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CL 553 United Methodist Polity and Discipline

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UNITED METHODIST POLITY AND DISCIPLINE
Spring 2005
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, 2004 United Methodist Publishing House
The Book of Resolutions, 2004 United Methodist Publishing House
Polity, Practice and Mission of The United Methodist Church, 2nd Edition, Thomas E. Frank, Abingdon, 2001

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES (not required for purchase)

The Ordering of Ministry in The United Methodist Church, John E. Harnish, Abingdon, 2000
A Deacon's Heart, Jack Seymour and Mary Ann Crain, Abingdon, 2000
Guidelines for Leadership in The United Methodist Church, 2001-2004, Cokesbury
2003 Program Calendar, United Methodist Communications
Decisions of the Judicial Council of The United Methodist Church, available at www.gcfa.org

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 present in class three reflection papers on the assigned readings. The written assignment and its oral presentation are due on the date of the topic discussion in class. The reflections will account for 30% of the final grade.
3. Each student will prepare and present an eight to ten page paper or an approved project on a self-selected topic related to United Methodist polity. The paper/project 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 15. All papers will be due at the beginning of the class session on April 26. The paper will account for 30% of the final grade. It is acceptable for class members to work in groups up to three class members on a common topic. The group will present one collected work for 25% of the final grade. Each group member would also present a written reflection about his/her individual learnings regarding United Methodist polity that would account for 5% 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 be distributed at the end of class on May 10 and will be due by Tuesday, May 17 via e-mail. The exam will account for 30% of the final grade.

COURSE OUTLINE

Date	BOD Readings	Topics and Text Readings
February 8		Introduction and Overview
February 15	pp. v – 21	The Nature of Polity Frank, Chapters 1 & 2
February 22	pp. 22 – 86	Constitution and Doctrinal Standards Frank, Chapter 3
March 1	pp. 87 – 94	The Ministry of All Christians Frank, Chapter 5
March 8	No Class	
March 15	pp. 95 – 122	The Social Principles Frank, Chapter 4
March 29* Meet one hour earlier	pp. 23 – 181	The Local Church Frank, Chapter 6
April 5	pp. 182 – 265	The Ministry of the Ordained; Clergy Ethics Frank, Chapter 7
April 12	pp. 267 – 294	The Superintendency Frank, Chapter 8
April 19	pp. 295 – 425	The Conferences Frank, Chapters 9 & 10
April 26 Papers/projects due	pp. 426 – 648	General Agencies Tuell, Chapter VII
May 3	pp. 649 – 685	Church Property Frank, Chapter 11
May 10	pp. 687 – 721	Judicial Administration Frank, Chapters 12 & 13
May 17		Final Exam Due

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.