:**
This course seeks to acquaint the student 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 those seeking ordination in the United Methodist Church.

**Objectives:**
- To enable the student 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 the student to administer the Discipline as an ordained minister in a local United Methodist church.
- Where relevant, we will explore the biblical and theological assumptions and historical developments that have given rise to and support our church’s structure.
- In a spirit of affirmation, to offer candid critique and visioning for the future of our United Methodist polity.
- To enable the student 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, notetaking, 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 – 5%. Default may result in up to 5% -- 5 points – deduction from the final grade.)
2. Read the entire Book of Discipline (1996). Write down in legible form and submit to the professor by each reading due date on the course calendar two observations and
reflections on your observations taken from your assigned weekly reading. (Value of
the final grade: 20% -- 20 points.)

**Example Observation/Reflection:** In the Constitution, Article I of the
Restrictive Rules states the General Conference shall not “revoke, alter, or change
our Articles of Religion.” To date, they have not been revoked. Therefore, they
still stand in effect. I do not have to feel defensive because my theology is in
accord with our Articles. My doctrine is in line with the authoritative doctrinal
statements of our Church.

3. **Read Polity, Practice and the Mission** by Frank. Write legibly a one- to two-
paragraph summary of each chapter by each reading due date listed on the course
calendar. (Value of the final grade: 15% -- 15 points.)

4. Satisfactorily do one of the following: (Value of the final grade: 60% -- 60 points.)
--Take the final exam.
--Submit an eight- to ten-page research 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. Proofread the final draft.
   --Put completed paper in manila envelope.
   -- Failure to turn in completed research paper on April 21 results in a 5% point
reduction for each week late.

**For additional information on form, please consult Kate L. Turabian, A Manual for
Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations** (Chicago: University of Chicago,
1973).
5. Devotionals. I invite one student for each of the three following dates (Feb. 24, March 24, April 28) to lead the class devotional (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:

Total Points:
A= Exceptional work 100-93
B= Good work 92-80
C= Acceptable work 79-70
D= Marginal work Below 70

Extra Credit:
For extra credit, from several of the publications listed below, identify five current issues relating to United Methodist polity. On paper, state the issue exemplified and submit it and a supporting copy of the article from which the issue is drawn to the professor by May 12. (Value is 2% -- 2 points.)

UM Publications:
United Methodist Reporter
Circuit Rider
Interpreter
Quarterly Review
Newscope
Good News magazine
# Fall 1999 Calendar for PM604

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>Reading from Discipline*</th>
<th>TOPIC of Class and Reading from Frank*</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sept. 8</td>
<td></td>
<td>Syllabus and Introduction to Polity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept. 15</td>
<td>pp. v-20</td>
<td>Historical Considerations in the Formation of UM Polity Chs. 1, 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept. 22</td>
<td>pp. 21-72 (¶62)</td>
<td>Constitution and Doctrinal Standards Ch. 3 Student Devotional</td>
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<td>Sept. 29</td>
<td>pp. 72-106</td>
<td>Our Theological Task and Social Principles Ch. 4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct. 6</td>
<td>pp. 107-146 (¶253)</td>
<td>The Ministry of All Christians Ch. 5</td>
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<td>Oct. 13</td>
<td>pp. 146-169</td>
<td>The Local Church, Ch. 6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct. 20</td>
<td>pp. 170-212 (¶336)</td>
<td>The Ministry of the Ordained Ch. 7 Student Devotional</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct. 27</td>
<td>pp. 212-246</td>
<td>The Ministry of the Ordained The Rev. Al Gwynn, Lexington District Superintendent and Chairperson of KY Board of Ordained Ministry</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov. 3</td>
<td>pp. 247-272</td>
<td>The Superintendency Ch. 8</td>
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<td>Nov. 10</td>
<td>pp. 273-324 (¶610)</td>
<td>The Conferences – General, Jurisdictional, and Central Ch. 9</td>
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<td>Nov. 17</td>
<td>pp. 324-396</td>
<td>The Annual Conferences and General Agencies Ch. 10</td>
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<td>Nov. 24</td>
<td></td>
<td>Reading Week</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dec. 1</td>
<td>pp. 397-646</td>
<td>Church Property Ch. 11</td>
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<td><strong>Dec. 1</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Research Paper Due (in Professor’s Office)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Dec. 8</td>
<td>pp. 647-742</td>
<td>Judicial Administration Ch. 12 and Conclusion</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dec. 13-17</td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>FINAL EXAM WEEK</strong> (Exam date: Wednesday, Dec. 15, 1-3pm)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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*Please note: The readings listed for each date should be completed before coming to class.*
REQUIRED TEXTS
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
Harmon, Nolan B, The Organization of the Methodist Church (Nashville, Abingdon, 1962)
Heitzenrater, Richard, John Wesley: His Own Biographer (Nashville, Abingdon, 1984)
Richey, Russell E., Perspectives on American Methodism (Nashville: Kingswood Books, 1993)

OTHER RESOURCES
Bromily, G., Children of Promise: The Case of Baptizing Infants, Eerdmans, 1979
Colaw, Emerson, Beliefs of a United Methodist Christian, Tidings, (3rd ed.)
Green, M., Baptism, Downers Grove, 1987
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
(a very expensive book)
Willimon and Wilson, *Redkindling the Flame*, Abingdon, 1988