Greetings! Welcome to CL 553 and the study of United Methodist Polity. I pray that the Lord will strengthen your ministry through our discussion of our United Methodist system and structure. Our focus will be on the practical and ministry oriented issues related to the United Methodist Church. I trust that this will be an adventure that will impact your thinking and your leadership within the church. Please feel free to contact me anytime. I want this course to be a vital part of your growth as a Christian leader in the church.

1). Course Description:

This course is 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 probationary membership in the various Annual 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.

2) Instructor: Randy Jessen

I am an Ordained Elder in Full Connection with the Rocky Mountain Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church. I graduated from Asbury with a Master of Divinity degree in 1984 and again with a Doctor of Ministry degree in 1997. My years of service include 21 years in pastoral ministry through the Rocky Mountain Annual Conference. My current appointment is as the Dean of the Beeson International Center for Biblical Preaching and Church Leadership. Even though I live in Kentucky, I remain in service as a member of the Rocky Mountain Annual Conference Board of Ordained Ministry. I have a heart for local church ministry and a love for ministry with children. My wife (Sue) and I are the founders of two mission agencies that provide for abandoned children in Romania. Global Hope (www.globalhope.org) owns and operates three Christian group homes for abandoned children in Arad, Romania. They also launched StarStone International to support pediatric HIV/AIDS clinic in western Romania.
My physical office (BC103) is located on the Wilmore campus on the lower level of the Beeson International Center. Please call Jenny Carson at 859-858-2254 for an appointment. You may also contact me direct through my office phone at 859-858-2060 or email me at randy_jessen@asburyseminary.edu. You can also call me on Skype at randyjessen. I operate on Eastern time.

3) 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.

4) 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 BOD 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.

5) Course Requirements:

A. Consistent online attendance is expected. Active class participation (i.e., reading pre-assigned texts, presence for the entire class session, responsive in asking relevant questions, and entering into our discussions) is vital.  
(Value of the final grade: 10 points)
B. Read the following resources:


C. Meet with a United Methodist Pastor to get that pastor’s perspective on how the Book of Discipline impacts the overall ministry of the church. Provide a two page summary of that conversation.

*(Value of the final grade: 5 points)*

D. Attend one Church Council or Administrative Board (other than your own church) meeting of a United Methodist congregation and observe what organizational structure is assumed by the church. In light of ¶ 242, 243.1, 243.2 and 246.2 briefly describe in 500 words 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 or does it use the Administrative Council structure?
- Does it use some alternative structure per ¶ 246.2 and ¶ 242?
- 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?

*(Value of final grade: 5 points)*

E. Research option: Choose one due the last day class.

- Write an eight to ten page paper research paper on a key element of United Methodist Polity. Touch on the history, theology, and impact of the polity element. Reflect on it in light of the current state of the church and with a focus on the future.
- Write your responses to the BOD questions related to becoming a probationary member of your Annual Conference.

*(Value of final grade: 30 points)*
F. Comprehensive Final Exam

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. *(Value of the final grade: 50 points.)*

**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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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-94.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>85-89.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>82.5-84.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80-82.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77.5-79.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>75-77.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>72.5-74.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>below 72</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**Summary of Grading Factors**

- Class attendance and participation: 10 Points
- Interview with a pastor: 5 Points
- Church visit and written reflection: 5 Points
- Research paper: 30 Points
- Final Exam: 50 Points

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**CL 553 Calendar**

**Spring 2008**

**UM Polity and Discipline**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Module Dates</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Module Topic</th>
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</table>
| Feb 11-17    | BOD     | Frank   | Syllabus review
|              |         |         | Introduction to Polity |
|              |         |         | Class member introductions |
| Feb 18-24    | Pp. v-20| Chapters 1-2 | Historical Formation of UM Polity |
| Feb 25- Mar 2 | Pp. 21-73 | Chapter 3 | Constitution and Doctrine |
| Mar3-9       | Pp. 74-86| Chapter 4 | Our Theological Task |
| Mar 10-16    | Pp. 87-125| Chapter 5 | Ministry of all Christians / Social Principles |
| Mar 17-23    | Pp. 127-193| Chapter 6 | The Local Church |
| Mar 24-30    | Pp. 194-283| Chapter 7 | The Ministry of the Ordained |
Note: Local Pastor Interviews and Local Church Reports are due March 28, 2008

Mar 31-Apr 6  Reading Week / Spring Break  No Class Meetings

Apr 7-13  Pp. 285-311  Chapter 8  The Superintendency

Apr 14-20  Pp. 451-670  Chapter 9  Administrative Order

Apr 21-27  Pp. 351-450  Chapter 10  The Annual Conference

Apr 28- May 4  Pp. 671-708  Chapter 11  Church Property

May 5-11  Pp. 709-746  Chapter 12  Judicial Administration

All research papers are due by Friday May 16, 2007 11:59 PM Eastern Time

May 19-23  Final Exam Week

Virtual Support Contact Information:

For technical support, library research support, library loans and virtual media contact Information Commons: 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: ExL_Office@asburyseminary.edu Phone: (859) 858-2393

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. 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/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

The copyright law of the United States (title 17, United States Code) governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyrighted material. Under certain conditions specified in the law, libraries and archives are authorized to furnish a photocopy or other reproduction. One of these specific conditions is that the photocopy or reproduction is not to be "used for any purpose other than private study, scholarship, or research." If a user makes a request for, or later uses, a photocopy or reproduction for purposes in excess of "fair use," that user may be liable for copyright infringement. This institution reserves the right to refuse to accept a copying order if, in its judgment, fulfillment of the order would involve violation of copyright law.

Class Communication:

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 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.

3. **Resources**, a section located on the left side, provides links to items you will want to use often in the semester.
REQUIRED TEXTS

Thomas Edward Frank, Polity, Practice, and the Mission of the United Methodist Church
Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1997 (or later).


RELATED TEXTS