

**The Polity of the United Methodist Church**  
**Fall Semester 2014**  
**Schleigle Room 120**  
**Thursdays 4:00 – 5:50 p.m.**  
**Jean Hawxhurst**

**Description:**

This course deals with the polity, structure and procedures of The United Methodist Church (relates to MDiv SLO 4). The course is designed to meet one of the requirements in the process of ordination in the United Methodist Church, and as such it is tailored for those who will be serving vocationally. It is a two-credit course.

**At the Completion of the Course, Students Should Be Able to:**

1. Have a working knowledge of the content of the United Methodist Book of Discipline and Book of Resolutions.
2. Be able to describe both main sides of some of the current issues facing the United Methodist Church and be able to articulate her/his belief about them.
3. Explain the polity of the United Methodist Church and possibility for future changes to it.

**Method:**

The teaching-learning approaches used in the course include: discussions, lectures, videos, speakers, student presentations, case studies and reading. The main text will be *The United Methodist Book of Discipline*, but other books will supplement it.

**Instructor:**

Jean Hawxhurst is currently the District Superintendent of the Frankfort District in the Kentucky Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church. She earned her undergraduate degree in Mathematics and Education from the University of Richmond, her MDiv degree from Lexington Theological Seminary, and her DMin degree in theology from Louisville Seminary. She also holds a certificate from the University of Geneva and the World Council of Churches in ecumenism. (Two guest speakers are also scheduled to meet with the class: Rev. Dr. Marian McClure Taylor, the Executive Director of the Kentucky Council of Churches and Bishop G. Lindsey Davis, the Resident Bishop of the Kentucky Annual Conference.)

**Use of Inclusive Language**

In accordance with seminary policy, students are to use inclusive language in class discussions and in written and oral communication by using language representative of the whole human community in respect to gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, age, and physical and intellectual capacities. For more information see: <http://lpts.libguides.com/content.php?pid=469569&sid=4083885> Direct quotations from theological texts and translations of the Bible do not have to be altered to conform to this policy. In your own writing, however, when referring to God, you are encouraged to use a variety of images and metaphors, reflecting the richness of the Bible's images for God.

**Academic Honesty:**

All work turned in to the instructors is expected to be the work of the student whose name appears on the assignment. Any borrowing of the ideas or the words of others must be acknowledged by quotation marks (where appropriate) and by citation of author and source. Use of another's language or ideas from online resources is included in this policy, and must be attributed to author and source of the work

being cited. Failure to do so constitutes plagiarism, and may result in failure of the course. Two occurrences of plagiarism may result in dismissal from the Seminary. Students unfamiliar with issues related to academic honesty can find help from the staff in the Academic Support Center. For more information, see the Policy for Academic Honesty in the Student Handbook.

### **Special Accommodations:**

Students requiring accommodations for a documented physical or learning disability should be in contact with the Director of the Academic Support Center ([kmapes@lpts.edu](mailto:kmapes@lpts.edu)) during the first two weeks of a semester (or before the semester begins) and should speak with the instructor as soon as possible to arrange appropriate adjustments. Students with environmental or other sensitivities that may affect their learning are also encouraged to speak with the instructor.

### **Citation Policy:**

Citations in your papers should follow Seminary standards, which are based on these guides (copies of which are available at the library and in the Academic Support Center):

American Psychological Association. *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*. 6th ed. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2010.

Turabian, Kate L., Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams. *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations: Chicago Style for Students and Researchers*. 8th ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013.

*The Chicago Manual of Style*. 16th ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010.

### **Attendance Policy:**

According to the Seminary catalog, students are expected to attend class meetings regularly. In case of illness or emergency, students are asked to notify the instructor of their planned absence from class, either prior to the session or within 24 hours of the class session. Six or more absences (1/4 of the course) may result in a low or failing grade in the course.

### **Course Requirements:**

1. Regular attendance and participation in class sessions (5%)
2. Assigned readings (5%)
3. Two brief papers on polity and *The Book of Discipline* (20% each)
4. Class presentation and Case Study (10%)
5. Midterm and Final examinations (20% each)

### **Grading Scale:**

A+ NOT USED	B+ = 87-89	C+ = 77-79	D+ = 67-69
A = 93 and above	B = 83-86	C = 73-76	D = 63-66
A- = 90-92	B- = 80-82	C- = 70-76	D- = 60-62
			<b>F = 59 and below</b>

### **Course Outline:**

1. Overviews, History and Getting Started
2. Doctrinal Standards
3. The Local Church, Property Issues and Presentations Begin
4. Ordained Ministry and First Paper Due
5. Conferencing
6. Ecumenical Relationships
7. Administration, Boards and Agencies and Mid Term Exam

8. Judicial Administration
9. Social Principles
10. The Book of Resolutions and Second Paper Due
11. Issues in the Connection
12. Final Exam

### **Basic Texts for the Course:**

*The Book of Discipline*. Nashville: The United Methodist Publishing House, 2012.  
*The Book of Resolutions*. Nashville: The United Methodist Publishing House, 2012.  
 Tuell, Jack. *The Organization of the United Methodist Church*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2009.  
 Frank, Thomas Edward. *Polity, Practice and the Mission of the United Methodist Church*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2006.

### **Strongly Recommended Texts:**

*The United Methodist Hymnal*. Nashville: The United Methodist Publishing House, 1989.  
*The United Methodist Book of Worship*. Nashville: The United Methodist Publishing House, 1992.  
 Rendel, Gil. *Back to Zero: The Search to Rediscover the Methodist Movement*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2011.  
 McNeal, Reggie. *The Present Future: Six Tough Questions for the Church*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2003.  
 Quinn, Robert. *Deep Change: Discovering the Leader Within*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1996.

### **Course Outline:**

#### September 4: Session 1: "An Overview of the Course and *The Book of Discipline*"

*Objectives: This session will assist you to:*

1. Understand the overview and expectations of the course.
2. Have a basic understanding of the purpose of the UM Discipline

*Assignments: Please come to class already having:*

1. Read *The Book of Discipline*(2012) pp. v-vi and 11-43 (P1-101)
2. Read Tuell, *The Organization of the United Methodist Church*, pp. 11-43
3. Read Frank, *Polity, Practice and the Mission of the United Methodist Church*, pp. 15-156

#### September 11: Session 2: "Standards, Tasks and Ministries"

*Objectives: This session will assist you to:*

1. Have a working knowledge of our doctrinal standards
2. Know your role in the theological task of the church
3. Be able to explain the ministry of all Christians

*Assignments: Please come to class already having:*

1. Read *The Discipline*, pp45-101 (P102-143)
2. Read Tuell, pp. 44-45
3. Read Frank, pp. 159-172

#### September 18: Session 3: "Church Structure and Property Issues"

*Objectives: This session will assist you to:*

1. Have a working knowledge of the basic structure of the local congregation
2. Understand what to do when there are issues with church property

*Assignments: Please come to class already having:*

1. Read *The Discipline*, pp. 143-215 and 21-763 (P201-271 and 2501-2552)
2. Read Tuell, pp. 46-73
3. Read Frank, pp. 173-194

September 25: Session 4: "The Ministry of the Ordained"

Objectives: This session will assist you to:

1. Identify the different tracks of ordination and begin to claim which one is yours
2. Understand the basics of the process toward ordination

Assignments: Please come to class already having:

1. Read *The Discipline*, pp. 217-313 (P301-370)
2. Read Tuell, pp. 74-105
3. Read Frank, pp. 195-228
4. Written your first paper

October 2: Session 5: "Holy Conferencing"

Objectives: This session will assist you to:

1. Explain the importance of connectionalism and conferencing
2. Describe the various forms of conferencing and why each exists

Assignments: Please come to class already having:

1. Read *The Discipline*, pp. 315-506 (P501-672)
2. Read Tuell, pp. 115-128
3. Read Frank, pp. 255-274 and 285-298

October 9: Session 6: "Ecumenism"

Objectives: This session will assist you to:

1. Understand how ecumenism is core to our theological task
2. Know how to get involved ecumenically on a local and state level
3. Have a working knowledge of some of the differences in polity among denominations

Assignments: Please come to class already having:

1. Read *The Discipline*, pp. 342-349 (P431-442)
2. Prepared any questions from your studies in the first 6 sessions

October 23: Session 7: "Administration"

Objectives: This session will assist you to:

1. Identify the boards and agencies of the denomination
2. Explain why boards and agencies support the connection

Assignments: Please come to class already having:

1. Read *The Discipline*, pp. 507-719 (P701-2401)
2. Read Tuell, pp. 129-146
3. Read Frank, pp. 275-284
4. Prepared yourself for your mid-term exam

October 30: Session 8: "Judicial Polity"

Objectives: This session will assist you to:

1. Understand the judicial branch of our structure
2. Know what chargeable offenses are and what happens when they are committed.

Assignments: Please come to class already having:

1. Read *The Discipline*, pp. 765-804 (P2601-2719)
2. Read Tuell, pp. 157-161
3. Read Frank, pp. 311-320

November 6: Session 9: "Our Social Principles"

Objectives: This session will assist you to:

1. Have a working knowledge of the current social principles
2. Be able to articulate your opinions on some of them
3. Understand the role they play in our current and future conferencing

Assignments: Please come to class already having:

1. Read *The Discipline*, pp. 103-143 (P160-166)
2. Read the handouts given at the last class session.

November 13: Session 10: "The Book of Resolutions"

Objectives: This session will assist you to:

1. Have a working knowledge of the Book of Resolutions
2. Understand the process of how a resolution is made

Assignments: Please come to class already having:

1. Skimmed through the Book of Resolutions
2. Read in particular pp. 5-38
3. Prepared yourself to discuss one resolution in particular of your choice
4. Written your second paper

November 20: Session 11: "Oversight"

Objectives: This session will assist you to:

1. Have interaction with the current Bishop of the Kentucky Annual Conference
2. Understand the roles of the District Superintendent and Bishop

Assignments: Please come to class already having:

1. Read *The Discipline*, pp. 315-349 (P401-442)
2. Read Tuell, pp. 106-114
3. Read Frank, pp. 229-254

December 4: Session 12: "Issues in the Connection"

Objectives: This session will assist you to:

1. Know what some of the current issues facing our denomination are
2. Be able to articulate both sides of some of those issues
3. Be able to articulate the direction in which you hope we will go

Assignments: Please come to class already having:

1. Read Tuell, pp. 162-166
2. Read Frank, pp. 321-328
3. Read the handouts given at the last class session

December 11: Session 13: "Final Exam"