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CL 553 United Methodist Polity and Discipline

Steve Harper

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CL 553 United Methodist Polity and Discipline
Spring 2004
Thursday Evenings: 6:15 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.
---Selected Thursdays; specifics to be arranged---

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Purpose

This course introduces students to the organizational structure of The United Methodist Church, with a particular emphasis upon the use of polity to strengthen pastoral leadership in the connectional system and congregation.

Course Objectives as Identified by the GBHEM of The UMC

1. To examine the development of United Methodist polity from an historical and theological perspective:
 - a. to understand structural expressions of ecclesiology
 - b. to become familiar with connectionalism and itineracy
 - c. to understand the annual conference
 - d. to understand the covenantal nature of ministry

2. To use the *Book of Discipline* and *Book of Resolutions* as working handbooks for mission and ministry:
 - a. to understand the process by which leaders are selected
 - b. to learn how clergy are selected, deployed, evaluated, and terminated
 - c. to be familiar with all levels of the church's decision-making process
 - d. to be aware of the required and alternative organizational models
 - e. to examine connectionalism in relation to church property
 - f. to understand the church's judicial process
 - g. to see the nature and ministry of general boards and agencies
 - h. to discover the role of caucuses and special groups in the church
 - i. to perceive the nature of ecumenical relationships.

Required Texts

The Book of Discipline, 2000
The Book of Resolutions, 2000
Thomas E. Frank, *Polity, Practice and Mission of The United Methodist Church*
Jack Tuell, *The Organization of The United Methodist Church, 2002*
William Willimon, *Calling and Character: Virtues of the Ordained Life*

Additional Useful Resources

Guidelines for Leading Your Congregation: 2001-2004
2004 Program Calendar

Decisions of the Judicial Council (see www.gcfa.org)

John Harnish, *The Orders of Ministry in The United Methodist Church*

Jack Seymour and Mary Ann Crain, *A Deacon's Heart*

Robert L. Wilson and Steve Harper, *Faith and Form*

Course Requirements

1. Attendance and active class participation (10%)
2. Group Reflection, Research, Reporting (30%)
3. Research Paper (30%)
4. Final Exam (30%)

Course Outline

February 19, 2004

Orientation

Group Assignments

Introduction

February 26, 2004

Read Frank, Chapters 1-4 (note: readings are prior to the class)

Read Tuell, Chapter 1

The Nature of Polity

The Constitution and Doctrinal Standards

March 11, 2004

Read Frank, Chapters 5-6

Read Tuell, Chapters 2-3

Group Meeting #1

The Ministry of All Christians

The Local Church

March 18, 2004

Read Frank, Chapter 7

Read Tuell, Chapter 4

Read Willimon

Group Meeting #2

The Ministry of the Ordained

April 8, 2004
Read Frank, Chapter 8
Read Tuell, Chapter 5
Group Meeting #3
The Superintendency

April 15, 2004
Read Frank, 9-10
Read Tuell, 6-7
Group Meeting #4
Administrative Order
The Conferences

April 22, 2004
Read Frank, Chapters 11-12
Read Tuell, Chapters 8-9
Group Meeting #5
Church Property
Judicial Administration

May 6, 2004
Read Frank, Conclusion
Read Tuell, Conclusion
Polity and the Future of the United Methodist Church
Final Exam

Just a reminder----because I inadvertently scheduled a class session for Maundy Thursday (April 8), I am hopeful that we can adjust the schedule, eliminating the class on 4-8 and adding it to 4-29. This would result in changes above as follows:

Current	4-8	4-15	4-22
Hoped For	4-15	4-22	4-29

The class would still end on May 6th as noted above.

We will make this decision at our first session.

