Learning goals
1. To acquire basic knowledge of the history of Christian sacraments, with special attention to the Methodist traditions.
2. To develop a good understanding of Methodist theology of the sacraments and to understand Methodist theology in relation to other theological traditions.
3. To develop skills of presiding at the sacraments that can provide a foundation for practical improvisation as needed in particular contexts.
4. To deepen love for the sacraments as God’s means and gifts of grace and to increase our ability to communicate this love to congregations.
5. Through sound sacramental thought and practice to form serious, committed disciples of Jesus Christ.

Required Textbooks

Recommended Textbooks

Other Required Readings These readings will be found on Blackboard or on the specific website listed.

On line:
These texts are available as a free download at www.GBOD.org or for purchase


EssaysPosted on Blackboard:

Course Format Information

Precourse work is due in four segments due over four weeks

Lesson one: John Wesley on the Sacraments

Reading assignments


Writing assignment, due via electronic submission to COS office by 11:59pm, March 14th

Two Essays, 500 words each. Address the following questions:

1. On Duty of Constant Communion:
   - According to Wesley, what are the purposes and/or meanings of Holy Communion?
   - What wrong understandings and practices of Holy Communion is Wesley trying to correct?

2. Treatise on Baptism:
   - According to Wesley, what are the purposes and/or meanings of Baptism?
   - What wrong understandings and practices of Baptism is Wesley trying to correct?

Real-time teleconference discussion: Friday, March 15, 10-11:30 a.m.

Main Topics for discussion: Introductions and overview of course. In what ways do United Methodists continue to face the problems Wesley addresses in his sermon on Constant Communion and treatise on Baptism? What new problems do we face?

Lesson two: Sacraments in the Early Church

Reading assignments

• Stookey, Laurence Hull. Eucharist: Christ’s Feast with the Church. Nashville: Abingdon, 1993. specifically:
  - Chapter 1, Central Meaning Behind the Meal, pp. 13-26.
  - Chapter 2, Key biblical Understanding of the Eucharist, pp. 27-40.
  - Chapter 4, “From Age to Age,” pp. 63-79.
Writing assignment, due via electronic submission to COS office by 11:59pm, March 21st

Two Essays: 500 words each. Address the following questions

1. **Eucharist**
   Compare the practice of Eucharist in your home church with the descriptions of Eucharist in the Early Church. Note similarities and differences. What meanings and practices from the early church do you think might challenge the practices of contemporary United Methodists?

2. **Christian Initiation**
   Compare the practice of Christian Initiation and Baptism in your home church with the descriptions of initiation in the Early Church. Note similarities and differences. What meanings and practices from the early church do you think might challenge the practices of contemporary United Methodists?

**Real-time teleconference discussion:** Friday, March 22, 10-11 a.m.

**Main Topics for discussion:** What can we learn from the early church about the practice of sacraments that might have practical importance for Christians in the 21st century? Is the early church a good model? In what ways is it NOT a good model?

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**Lesson Three: Sacraments in the Reformation Period**

**Reading assignments**

- Stookey, Laurence Hull. *Eucharist: Christ’s Feast with the Church.* Nashville: Abingdon, 1993. specifically:
  - Chapter 3, “Faith Seeking Understanding”
  - Chapter 4, “From Age to Age,” pp. 79-93

Writing assignment, due via electronic submission to COS office by 11:59pm, April 4th

Two Essays: 500 words each. Address the following questions:

1. **Eucharist**
   Compare the practice of Eucharist in your home church with the descriptions of Eucharist in the Reformation period. Note similarities and differences. What meanings and practices from the Reformation do you think might challenge the practices of contemporary United Methodists?

2. **Christian Initiation**
   Compare the practice of Christian Initiation and Baptism in your home church with the descriptions of initiation in the Reformation. Note similarities and differences. What meanings and practices from the Reformation do you think might challenge the practices of contemporary United Methodists?

**Real-time teleconference discussion:** Friday, April 5, 10-11 a.m.

**Main Topics for discussion:** What can we learn from the Reformation about the practice of sacraments that might have practical importance for Christians in the 21st century? Does the Reformation offer good models? In what ways does the Reformation NOT provide good models?
Lesson Four: Methodist history of Sacraments

Reading assignment
- United Methodist Hymnal, pp. 1-54.

Writing assignment, due via electronic submission to COS office by 11:59pm., April 11th
Two Essays: 500 words each. Address the following questions:

1. Holy Communion
   Pick an order for the Holy Communion in the Methodist Church tradition from 1922 (Methodist-Episcopal Church, South) or 1924 (Methodist-Episcopal Church) and compare this to the order in the current UM Hymnal. Note significant at least three theological/historical/practical differences.

2. Baptism
   Compare the 1944 Methodist order for “The Baptism of Infants” and “The Baptismal Covenant II” in the current UM Hymnal. Note significant at least three theological/historical/practical differences.

Real-time teleconference discussion: Friday, April 12, 10-11 a.m.
Main Topics for discussion: How does the history of the sacramental rites of Methodism illustrate theological developments? Cultural developments? In what ways do our current official rites fit with, or not fit with, contemporary United Methodist sensibilities?

WEEKEND AT EPWORTH

What to bring
- Communion utensils, baptismal utensils (i.e. cups, pitchers, towels, --whatever you may use at your church to implement the sacrament other than furniture).
- Bible
- UM Book of Worship and UM Hymnal
- Note pad for journaling.
- Your presentation of the table/font in your local congregation — both a hard copy of your 8-page paper and a Power Point presentation on a thumb drive.

Reading assignments
  READ: Chapter 5, “Toward a Renewal of Eucharistic Understanding”
  Chapter 6, “Conducting the Eucharist”
• *By Water and the Spirit: A United Methodist Understanding of Baptism* (UM teaching document available at GBOD.ORG/worship).
• *This Holy Mystery: A United Methodist Understanding of Holy Communion*. (UM teaching document available at GBOD.ORG/worship).

**Prepared assignment for the Weekend**
Each student will come prepared to make a 30 minute presentation with Power Point slides that illustrates the arrangement of the communion table and the baptismal font in her/his local congregation.

The “lecture” part of the presentation will include a 8+-page paper. The paper will be submitted, hard copy, to the instructor at the end of the presentation.

The presentation should show (through illustration, or perhaps actual video footage) how the sacraments are conducted in this setting. The presentation/paper should also include a description of how the sacraments are “set up.” That is, how is the table prepared? Who does this? How is the font readied? Who does this? The presentation paper will also include some evaluation of the physical setting/location of the table and the font, as well as any communion or baptismal utensils (plates, cups, pitchers) drawing on readings.

**Assignment in summary:**
8+-page paper. This paper should also draw on reading assignments, as appropriate, in the discussion of the conduct of sacraments, architecture, or preparation. The paper must contain footnote references to a minimum of 5 items from the course bibliography.

PowerPoint (or other presentation software) slide presentation (this will be submitted electronically for posting on Blackboard to COS office, no later than 8 a.m., Tuesday April 23).
**FINAL ASSIGNMENTS**

Prepare a sermon (1500-2000 words) that “opens up” the meaning of the sacrament of Holy Communion or Baptism in your local congregation. A written text of sermon is **due via electronic submission to COS office by 11:59pm, Friday, May 2.**

Each student will read and provide a one-page evaluation of two sermons (as the instructor will assign). **Note:** These written evaluations will be shared with the preacher in order to allow her/him to incorporate comments into a final text of the sermon. These two evaluations will be graded “pass/fail.” Evaluations **due via electronic submission to COS office by 11:59 a.m., Thursday, May 10th.**

**Course-work course assignments, summary:**
- Eight 500 papers before Weekend class, due March 15, 22, April 5, 12. **(Letter grade, 40% of final grade, 5% each)**
- Four teleconference discussions before Weekend class on March 15, 22, April 5, 12. **(Pass/fail, 5% of final grade)**
- Presentation/paper due on weekend, April 19 (8+-page paper and PowerPoint presentation). **(letter grade, 30% of final grade)**
- A Sermon (on baptism or Holy Communion), 1500-2000 words, due May 3. **(Letter grade, 20% of final grade)**
- Two one-page evaluations of the sermons of fellow students, due May 11. **(Pass/fail, 5% of final grade)**

**Standards for written assignments (other than sermons)**

The standard grade for written work is “B.”

According to Candler standards:

The grade “B” is assigned to work that meets all of the stated course requirements and reflects a firm grasp of course materials and practices.

Elaboration:

The “B” paper/essay should:

1. Provide a clear description (the “what” aspects) of the material. It should present relevant facts, and it should be free of error in stating these facts.
2. Demonstrate analysis of the material (the “why” aspects), that presents coherent argumentation, showing connections (historical or synchronic) that explain the facts.
3. Demonstrate that the student has seriously engaged with the written assignments and lectures.
4. Follow an appropriate writing style for the assignment, specifically Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations.*
5. Be free of grammatical and spelling errors. However, given the time constraints we all face, I do not consider a small number typographical errors (2-3) to present a significant detraction from the quality of an essay.

Outstanding work will receive the grade of “A.”

According to the Candler standards: A-Reserved for outstanding work of exceptionally high quality that reflects a creative appropriation of course materials and practices.
Elaboration:

The “A” paper will go beyond the qualities of the “B” by demonstrating clarity and originality in analysis. It will “get under the surface” of the material to illustrate what may not be obvious. It might point out flaws or limitations of method and analysis in the work of others (including your professor), or it might offer a fresh application that illustrates the usefulness of the method and analysis of others.

**Passing work will receive the grade of “C.”**

According to the standard: C-Work that shows a basic grasp of the course materials and practices.

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<th>Evaluation format:</th>
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<td>Presentation of factual material</td>
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<td>Use of course material/readings</td>
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<td>Clarity of argumentation</td>
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<td>Writing style and grammar</td>
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<td>Creativity of analysis</td>
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<td>Additional comments</td>
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**Standards for Sermon**

The “B” sermon should:

1. Be free of grammatical and spelling errors, except for case where grammar is offended for rhetorical effect (ain’t no tellin’ how that might work).
2. Use creative mix of illustration, personal examples, allusions to “open up” scripture, or, in this case, the meaning of baptism or Holy Communion.
3. Clearly proclaim the good news.
4. Be contextually sensitive.

**Outstanding work will receive the grade of “A.”**

According to the Candler standards:

A---Reserved for outstanding work of exceptionally high quality that reflects a creative appropriation of course materials and practices.

Elaboration:

The “A” paper will go beyond the qualities of the “B” by demonstrating originality in presentation. It will “get under the surface” of the material to illustrate what may not be obvious.

**Passing work will receive the grade of “C.”**

According to the standard:

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<th>Evaluation format:</th>
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<tr>
<td>Use of scripture/liturgical text</td>
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<td>Clarity of thought</td>
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<td>Writing style and grammar</td>
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<td>Creativity of analysis</td>
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<tr>
<td>Additional comments</td>
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DIRECTIONS FOR EMAILING PRECOURSE WORK

Please read **all the directions** below before emailing your assignments to the COS Office, any emails received that do not follow the directions below will not be accepted. You will receive an email confirmation of receipt and if your email is not submitted correctly an email indicating you will need to resend your assignments.

1. **Email only michelle.levan@emory.edu**, do not email the instructor your assignment.
2. **Emails must be received** no later than 11:59pm on the stated deadlines prior to each phone session.
   a. There are **FOUR deadlines** – one prior to each teleconference: March 14 and 21, April 4 and 11
   b. Please note that the cut off time is EASTERN STANDARD TIME zone, so email your assignments accordingly.
   c. Email each week’s assignments following this process and to the COS Office.
   d. **Precourse work cannot be submitted late.**
3. The course number and the phrase “precourse work” should be the subject of your email:
   - Example: **Precourse Work 113**
     a. You will need to send a separate email for each course you are registered to attend.
4. **Precourse work must be sent as an attached document and not in the body of the email.**
   a. Any version of Microsoft Word or WordPerfect documents will be accepted; PDF and Mac-Pages documents will be accepted.
   b. All of your assignments for each course must be in one document, multiple documents are not acceptable. You should send only one attachment with course all assignments.
5. Your **FULL name, phone number and email**, should all be clearly included at the beginning of your email:
   - Example: Michelle Levan
     404.727.4587
     michelle.levan@emory.edu
6. **Plagiarism Policy and Plagiarism Defined** paragraphs must be included in the body of your email (both are below), not within your precourse 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. If the email does not include the plagiarism policy and definition it **will not be accepted**. Your email, with the plagiarism policy and definition will be printed and used as cover sheet for your precourse work, because it has the verification of date and time received, and your agreement to the plagiarism policy and definition, and your contact information.

   **Plagiarism Policy**
   I have read the plagiarism definition below and verify that this assignment represents my own work, except where credit is given. I have also made copies of this assignment and I will bring them with me to class in the event that any of my work is misplaced.

   **Plagiarism Defined**
   “You plagiarize when, intentionally or not, you use someone’s words or ideas but fail to credit that person. You plagiarize even when you do credit the author but use his exact words without so indicating with quotation marks or block indentation. You also plagiarize when you use words so close to those in your source, that if your work were placed next to the source, it would be obvious that you could not have written what you did without the source at your elbow. When accused of plagiarism, some writers claim I must have somehow memorized the passage. When I wrote it, I certainly thought it was my own. That excuse convinces very few.” From page 167 of The Craft of Research by Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams, published in 1995 by The University of Chicago Press in Chicago.
7. **If you do not follow the procedure your precourse work WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED!!!!!!!**