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# CL 553 United Methodist Polity and Discipline

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**CL553: UNITED METHODIST POLITY AND DISCIPLINE**  
**Spring 2000**  
**Tuesday, 10:00 – 11:40 a.m.**  
**David A. Dodge**

**PURPOSE**

This course seeks to introduce learners to the organizational structure of The United Methodist Church. It is designed to meet the Disciplinary requirement for all candidates for ordained ministry in The United Methodist Church.

**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 and the Book of Resolutions 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.

**REQUIRED TEXTS**

The Book of Discipline, 2000 United Methodist Publishing House  
The Book of Resolutions, 2000 United Methodist Publishing House  
Polity, Practice and Mission of The United Methodist Church, Thomas E. Frank, Abingdon, 1997  
The Organization of The United Methodist Church, 1997, Jack Tuell, Abingdon, 1997  
The Ordering of Ministry in The United Methodist Church, John E. Harnish, Abingdon, 2000  
Calling and Character: Virtues of the Ordained Life, Will Willimon, Abingdon, 2000

**ADDITIONAL RESOURCES** (not required for purchase)

A Deacon's Heart, Jack Seymour and Mary Ann Crain, Abingdon, 2000  
Guidelines for Leadership in The United Methodist Church, 2001-2004, Cokesbury

### **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

1. Attendance and active class participation is expected. Assignments are expected on the due date. Exceptions will be allowed only for extreme illness or emergency. Attendance and participation will account for 10% of the final grade.
2. Readings and written reflections on the assigned readings represent an important element of the course. It is expected that each student will have read the assignments for each particular class session and topic. It is also expected that each student will turn in a one to two page written reflection of the assigned reading. The written assignment is due on the date of the topic discussion in class. Written reflections will account for 30% of the final grade.
3. Each student will prepare and present an eight to ten page paper on a self-selected topic related to United Methodist polity. The paper should present an issue related to our polity, discuss why it is an issue, and take a position that is supported through a theological and reasonable discourse. Sources should be cited via endnotes. Careful attention should be given to grammatical correctness. Topics should be selected and presented for approval by March 5. All papers will be due at the beginning of the class session on April 30. The paper will account for 30% of the final grade.
4. There will be a final exam. It will be an essay format that will examine each student's general understanding of UM polity. The Book of Discipline will be allowed for use during the course of completing the exam. The exam will account for 30% of the final grade.

### **COURSE OUTLINE**

<b>Date</b>	<b>BOD Readings</b>	<b>Topics and Text Readings</b>
February 12		Introduction and Overview
February 19		No Class
February 26	pp. v – 21	The Nature of Polity Frank, Chapters 1 & 2
March 5	pp. 22 – 86	Constitution and Doctrinal Standards Frank, Chapter 3 Tuell, Chapter I
March 12	pp. 87 – 94	The Ministry of All Christians Frank, Chapter 5 Tuell, Chapter II
March 19	pp. 95 – 122	The Social Principles Frank, Chapter 4
March 26	pp. 23 – 181	The Local Church Frank, Chapter 6 Tuell, Chapter III
April 9* Meet one hour earlier	pp. 182 – 265	The Ministry of the Ordained; Clergy Ethics Frank, Chapter 7 Tuell, Chapter IV Harnish Willimon
April 16	pp. 267 – 294	The Superintendency

		Frank, Chapter 8 Tuell Chapter V
April 23	pp. 295 – 425	The Conferences Frank, Chapters 9 & 10 Tuell, Chapter VI
April 30 <b>Papers Due</b>	pp. 426 – 648	General Agencies Tuell, Chapter VII
May 7	pp. 649 – 685	Church Property Frank, Chapter 11 Tuell, Chapter VIII
May 14	pp. 687 – 721	Judicial Administration Frank, Chapters 12 & 13 Tuell, Chapters IX & X
May 21		Final Exam

Please be aware that I am available to you for questions or concerns. You can arrange to see me immediately following most class sessions. It will be helpful to me to know that in advance. You can contact me by phone at 1-800-282-8011 extension 133, or by e-mail at [ddodge@flumc.org](mailto:ddodge@flumc.org).