Purpose
The purpose of this course, in conjunction with United Methodist History and Doctrine, is to ground students in United Methodist texts, traditions, theology, and practices of The United Methodist Church. This grounding will lead students into a deeper sense of their vocation as practitioners, leaders, and public theologians who will generate positive change and new possibilities for the church and world. It will provide students with a basic content knowledge of UM polity. It is also designed to assist students with navigating the online resources and conversations taking place in The United Methodist Church and how to use the Internet to foster relationships and work together. As such, the course is designed to fulfill the polity requirement for ordination in The United Methodist Church.

Course Outcomes
1) Students will understand the intricate relationship between the history, doctrine, and polity of The United Methodist Church.
2) Students will know how to use The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church and The Book of Resolutions, understand their impact on practices of contemporary congregations and conferences.
3) Students will discover how the polity of The United Methodist Church is used as an agent for change in the Church and the world.
4) Students will find and use relevant information about denominational issues, practices, resources, and agencies online.

Course Approach
This course is designed as an eight-week fully online course. All other work including worksheets, lectures, and discussions among participants will be asynchronous. You will be able to do the work for each week on your own schedule. However, work for each week will have to be completed during the week that it is assigned.

Please check the course requirements, go to the Blackboard site, and review the format to be sure you can fulfill the expectations of the course. The course will include weekly asynchronous lectures/powerpoints, five one-hour synchronous discussions, a weekly online forum, and online submittal of assignments. The five required on-line, real time, one hour long sessions on the following Mondays: January 5th, January 12th, February 9th, February 16th, and on Friday, February 27th at
1:00 p.m. EST. It is, therefore, completely Blackboard and Internet dependent. High quality access to Blackboard and the Internet is required for successful completion of the course.

**Blackboard Site**

Once registered for this course your Emory username and password will provide you with access to this course on Blackboard. All course materials and directions will be posted at this time. Comfort with use of Blackboard and the Internet and/or willingness to seek assistance from Michelle Levan with any issues is required. Do not assume you can just “pick up” the Blackboard site navigation on your own unless you have had some computer experience. We will have both “asynchronous” activities (meaning that you can go online on your own time, separate from the other students and professor) and “synchronous” meetings (meaning that we will all be online at the same time, and visible to or able to hear everyone together.)

**“Netiquette”**

“Netiquette” refers to the decorum that we maintain and the respect that we give one another as we converse and relate to one another in our online community. Because emotions can be misunderstood due to the absence of body language, you are encouraged to use emoticons and to review your submissions to our discussion forums and other activities prior to their final submittal. The use of inappropriate language, or disrespectful treatment of others is not any more acceptable online than it is in a regular face-to-face classroom. At the same time you are encouraged to be light hearted and humorous, and to respectfully disagree with others as we discuss issues about which we are passionate. You will find general guidelines to follow for conversations posted on the Blackboard site. These guidelines come from the Sloan Consortium, 2011 Certificate Course.

**Required Texts**

- Websites of the denomination, annual conferences, general agencies, and denominational groups. Various articles and selections will be posted on Blackboard.

**Precourse Work**

1. Read the 2012 Book of Discipline in its entirety, prior to the beginning of the course. Skim Chapter 5 on the Administrative Order.
2. By the first day of class, complete as much of the Worksheet as possible – the Worksheet is on the Blackboard site. The worksheet will be available to you upon registration for the course, and the Worksheet should be completed in full by February 23, 2015.

**Assignments**

1) Open *Discipline* and Open Internet *Worksheet*– a fully online, set of questions, taken through Bb; must be completed by February 23rd. 20 pts
2) Participation in eight Weekly Discussion Forums 40 pts
3) Attendance and Participation in 5 Synchronous Class Meetings 15 pts
4) Individual View Point paper on one Issue of the Day (6-8pp). Due by February 28th.  25 pts

| TOTAL POINTS | 100 pts |

ACOS Polity, Burkholder 11/7/14
Course Activities
1) By February 23rd, you will complete the Worksheet in the Blackboard site.
2) Each week you will watch/listen to 1-2 hours of lectures accessed through Blackboard. Most will be presented in 15 to 30 minute segments. You can download these lectures.
3) Each week you will post responses to the Discussion Board for our Weekly Forum in Blackboard on the Weekly Forum posted by Dr. Burkholder.
4) You will “attend” and participate in the five, required synchronous online Class Meetings held at 1:00 EST.
5) You will complete a research paper on a particular issue selected from a list on the Blackboard site. You will submit the paper to me by email no later than February 28th by 11:59 p.m.

Class Schedule
Prior to January 5th: Complete the following:
1. Students will have read the Book of Discipline, 2012.
2. Students will have reviewed and become familiar with the course Blackboard site.
3. Students will have introduced themselves to each other through the Blackboard site and responded to at least two other participants.
4. Students will have completed the online Worksheet.

Week 1: Jan 5th
Monday, January 5th, 1:00 p.m. EST: Required Synchronous Class Meeting; Introduction to Blackboard site/Q&A regarding the lectures, readings, and course.

Lectures: Introduction
Denominationalism in the United States
The Relationship between History, Theology, Mission, and Polity
Introduction to UM Polity: What Are the Primary Characteristics of United Methodist Polity?

Reading
Posted: Frank, Foreword, Introduction and chaps 1-2, pp. 15-114
Richey, Chapter 1 – 5, pp. 11-50

After listening to the lecture and reading the material proceed to the Discussion Forum. Follow the directions on the Blackboard site. You will do this every week.

Week 2: Jan 12th
Monday, January 12th, 1:00 p.m. EST: 2nd Required Synchronous Class Meeting

Lectures – Our Foundations
Our Foundational Principles

Readings
Discipline, pp. i-xiii, 1-39 (41-86); 97-131 (Paragraphs 1-104, Part IV: 160-166)

Week 3: Jan 19th  NO Synchronous Class Meeting

Lectures – Ministry by Those “Set Apart”
Ministry of the Ordained
The Definition and Role of the Deacon
The Definition and Role of the Elder
The Definition and Role of the Local Pastor
Sacramental Responsibilities and Privileges

Readings  Discipline, pp. 203-294 (Paragraphs 301-369)
Warner, Part II, Chapter 4, pp. 69-92
Richey, Chapter 6-9, pp. 51-94
Posted: This Holy Mystery – UM Statement on the Eucharist

Week 4: Jan 26th  NO Synchronous Class Meeting

Lectures - The Ministry of All Christians and the Local Church
Ministry of the Laity
The Local Church
Polity of Baptism and Confirmation

Readings  Posted: By Water and the Spirit –UM Statement on Baptism
Discipline, pp. 87-95; 133-201 (Paragraphs 120-142; 201-277)
Warner, Part 2, Chapter 6, pp. 110-130

Week 5: Feb 2nd  NO Synchronous Class Meeting

Lectures – The Superintendency
The Definition and Role of the Bishop
The Definition and Role of the Superintendent
How Appointment-making Has Worked, Now Works, and Will Hopefully Work

Readings  Discipline, pp. 295-323 (Paragraphs 401-435)
Warner, Part II, Chapter 5, pp. 94-108

Week 6: Feb 9th

Monday, February 9th, 1:00 pm EST, 3rd Required Synchronous Class Meeting

Lectures- Connexion through Conferencing
  A History of Conferencing
  The General Conference
  The Charge Conference
  The District Conference
  The Annual Conference
  The US Jurisdiction and The Central Conference
  The Missionary Conference

Readings  Discipline, pp. 325-472 (Paragraphs 512-671)
Richey, chaps 10-14, pp. 95-158
Warner, Part III, Chapter 7, pp. 131-146
Week 7: Feb 16th
Monday, February 16th, 1:00 pm EST 4th Required Synchronous Class Meeting

Lectures- The General Ordering of the Church and Judicial Administration
The Administrative Order
The General Agencies
The Judicial Council
The Complaint Process, The Right To Trial
Church Property and the Trust Clause

Readings
Discipline, pp. 473 -781; (Paragraphs 701-2406, 2501-2551; 2601-2719)
Warner, Part III, Chapter 8, pp. 147-165
Richey, Chapter 15, pp. 159-174

Week 8: Feb 23rd – (Worksheet is due by 11:59 pm on Monday, February 23rd.)

Lectures –Inclusiveness and Global United Methodism
The Core Value of Inclusiveness, A Revisit to its Roots in Our History, and Its Impact on Current Polity
Caucus Groups in the UMC
Issues Related to Being a Global Church

Readings
Posted: Articles on Remaining Unified or Separating
Warner, Part IV, pp. 166-174
Richey, Chapters 16-18, pp. 175-205
Posted: Frank, Conclusion, pp. 321-328
Links to Websites of Caucus Groups

Friday, Feb 27th 5th Required Synchronous Class Meeting at 1:00 p.m. EST

Saturday, Feb 28th FINAL Paper DUE by 11:59 p.m.

Course Policies
I. Late Assignments: Late assignments will receive a reduction of points equivalent to one letter grade for anything one day late, and two letter grades, on the second day. They will not be accepted after the third day.

II. Disabilities: If you are a student registered with the Office of Disability Services, accommodations are effective on the date of the direct discussion (NO leaving a message or emailing me – this requires a phone call or Skype) with the course instructor regarding implementation of course accommodations and the receipt of the accommodation letter (this should happen simultaneously). If you are not registered with the ODS, then accommodations cannot be made by the instructor.

III. Academic Honor: As stated in the Candler Catalog, “Candler School of Theology requires that all material submitted by a student in fulfilling his or her academic degree requirements be the original work of the student. Violations of academic honor include any action by a student indicating dishonesty or a lack of integrity in academic ethics. Violations in this category include, but are not limited to cheating, plagiarism, or knowingly misrepresenting another’s work as one’s own. Cheating
includes seeking, acquiring, receiving, or passing 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 the work of another person, 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. In addition, papers, or portions of papers, submitted for academic credit in one course cannot be submitted for credit in another course without the express permission of the instructors of both courses."

IV. Grading: Grades reflect a professor’s evaluation of the quality and comprehension of a student’s work in a course. Grades give feedback to the student and to the organizations to which the student and professor are accountable. Assignments are designed to lead students toward the accomplishment of specific outcomes of the course. Grades are given on the basis of a student’s demonstration of competence in light of the desired outcomes.

Course assignments are graded on a point scale, the value of which depends on the assignment. The points for the course will total 100 points. The numerical scale will yield letters grades as follow: A scale = 92 points and above; B scale = 82-92; C scale = 70-81; D scale = 60-69; F: anything below 60 points. A minus (-) will be assigned for the lowest two points in a scale. A plus (+) will be assigned to the two highest points in a scale, with the exception of A and F grades.

A grade of “A” (92 points and above) reflects:
1. Consistently excellent and creative work.
2. Writing assignments in forum postings and the research paper are strong and interesting, exhibiting a superior level of analysis, creativity, and interpretation; clear and without errors in grammar, spelling or diction.
3. Theses and points of view of others are interpreted in own words in written and oral work.
4. Student participates appropriately in both synchronous and asynchronous events, contributing significantly to growth and learning of whole class.

A grade of “B” (80 – 91 points) reflects:
1. Good comprehension but less evidence of an ability to interpret the material.
2. Writing is interesting, exhibiting a high level of analysis and interpretation. The thesis tend to be predictable or too broad and may not be fully supported. Not all examples may support the thesis or an example may not be fully analyzed. They are, however, clear and without errors in grammar, spelling, and diction.
3. Student articulates theses and points of view of others, but relies moderately on words of others.
4. Class participation contributes somewhat to the growth and learning of the whole class.

A grade of “C” (70 – 79 points) reflects:
1. Comprehension of the material but little evidence of ability to interpret the material.
2. Writing contains a mix of strengths and weaknesses, with moderate level of analysis and interpretation. Theses are either too obvious or too vague. Assertions are not supported. Introductions and conclusions are not very effective, e.g., missing transitions, and conclusions. Papers and presentations contain errors of grammar, word choice, and spelling. Student relies on clichés rather than careful thought.
3. Student articulates theses and points of view of others, but relies heavily on quotes from others. Has difficulty putting ideas into own words.
4. Speaks up occasionally in class, but contributes little to growth and learning of the class.

**A grade of “D” (60-69 points) reflects:**
1. Evidence of exposure to material, but non-comprehension of material. No evidence of ability to interpret material.
2. The assignment has not been addressed.
3. Written and oral work has not followed directions, or it has failed to present what has been asked for, e.g. thesis, arguments, evidence, etc. Materials are extremely quote-dependent.
4. Student is present but does not participate.

**A grade of “F” (59 points and below) reflects:**
1. Incompetence.
2. Incomprehensible written or oral work. Writing is unreadable, unrecognizable, or missing.
3. Plagiarism.
4. Class participation is inappropriate, incomprehensible, or absent.

**Guidelines for Written Assignments**
- All papers should be typed, double-spaced, on 8 ½” by 11” paper, unless the instructor has asked for a different format specifically within the precourse work. Font should be Times New Roman or something similar and no larger than size 12. Margins are to be 1” on all four sides of each page.
- All papers must include a page number and the last name of the student in either the header or footer of every page.
- You should note the question you are answering at the beginning of each new section of materials.
- All papers should provide citations for all quoted material. You may use MLA, Turabain, APA or Chicago Style.
- Punctuation should be consistent; clarity of meaning is the primary purpose of punctuation. Edit and retype material as needed and check spelling in a standard dictionary.
- All papers should attempt to eliminate discriminatory language—for example: racism, ageism, sexism, classism, and prejudicial usage concerning handicapping conditions.

**Inclusive Language Covenant**
The faculty of Emory Course of Study School has adopted a covenant statement encouraging inclusiveness in the use of language, as follows:

The Inclusive Language Covenant is designed to create a linguistic environment in which all students, staff, and faculty can grow in understanding and appreciating the rich diversity of God’s people. The COS faculty commits itself—through continued discussion, reflection, and exploration—to using language in such a way that we respond to the fullness of God’s presence among us as much by our choice of words as by our care for one another. Recognizing that our experience with inclusive language is an integral part of theological formation, we invite students and others to share as partners with us in this learning process.

We understand “covenant” more in terms of its biblical and theological meaning than in a legal or contractual context. Covenant signifies the common commitment of a community of faith in response to God’s revelation and in partnership with one another. The values implied in the covenant have morally persuaded us to try to generate patterns of speech and behavior that bond the members of the community in mutual respect. We expect all members of the community to address issues of diversity constructively. The entire Inclusive Language Covenant can be found on the COS website, and you are encouraged to read the whole covenant.