

Church Administration and Polity COS #224

Course of Study School of Ohio at Methodist Theological School of Ohio Summer, 2024

**July 12 & 13, August 2 & 3
Fridays 3-5 pm, Saturdays 9-11 am, 1-3 pm**

**Rev. Dr. Ellis E. Conley
conleyellis@aol.com**

See syllabus on Populi for phone number

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION (GOALS AND OBJECTIVES)

This course focuses upon developing the student's competency as an administrator in a United Methodist congregation.

Students will be able to:

1. Articulate a biblical and theological understanding of polity.
2. Understand and explain the polity of The United Methodist Church, including conferencing, oversight, and discipline.
3. Articulate the nature of stewardship biblically and theologically.
4. Identify techniques and develop skills as effective administrators of local churches, including financial management.

(from Course of Study School of Ohio, Course Descriptions)

II. SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

Students shall understand that our United Methodist polity as expressed in the UM Book of Discipline organizes us for mission and helps us accomplish our purpose of making disciples rather than hindering us. The course will demonstrate how the distinguishing marks of United Methodism (connectional, disciplined, catholic, itinerant) weave throughout our polity. The administration of the local church unites mission, discipleship, and leadership development. Stewardship of all of God's gifts results in vital congregations and ministries.

II. TEXTBOOKS

Required:

The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist 2016, The United Methodist Publishing House.

Christopher, J. Clif, Not Your Parents' Offering Plate, Abingdon Press, 2008.

Warner, Lacey C., The Method Of Our Mission, Abingdon Press, 2014.

Weems, Lovett H. Jr., Leadership in the Wesleyan Spirit, Abingdon Press, 1999.

Recommended:

Lencioni, Patrick, The Better Pastor, Lighthouse Catholic Publishing, 2016

Lencioni, Patric, The Ideal Team Player, Jossey-Bass, 2016

III. CLASS STANDARDS

A. Wesleyan “Rule of Life”:

- Do no harm
- Do good
- Attend to the ordinances of God (spiritual discipline).

(General Rules, Discipline 2016)

B. Inclusive language

It is expected that students be committed to equality for women and men of every racial and ethnic background. Students and instructor are to use language which exemplifies respect, dignity, and equality in conversations with colleagues, in public discourse, in classroom discussions, and in writings. Class participants will be expected to use inclusive language in all writings and during class discussion & participation. If you have specific questions, please see the instructor. (Helpful resource, *Words that Hurt, Words that Heal (new edition)* (Cokesbury.com download, original 1980 resource)

C. Academic Responsibility

Student integrity regarding all work assigned in this class is a basic expectation of the learning community. (see page 14, *Course of Study School of Ohio Student Handbook* – “Academic Responsibility”)

D. Attendance

Instructor expects timely participation of students; tardiness is a sign of disrespect to others. Extenuating circumstances should be reported to instructor and COS Dean immediately. (see page 5, *Course of Study School of Ohio Student Handbook* – Attendance Policy)

E. Confidentiality

It is imperative that students do not share information that is confidential, privileged, or proprietary in nature. In addition, students are expected to honor the privacy and confidentiality of their classmates by not disclosing conversations with those outside of the zoom session classrooms.

IV. ASSIGNMENTS, GRADING, AND EVALUATION

Note: All assignments are due and expected on time. If because of some extenuating circumstances you are unable to meet a given deadline, you must contact the instructor before the deadline in question is expected. Failure to do so will result in a lower grade for the assignment. No Incomplete grade can be granted in this class.

Helpful hint - make a printed copy of all written work e-mailed to the instructor.

A. Class participation (16% of final grade) COS requires that students attend all class sessions in order to receive credit for the course. No “cuts” or “excused absences” are allowed for church, community, family, or other business. In extreme cases, such as serious illness or a family emergency, an additional paper on the reading material of the missed session will be required and negotiated with the instructor. A student missing 20% or more of the classroom work shall not receive credit for the class.

1. Timely, careful reading, and completion of assignments in preparation for class participation is expected.
2. Class discussion through verbal contributions including any small group is expected; respectful and hospitable listening to contributions by others is a class norm. Each class member must contribute regularly to discussions without monopolizing the time.

B. Initial Paper “Living the Theological Task and Mission in My Setting” (20% of final grade) (due Friday, July 12)

The paper must be 5-6 pages long, double spaced, 12-point font. No more than 6 pages. The following guidelines are provided to help organize your thoughts. (*Your paper must include these themes. Be creative.*)

- What is our Theological Task as United Methodists as defined by the Discipline.
- What are the four theological guidelines, distinctions, and sources of United Methodism (often called the “Quadrilaterals”)?
- Describe the church/charge where you have been assigned to serve. Large, small, rural, urban, community church, family chapel, multi-generational. How has the church changed over the past 10 years, 20 years?

- Describe the location and community that surrounds it. What sort of folks live in the community? How has it changed in the past 10 years, 20 years?
- What are the significant ministries of the church/charge that connect it with the community in involvement, ministry and outreach?
- How does your church/charge fulfill the United Methodist mission statement? (P120, BOD)

C. Reflection Paper on Weems, Leadership in the Wesleyan Spirit (10% of final grade) The paper is to be 2-3 pages, no more than 3 pages, 12-point font, double spaced. (due Friday, July 19)

The outline for the reflection paper is to be:

- State a brief overview/review of the book.
- What issues are raised for you from the reading? (At least 2)
- What one or more insight from the book will you put into practice and be useful to you in your ministry?

D. Reflection Paper on Christopher, Not Your Parents' Offering Plate (10% of final grade) The paper is to be 2-3 pages, no more than 3 pages, 12-point font, double spaced. (due Friday, July 26)

The outline for the reflection paper is to be:

- State a brief overview/review of the book.
- What issues are raised for you from the reading? (At least 2)
- What one or more insight from the book will you put into practice and be useful to you in your ministry.

E. Write a one-page summary for each of the 6 key administrative committees in a local church/charge. (24% of final grade) (due Friday, August 2) Charge Conference, Church Council, Pastor (Staff)-Parish Relations, Trustees, Finance, and Nominations and Leadership Development. The summary should include the disciplinary paragraphs, membership, relationship to other committees, edited summaries of responsibilities, and be suitable for distributing to the committee at their first meeting.

E. Final Paper/Project "My Church Has Real Possibilities" (20% of final grade) The paper should be at least 5-6 pages in length, and no more than 8 pages, 12-point font. Due by Friday, August 9 (12 noon).

- What adjustments/changes might be made to the administrative structure of your church/charge to regain the focus on mission and streamline the decision-making process? What is one or two small steps you can take.

- From your course readings and asynchronous assignments reflect on leadership and stewardship, what ministry corrections need to be made? What are one or two small steps that you can take in move in the right direction of a more vital ministry?
- What steps might you take to assist your leadership team to function healthier?
- Who can help you as you lead the church to be healthier and more vital?
Describe how you will begin to practice “paying the rent” on your charge.

V. SCHEDULE OF READINGS AND CLASS TOPICS

July 12, 13

Read Prior to Class

Matthew 28: 16-20

Book of Discipline, Parts I, II, III, IV, V, and VI, Chapters 2 & 3

Warner, The Method Of Our Mission, Introduction, Part I and II

Weems, Leadership In the Wesleyan Spirit,

Asynchronous Assignments

“Clay Ride” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3-98SNafMMQ>

View 4 of the 5 Podcasts and be prepared to share one “take-a-way” from each.

“Leadership Lessons from Lovett Weems” Leading Ideas, Episode 24

<https://www.churchleadership.com/podcast/episode-24-leadership-lessons-from-lovett-weems/>

“Leading in Small Churches or Multi-Church Settings” Lewis Parks, Leading Ideas,

Episode 15 <https://www.churchleadership.com/podcast/episode-15-leading-in-small-church-or-multi-church-settings-featuring-lew-parks/>

“Leading Like Nehemiah” featuring Lovett H. Weems, Jr. Episode 83

<https://www.churchleadership.com/podcast/episode-83-leading-like-nehemiah-featuring-lovett-h-weems-jr/>

“Churches Thriving With Part-Time Pastors” featuring G. Jeffrey McDonald, Leading

Ideas Episode 64, <https://www.churchleadership.com/podcast/episode-64-churches-thriving-with-part-time-pastors-featuring-g-jeffrey-macdonald/>

“Leading a Historic Congregation” featuring Amy Butler, Leading Ideas Episode 9,

<https://www.churchleadership.com/podcast/leading-a-historic-congregation-featuring-amy-butler/>

Friday, July 12, 3 pm

Introductions, Syllabus Review/Assignments

The Discipline Organizes us for Mission

Distinguishing Marks of United Methodist

Our Theological Task (including Theological Guidelines)

The Local Church

Friday, July 12, 4 pm**Principles of Leadership**

How do we as leaders and our congregations relate to the community?

Leadership in the Wesleyan Spirit: Principles, Practices, and Passions

Saturday, July 13, 9 am**Doctrinal and Theological Foundations**

Articles of Religion

Confession of Faith of the Evangelical United Brethren Church

The General Rules

The Constitution

Social Principles

Saturday, July 13, 10 am**Developing Leaders**

Creating a Leadership Pathway in a Local Church

Pastoral Roles and Ordained Ministry: Certified Lay Minister, Local Pastor, Associate Member, Deacon, Elder, Superintendent, Bishop

Clergy Sexual Ethics, Boundaries

Saturday, July 13, 1 pm

Paying the Rent – Balancing the Major Tasks of Parish Ministry

Saturday, July 13, 2 pm

Pastoral Resiliency

August 2-3**Read Prior to Class**

Book of Discipline, Part VI, Chapter 4, Chapter 6, I-VI, Chapter 7, ¶2601-2703

Christopher, Not Your Parents' Offering Plate

Warner, The Method of Our Mission, Part III and IV

Asynchronous Assignments

“The Church and the Grocery Store” https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rqEv_frAY_0

View 4 of the 5 podcasts and be prepared to share one “take-a-way” from each.

“Why Giving Matters and Clues for Improving It” Lovett Weems, Leading Ideas

<https://www.churchleadership.com/videos/why-giving-matters-and-clues-for-improving-it/>

“Seven Practical Strategies for Cultivating a Culture of Generosity” Lovett Weems.

Leading Ideas 7, <https://www.churchleadership.com/leading-ideas/7-practical-strategies-for-nurturing-a-culture-of-generosity/>

“Improve Your Time Management and Enhance Your Ministry” featuring Nicole Reilley
<https://www.churchleadership.com/leading-ideas/improve-your-time-management-and-enhance-your-ministry-an-in-depth-interview-with-nicole-reilley>

“Building Thriving Rural Congregations” featuring Allen Stanton Leading Ideas Episode 87, <https://www.churchleadership.com/podcast/episode-87-building-thriving-rural-congregations-featuring-allen-stanton/>

“Transformational Leadership for Urban Ministries” featuring Tony Hunt, Leading Ideas Episode 141, <https://www.churchleadership.com/podcast/transformational-leadership-for-urban-ministries-featuring-tony-hunt/>

Friday, August 2, 3 pm

Conferencing and Governance, Appointment Making
 General, Jurisdictional, Annual, District, Charge, Church
 Itinerary, Appointment Making

Friday, August 2, 4 pm

Local Church Administrative Committees
 Charge Conference, Church Council, Nominations and Leadership Development,
 Pastor-Parish Relations, Trustees, Finance
 Simplified Structure

Saturday, August 3, 9 am

Councils, Boards, Committees, and Agencies
 District Committee on Ministries, Board of Ordained Ministry, Committee on
 Investigation, Judicial Council, Council of Bishops, College of Bishops, Connectional
 Table
 Local Church Ministry Assessments

Saturday, August 3, 10 am

Inspiring Extravagant Generosity
 Knowing Your Churches Financial Health
 Finance Report, Audit, Trustees Report
 Gifts Assessment, Stewardship of Life, Resiliency
 How Giving Has Changed – From Duty to Interest

Saturday, August 3, 1 pm

Discovering Your Spiritual Gifts

Saturday, August 3, 2 pm.

Pastor’s Job Description
 Clergy Time Management
 16 Things I Learned as a Pastor

Academic Honor Policy

The Course of Study School of Ohio requires that all material submitted by a student in fulfilling his or her academic requirements be the original work of the student.

Violations of academic honor include any action by a student indicating dishonesty or lack of integrity in academic ethics. Violations in this category include, but are not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, or knowingly passing off work of another as one's own.

Cheating includes seeking, acquiring, receiving or passing on information about the content of an examination prior to its authorized release or during its administration. Cheating also includes seeking, using, giving or obtaining unauthorized assistance in any academic assignment or examination.

Plagiarism is the act of presenting as one's own work with the work of another whether published or unpublished (including the work of another student). A writer's work should be regarded as his or her own property. Any person who knowingly uses a writer's distinctive work without proper acknowledgement is guilty of plagiarism.

A student found guilty of a violation of the academic honor code, after a review of the case, may be subject to one or more of the following sanctions: (1) warning; (2) failing grade for the assignment and/or course; (3) probation; (4) suspension; (5) dismissal from the Course of Study School of Ohio. In severe or repeat cases (regardless of the sanctions) a letter will be sent to the student's District Superintendent and Board of Ordained Ministry representative.

Attendance Policy

National policy from the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry (GBHEM) states that a student is expected to attend every class session. Unexcused absences may be cause for loss of credit or dismissal from the school. A student missing 20% or more of the classroom work shall not receive credit for the class. In the event of extenuating circumstances which require the student to miss up to 20% of the synchronous course time (whether in-person or on Zoom), the student should contact both the instructor and the Director prior to the start of the class to get approval and discuss make-up work. (Extenuating circumstances include emergency situations, illness, and dire circumstances, for example. Students are to provide back-up coverage at the local church while attending COS classes.)

Cancellation and Withdrawal: Student must notify the COSSO office if they will be unable to attend class for which they are registered. Although there is no penalty when withdrawing more than two weeks in advance of the beginning of a term, registration fees are nontransferable and nonrefundable. A \$50.00 late withdrawal fee is charged for all withdrawals within two weeks of the start of a class. All tuition and housing payments are applied to a future term.

Students withdrawing after the start of a term will be assigned a grade of AW (Administrative Withdrawal) and will be responsible for the full \$300.00 tuition amount. Any annual conference scholarship applied to the student billing record becomes the

student's responsibility and is due by the end of the term. Housing payment is non-refundable.

No Shows: Except in cases of immediate and dire emergencies, if a student misses any class without notifying the COSSO office, tuition and housing fees are due immediately, a \$50.00 no show fee is charged, and the student will receive an "F" in the class.