CL 553 United Methodist Polity and Discipline

Al Gwinn

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Welcome! This class is one of four classes 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 classes are The Theology of John Wesley, United Methodist History, and United Methodist Doctrine.

About Me: My name is Al Gwinn and it is my privilege to serve as instructor and guide as we learn, discuss, and apply the subject material of our class this semester. I currently serve as pastor of Lexington First United Methodist Church and chair the Kentucky Conference Board of Ordained Ministry. Some of my ministry experiences include serving on the Bishop’s Cabinet as the Lexington District Superintendent and on the General Council on Ministries and the SEJ Administrative Council.

It is my sincere desire to share with you my passions for personal involvement in service to you who are preparing for leadership and ministry in our church and for committed leadership and involvement throughout our great connectional church. Please know that it is my sincere intent to assist you in any way reasonably possible to master the requirements of our course in Polity and Discipline!

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.
- To be able to recognize and appreciate the biblical, theological, and historical foundations for United Methodist 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 and will compose a 6% -- 6 points of your final grade. Students are allowed two unexcused absences without a grade penalty. Points will be deducted from your final grade for each subsequent, unexcused absence. The only absences excused will be severe illness corroborated by a physician’s statement, death of a family member, and genuine life threatening emergencies.

2. You will be expected to fulfill all class requirements on time. Under dire circumstances, arrangements may be made before-hand to adjust a due date. Weekly assignments will not be accepted after the dates due.

3. Read the entire Book of Discipline (2000). Read Polity, Practice and the Mission by Thomas Frank. Submit, by each reading due date, two typewritten observations / reflections taken from your assigned weekly reading (one from each text). An observation is a reference to a particular sentence or paragraph in the readings (please site) and your reflection should be approximately 2 paragraphs (each) in length. (Value of the final grade: 24% -- 24 points.)

4. During the semester, attend one Church Council or Administrative Board meeting of an United Methodist church and observe what organizational structure is assumed by the church. In light of ¶ 242, 243.1, 243.2 and 246.2 briefly describe in one or two paragraphs the church’s organizational plan. Is it the “basic organizational plan” described in ¶243? Does it use the former Administrative Board and Council of Ministries structure? Does it use simply the old “Administrative Council” structure (which carries both the responsibilities of Administrative Board and Council of Ministries)? Does it use some alternative structure per ¶246.2 and ¶242? (Value of final grade: 5% -- 5 points)

5. Submit a reading report by the last day of class that details your completion of the assigned reading for the semester. Your grade will be adversely affected by any less than full completion. (Value of final grade: 10% -- 10 points)

6. Satisfactorily do one of the following: (Value of the final grade: 50% -- 50 points.)
   --Take the final examination.
   --Submit a ten-page paper on an issue related to United Methodist polity. It is advisable that you review your topic with me before you begin.

   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 and 12-pitch Times New Roman (or comparable) font.
   2. Format of the paper:
      a. Title Page (Title, name, instructor’s name, course, and date)
      b. Introduction, in which you state the paper’s purpose.
      c. Main Body. In writing your paper:
         --State the issue and any historical developments which have impinge upon it.
--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.

d. Conclusion
e. Be careful to acknowledge all 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 that includes all sources used in your research paper.

3. Additional Comments:
--Your paper will be graded for correct spelling, grammar, syntax, proper expressions, and logical flow. Proofread and edit carefully!
--Submit completed paper stapled in the top, left corner.
--Failure to turn in completed research paper on December 4 results in a letter grade 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).

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   Good work: strong, significant achievement of course objectives
B   3.00   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

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.
## CL553 CALENDAR
### Fall 2002

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>Reading from Discipline*</th>
<th>TOPIC of Class and Reading from Frank* (Topic for Class is Subject to Change)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sept. 4</td>
<td></td>
<td>Syllabus and Introduction to Polity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept. 11</td>
<td>Pp. v-20</td>
<td>Historical Considerations in the Formation of UM Polity Chs. 1, 2</td>
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<td>Sept. 18</td>
<td>Pp. 21-74</td>
<td>Constitution and Doctrinal Standards Ch. 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept. 25</td>
<td>Pp. 74-86,</td>
<td>Our Theological Task Ch. 4</td>
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<td>Oct. 2</td>
<td>Pp. 87-94, 95-122</td>
<td>The Ministry of All Christians and Social Principles Ch. 5 Class Evaluations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct. 9</td>
<td>Pp. 123-181</td>
<td>The Local Church Ch. 6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct. 16</td>
<td>Pp. 182-228</td>
<td>*The Ministry of the Ordained Ch. 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct. 23</td>
<td>Pp. 228-265</td>
<td>The Superintendency Ch. 8 Organizational Plan of Local Church Due Guest Speaker: Dr. James Heidinger, Good News Magazine</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct. 30</td>
<td>Pp. 267-294</td>
<td>The Conferences – General, Jurisdictional and Central Ch. 9</td>
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<td>Nov. 6</td>
<td>Pp. 295-349</td>
<td>The Annual Conferences Ch. 10</td>
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<td>Nov. 13</td>
<td>Pp. 349-425</td>
<td>General Agencies and Church Property Ch. 11</td>
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<td>Nov. 20</td>
<td>Pp. 426-648, Pp. 649-685</td>
<td>Judicial Administration Ch. 12</td>
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<td>Nov. 25-29</td>
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<td>Reading Week</td>
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<td>Dec 9-13</td>
<td></td>
<td>FINAL EXAM WEEK (Exam date: Wednesday, Dec. 11)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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

REQUIRED TEXTS
Thomas Edward Frank, Polity, Practice, and the Mission of the United Methodist Church

RELATED TEXTS
OTHER RESOURCES


“John Wesley: Concept of “Connection” and Theological Pluralism,” *Wesleyan Theological Journal*, 36, no. 2 (Fall 2001), pp. 88-104.
