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CL 553 United Methodist Polity and Discipline

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

Mixed Media Course: This is a mixed media course that will link students on the Wilmore and Orlando campuses as well as the satellite location at Gulf Breeze United Methodist Church (http://gbumc.org/). We will be using the seminary’s ExL online resources along with the three Saturday video link class days. One of the outcomes we intend is to facilitate a rich interaction between three different learning communities. This will require everyone to have a First Class account with the seminary by September 7, the first week of the course. At least one quarter of your grade will be earned online, so we will take advantage of the virtual classroom in between the monthly video classes.

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 anyone seeking ordination in the United Methodist Church.

I come to the course as superintendent of the Findlay District in the West Ohio Conference. I also serve as a half-time associate professor of leadership at Asbury. I have pastored a two point charge, a single point charge and been on staff of a mega-church. I had the privilege of representing our conference at the 2004 General and Jurisdictional Conferences and have just been elected to serve on the general board of the UM Publishing House.

Objectives (As identified by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry of the United Methodist Church)

1. To examine the development of United Methodist polity from a historical and theological perspective:
   a. To understand the implicit and explicit structural expressions of ecclesiology.
   b. To become familiar with the nature and implications of connectionalism and itinerancy for ministry.
c. To understand the annual conference as the basic unit of The United Methodist Church.
d. To study and understand the covenantal relationship between ministers (lay, diaconal and ordained) in The United Methodist Church.

2. To use the Discipline (BOD) and the Book of Resolutions (BOR) as working handbooks for mission and ministry.

   a. To understand the process by which leaders are selected.
   b. To gain a knowledge of the selection, deployment, evaluation and termination of clergy.
   c. To become familiar with the decision-making process at all levels of the church.
   d. To become aware of the required structure and alternative organization of the local church.
   e. To examine connectionalism in relationship to church property.
   f. To understand the judicial structures, the appeal and review process.
   g. To gain an awareness of the role and functioning of the general boards and agencies.
   h. To understand the role of caucuses and special groups.
   i. To perceive the nature of ecumenical relationships.

Course Requirements:

1. Since this is a distributed learning course on three sites, full engagement in discussion and interaction will be the norm. We will work through cases and/or mock trials during the course, so plan on some group collaboration. In between video-linked class days, we will utilize ExL resources weekly to continue the learning community. A word on posting to ExL: please keep all posts to a maximum of 50 words and use full grammar and style (i.e., avoid using e-mail short hand). You will be assigned to a mixed team online and then groups on each site on the three Saturdays. Fifty percent of your grade will be based on your interaction throughout the course.

2. You will be expected to fulfill all class requirements on time. Under dire circumstances, arrangements may be made beforehand to adjust a due date. Otherwise, assignments will be accepted with penalty after the dates due.

3. Follow the course outline for reading assignments. Readings must be completed before the day assigned for discussion. Note that much of the reading is front-loaded, i.e. you will need to start early to prepare for our first day together.
4. Write a three to five page double-spaced summary of your local church describing its administrative structure and ministries. How closely does the church match the BOD? Are there any changes you would suggest in their structure and ministries that would both align with the BOD and increase its effectiveness? Use (cite) the BOD and other course material to support your conclusions. Only electronic copies of the paper will be accepted (i.e. no hard copies given the distance between sites). This assignment will count for one quarter of your grade. Due October 16.

5. Open book exam. Due at 5 p.m. Eastern on November 29. The exam will be web-based and will count for one quarter of your grade.

Rubric for Online Posts:

Exceptional: Weekly posts that reflect clear, precise and creative insights that interact with peers, the course material and life experiences. Does not exceed 50 words per post. Shows unusual integration and application to one’s own development. Outstanding model of theological reflection and critical thinking.

Good: Regular and strong insights that interact with peers, the course material and draws upon life experiences. Shows genuine points of application of the course to one’s own development. Impressive theological reflection and critical thinking.

Acceptable: A minimum of 75% weekly frequency of posts that interact with peers, the course material and occasional links to life experiences. Minimal application to one’s own development. Moderate theological reflection and critical thinking.

Rubric for Papers:

Exceptional: Clear, precise and creative writing that interacts both with the course material and outside sources (five or more outside citations) and experiences. Shows unusual integration and application of the course to one’s own development. Adheres to Slade’s guidelines for form and style. Outstanding model of theological reflection and critical thinking.

Good: Strong writing that interacts with the course material and draws upon life experiences. Shows genuine points of application of the course to one’s own development with some use of outside sources. Strong form and style. Impressive theological reflection and critical thinking.
Acceptable: Average writing that interacts with the course material and occasional links to life experiences. Few, if any, outside sources. Little application to one’s own development. Generally consistent form and style. Moderate theological reflection and critical thinking.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Required Reading


http://www.umc.org/interior.asp?mid=166 [Become familiar with the resources of this UMC site.]

Related Resources


____. Guidelines for Leadership in The United Methodist Church, 2001-2004, Cokesbury


# Course Outline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date Due</th>
<th>Readings</th>
<th>Topics and Text Readings</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>September 10</td>
<td></td>
<td>Post a self-description to the First Class Discussion Center. Secondly, post a response to any one social principle which includes a biblical citation to support your stance.</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 18</td>
<td>Video Link</td>
<td>Introduction and Overview</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BOD pp. v – 21</td>
<td>The Nature of Polity</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Frank, Chap 1 &amp; 2</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>BOD pp. 22 – 86</td>
<td>Constitution and Doctrinal Standards</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Frank, Chapter 3</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Tuell, Chapter I</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BOD pp. 87 – 94</td>
<td>The Ministry of All Christians</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Frank, Chapter 5</td>
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<td>Tuell, Chapter II</td>
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<td></td>
<td>BOD pp. 95 – 122</td>
<td>The Social Principles</td>
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<td>Frank, Chapter 4</td>
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<td></td>
<td>BOD pp. 23 – 181</td>
<td>The Local Church</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Frank, Chapter 6</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Tuell, Chapter III</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 25</td>
<td></td>
<td>Post a reply to any student’s social principles response from September 10. Include your biblical and/or theological foundation for your reply.</td>
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<td>October 8</td>
<td></td>
<td>Post a 50 word statement you would convey to a District Committee on Ordained Ministry describing your call.</td>
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<td>October 16</td>
<td>BOD pp. 182 – 265</td>
<td>The Ministry of the Ordained; Clergy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Assignment</td>
<td>Relevant Chapters/Sections</td>
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<td>October 23</td>
<td>As a team, select one general agency and create a one page summary of the agency and describe what issues are at the forefront of their work currently.</td>
<td>Frank, Chapter 7 Tuell, Chapter IV, BOD pp. 267 – 294 Frank, Chapter 8 Tuell Chapter V</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 30</td>
<td>Post the team’s agency summary to the discussion center. Review each team’s agency posts.</td>
<td>BOD pp. 295 – 425 Frank, Chap 9 &amp; 10 Tuell, Chapter VI, BOD pp. 426 – 648 Tuell, Chapter VII</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 3</td>
<td>Post a response to any one of the hundreds of changes approved by General Conference. Include the 2000 BOD or BOR citation so we can see what to expect in the 2004 BOD or BOR when they come out in 2005.</td>
<td><a href="http://www.umc.org/Calms/Petition.asp?mid=2886&amp;PlenarySupport=yes">http://www.umc.org/Calms/Petition.asp?mid=2886&amp;PlenarySupport=yes</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 10</td>
<td>Post a response to any one Judicial Council decision that includes a BOD and/or biblical citation to support your stance.</td>
<td><a href="http://www.umc.org/interior_judicial.asp?mid=263">http://www.umc.org/interior_judicial.asp?mid=263</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>November 20</td>
<td>BOD pp. 649 – 685 Frank, Chapter 11 Tuell, Chapter VIII, Church Property</td>
<td>Video Link, Frank, Chapter 11 Tuell, Chapter VIII, BOD pp. 649 – 685 Frank, Chapter 11 Tuell, Chapter VIII</td>
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<td>November 29</td>
<td>Final Exam Due @ 5 p.m. Eastern</td>
<td>Final Exam, BOD pp. 687 – 721 Frank, Chap 12 &amp; 13 Tuell, Chap IX &amp; X, Judicial Administration</td>
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