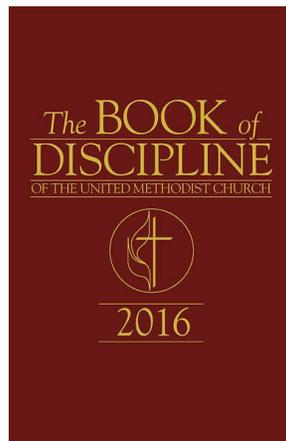


# Church Administration and Polity

## COS #224



**Course of Study School of Ohio  
West Virginia Extension  
Spring, 2023**



**Rev. Dr. Ellis E. Conley  
21 Renard Run  
Hurricane, WV 25526  
[conleyellis@aol.com](mailto:conleyellis@aol.com)**

## I. COURSE DESCRIPTION (GOALS AND OBJECTIVES)

This course forms the student's identity as pastoral leader and change agent in congregations, The United Methodist Church, and the world.

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 COS Spring Heights, Student Handbook & Objectives  
COS Revised Curriculum – 2014)

## II. SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

Students shall be able see understand that our United Methodist polity as expressed in the UM Book of Discipline organizes us for mission and helps us accomplish our purpose 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.

## III. 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.

Kotan, Kay and Schroeder, Phil, Small Church Checkup, Discipleship Resources, 2018

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

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

### Recommended:

Willard, Ken and Brown, Kelly, Church Ecology, Market Square Books, 2020.

## IV. CLASS STANDARDS

### A. Wesleyan “Rule of Life”:

- Do no harm
- Do good
- Attend to 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 Integrity

Student integrity regarding all work assigned in this class is a basic expectation of the learning community. (see page 31, *COS Student Handbook, 2013* – “Academic responsibility”) Also, guidelines for writing, page 25, *COS Handbook*.

### 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 COS Attendance Policy – page 15, *COS Student Handbook, 2013*)

### 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.

## V. 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 (25% 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.

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, March 17)**

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? (¶120, 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, March 24)**

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, March 31)**

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. (10% of final grade) (due Friday, April 14)** (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, and responsibilities.

**E. Final Paper/Project “My Church Has Real Possibilities” (25% of final grade) The paper should be at least 6-8 pages in length, and no more than 10 pages, 12-point font. Due by Friday, April 21 (12 noon).**

- Read Kotan and Schroeder, Small Church Checkup
- Complete and report the Healthy Church Assessment beginning on page 123. What other questions should be asked that are included in the book but not in the assessment to give a complete picture of your church/charge?
- What new insights have you learned by doing the Healthy Church Assessment about your church?
- 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 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?
- Who can help you as you lead the church to be healthier and more vital?

## **SCHEDULE OF READINGS AND CLASS TOPICS**

### **March 17-19**

#### **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,

#### **Friday, March 17**

##### **Introductions, Syllabus Review/Assignments**

##### **The Discipline Organizes us for Mission**

Distinguishing Marks of United Methodist

Our Theological Task (including Theological Guidelines)

The Local Church

“Clay Ride”

“The Church and the Grocery Store”

“Chuck Knows Church – Our Purpose”

#### **Saturday, March 18, am**

##### **Principles of Leadership**

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

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

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

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

Leading Ideas, Episode 15

#### **Saturday, March 18, pm**

##### **Doctrinal and Theological Foundations**

Articles of Religion

Confession of Faith of the Evangelical United Brethren Church

The General Rules

The Constitution

Social Principles

#### **Sunday, March 19**

##### **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

## **April 14-16**

### **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

Kotan and Schroeder, Small Church Checkup

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

### **Friday, April 14**

#### **Conferencing and Governance**

General, Jurisdictional, Annual, District, Charge, Church  
Itineracy, Appointment Making

### **Saturday, April 15, am**

#### **Local Church Administrative Committees**

Charge Conference, Church Council, Nominations and Leadership Development,  
Pastor-Parish Relations, Trustees, Finance  
“Chuck Knows Church – The Committee”  
Simplified Structure

### **Saturday, April 15, pm**

#### **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  
Paying the Rent

### **Sunday, April 24, 10:30 am**

#### **Stewardship**

Knowing Your Churches Financial Health  
Finance Report, Audit, Trustees Report  
Gifts Assessment, Stewardship of Life, Resiliency  
How Giving Has Changed – From Duty to Interest  
“Why Giving Matters and Clues for Improving It” Lovett Weems, Leading Ideas Video  
“Chuck Knows Church – Stewardship”