All pre-course assignments should be emailed to amy.elizabeth.walker@emory.edu by June 1, 2016.

Course Description
This course examines the polity of the United Methodist Church, with attention to the way polity evolves historically and expresses the church’s ecclesiology and engagement with contemporary issues.

Course Objectives
The purpose of this course is to enable students to examine the polity of The United Methodist Church in order: 1) to enhance familiarity and facility in usage of The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church; 2) to gain a working knowledge and understanding of the polity of the United Methodist Church in its various forms as practiced in the life of congregations, conferences, and the connection; 3) to explore the theology, history, disciplines, and social principles of United Methodism in relation to the ministry and mission of the church in the world, with particular attention to ecclesiological and missiological opportunities, changes, challenges, and issues.

Required Textbooks

The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church. UMPH, 2012.


Required Documents
  o “The Character of a Methodist” (reserves)
  o “By Water and the Spirit” (Blackboard)
  o “This Holy Mystery” (Blackboard)
  o “Renewing the Episcopal Initiative on Children and Poverty, Council of Bishops” (Blackboard)
  o “Call To Action Report: Vital Congregations” (Blackboard)
**Recommended Texts**

- The Book of Resolutions of the United Methodist Church (UMPH 2012).

**Pre-Course Assignments**

1) Read Required Textbooks.

2) Students will complete the following exercises in relation to assigned readings which will be used by students in class discussion. They are as follows:

   - **Life Together.** Define what Dietrich Bonhoeffer means by the following: Community, The Day With Others, The Day Alone, Ministry, Confession and Communion (1½ to 2 pages).

   - In “The Character of a Methodist” (Reserves Direct), John Wesley focuses on the centrality of love in the character of a Methodist. What does Wesley say about love? And what difference would this make in our polity today? (1½ to 2 pages).

   - You are counseling parents on infant Baptism. Based on your reading of “By Water and the Spirit” (Blackboard), identify the points from the document that you would share in order to help them understand infant baptism. Be sure to cite pages and include a brief definition of each point (1½ to 2 pages).

   - Using “This Holy Mystery” (Blackboard), prepare to teach a newcomer’s class on the practice of Holy Communion in UM churches by making a bullet point listing of the items you would share. Be sure to cite pages and include brief definitions of each point (1½ to 2 pages).

   - Create a simple, detailed outline of the following document: “Renewing the Episcopal Initiative on Children and Poverty, Council of Bishops” (Blackboard).

   - Read the “Call to Action Report” documents (Blackboard) and be prepared to discuss the following question in class: “Is the Call to Action Report the answer to the problem of declining membership in the UMC? Why? Or Why not?”

**Course Requirements**

1) Regular class attendance and active participation in class lectures, discussions, exercises, assignments, and presentations. Active participation means being attentive, contributing when appropriate, having respect for others, not using cell phones or texting, and remaining off-line unless relevant to class topics.

Please notify the instructor ahead of time if you must miss a session of class. An excused absence is at the discretion of the instructor. An unexcused absence will result in a daily grade loss of 1 point. Students are required to be on time and not leave early. Two late arrivals or early departures will count as one absence. Students are responsible for all assignments on due dates whether absences are excused or not.
If you are a student with the Office of Disability Services, accommodations are effective on the date of the in-person discussion with the course instructor regarding implementation of course accommodations and the receipt of the accommodation letter (this should happen simultaneously).

2) Completion of daily worksheet on a section of the Book of Discipline. Weekly assignment will be uploaded to Blackboard.

3) Class Presentation and Position Paper focused on a current issue in the United Methodist Church. Working together in groups, students will: a) explore one of the following issues (see below); b) lead a class presentation with their group; and c) write a five-page paper articulating their own position on the subject. Topics and groups will be assigned on the first day of class.

1. The Future of Itinerancy—How is it currently being employed? Is itinerancy still a valid model for United Methodist ministry in North America?
2. United Methodist as a “World Wide Church”—Should the US become a regional conference of its own or should the general church structure remain as it is? Why?
3. The Guaranteed Appointment—Where does it currently stand? What are the implications of no continued appointment versus guaranteed?
4. The Official Voice of the Church—Who speaks for the United Methodist Church and why?
5. The Ministry Orders—Where do they currently stand? Where should they be?
6. Human Sexuality—In light of the changing views on sexuality in the culture, what should the church’s response be?
7. The Judicial Council—What is the role of the Judicial Council in shaping polity? Is this positive or negative for the direction of the UMC?

Research:
Groups will research their issue thoroughly with attention to the following criteria:
• Why this is a relevant question for today?
• Theological, historical, social, political roots of the issue
• The development of the current position
• Current controversy surrounding this particular issue
• The two main sides of the issue
• Solutions proposed by different sides
• The process by which each side is attempting to resolve the issue

Class Presentation
In a 20-minute class presentation, groups will present the above findings. The main focus should be on helping the class understand the issue and its ramifications for life together in the UMC and the church’s ministry and mission in the world. Groups are encouraged to find a creative way to invite class questions and discussion. Each student will turn in copies of his/her research with the final paper.

Position Paper
Based on your research, write a five-page essay arguing your own position regarding the issue/question and how your position would influence “life-together” in the United Methodist Church. Your paper should follow the standard format for research papers with an introduction, argument, main body, conclusion, and bibliography.

4) Final open-book examination on the last day of class.
Evaluation Guidelines
Grades are based on class attendance and participation, knowledge and use of assigned readings, reflections, class presentation/paper and performance on the final open-book examination.

Student Honor and Conduct Code is assumed in all work.

Assignments and papers should be submitted electronically to Blackboard on the due date. Quality on all written assignments is expected – syntax, grammar, spelling, citation, proofreading, etc. – and will be evaluated accordingly. Paper should be written following the Inclusive Language Covenant (see below).

Late assignments will result in a letter grade reduction (minus the appropriate number of points) per each day late except for the final Position Paper which will result in one letter grade reduction (minus the appropriate number of points) between 1-5 days from the due date and an additional letter grade for each day beyond 5 days late.

Position Papers will be graded according to the criteria set forth in the assignment.

Course Grading

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<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
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<tr>
<td>Attendance/Participation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Worksheet</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exercise with 6 Documents</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class Presentation</td>
<td>4%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Position Paper</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Examination</td>
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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 pre-course 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.
Directions to Email Pre-Course Assignments

SEND TO – Email your pre-course assignments to amy.elizabeth.walker@emory.edu

DEADLINE – Email must be received no later than 11:59p.m. EST on June 1, 2016. One letter grade will be deducted each day for late pre-course work.

EMAIL SUBJECT LINE – The subject of your email should be “ACOS Pre-Course Work: UM Polity.”

THE EMAIL – Your full name, phone number, and email address should be included at the beginning of your email. Pre-course work must be sent as an attachment and not in the body of the email.
   a. Only Microsoft Word and .pdf documents will be accepted.
   b. All assignments for each course must be in one document, multiple documents are not acceptable. You should send only one attachment with all course assignments; emails sent with multiple documents will not be accepted.

PLAGIARISM – The “Plagiarism Policy” and “Plagiarism Defined” paragraphs below (in red) must be included in the body of your email, not within your pre-course work. The inclusion of the policy and definition in the body of the email verifies that you agree to it and your email will represent your signature (which is a requirement). If the email does not include the plagiarism policy and definition it will not be accepted.

   Plagiarism Policy - I have read the plagiarism definition below and verify that this assignment represents my own work, except where credit is given.

   Plagiarism Defined: “You plagiarize when, intentionally or not, you use someone else’s words or ideas but fail to credit that person, leading your readers to think that those words are yours. In all fields, you plagiarize when you use a source’s words or ideas without citing that source. In most fields, you plagiarize even when you do credit the source but use its exact words without using quotation marks or block indentation” (201-202). Booth, Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams. The Craft of Research, Second Edition. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2003.