

CH320

United Methodist Church History and Polity

Spring, 2011

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Goals:

Trace historical developments of United Methodism with particular concern for the ways they affect ministry today

Gain practical insights into the connectional polity of the United Methodist Church

Integrate the mission of the United Methodist Church “making disciples for Jesus Christ” with one’s own self-understanding as a person of Christian faith

Discern directions for the church of the 21st century

Required Texts:

2008 Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church, Nashville: The United Methodist Publishing House, 2008

2008 Book of Resolutions, The United Methodist Publishing House, 2008

Frank, Thomas E. Polity, *Practice, Mission of the United Methodist Church*, Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2006

Richey, Russell E., Kenneth E. Rowe, Jean Miller Schmidt, ed. *the Methodist Experience in America, volumes 1 and 2*, Abingdon Press

Some readings may be placed on reserve.

Requirements:

Class participation: Familiarity with the Discipline is gained through discussion and questions. Understanding of history and how it informs the life of United Methodist will grow through shared knowledge and interaction with others. Class attendance is essential and missing class will involve extra writing. During the history section of the course, each student will present on 1-2 of the original documents. (20% of final grade)

Committee review assignment: Select one committee or work area in the life of the local church. Read the Guidelines booklet for that committee and the relevant paragraphs in the Discipline. Prepare an oral report for class on the work of the committee and how it contributes to the disciple making ministry of the church. If possible, give examples gained from attending that particular committee or from interviewing someone who serves on it. Hand in a summary of the presentation. (15% of final grade)

Biographical sketch: Choose one person important in the 19th or early 20th century life of any of the predecessor bodies of the UMC. Prepare a brief presentation for class. You may do this in any form you wish. Hand in a summary of the presentation that outlines the main points and includes sources. (15% of final grade)

Research paper: Research and write a 10-12 page paper on some aspect of UM history which impacts how the UMC understands its ministry and message. These topics could include historical understandings of inclusion/exclusion and their impact today, approaches to connectionalism or ministry, changes in ordination policy, etc. Discuss both the historical roots of the issues and the way the issue is currently dealt with in the Discipline. Footnote historical references and use specific references to the Discipline but do not quote large sections. Papers without proper annotation do not receive As. (50% of final grade)

Course Outline

February

11 Our Journey, Our Task

Introductions of one another, the Discipline, our denomination

Reading: Discipline p. 9-20, 41-86

18 Review of the Origins of American Methodism

Reading: vol 1, chap. 2-6, choose and read at least 6 documents through 1820 in vol. 2

- 25 Inclusion, Exclusion in 19th Century Methodism
Reading: vol. 1, chap. 7-10, choose and read 6 documents from 1820-1870 in vol. 2

March

4 Biographical Sketches Due

- 11 Mission at Home and Abroad
Reading: vol 1, chap. 11-12, vol 2, choose and read 6 documents from 1880-1930
- 18 Unions, Mid Century challenges
Reading: vol. 1, chap. 13-14, choose and read 6 documents from 1930-1980

April

- 1 Basic History and Organization of the UMC
Reading: Frank Intro, chap. 1 - 3; Discipline: Constitution, Para. 1-99; Richey 18
- 8 Scriptural Holiness
Reading: Frank, chap. 4; Discipline, Para. 101-199, *Book of Resolutions*, choose 2 from each section
- 15 Leadership in Local Congregations
Reading: Frank 5, 6, 11; Discipline: Para. 201-299, 2501-2599
Committee assignment report due
- 29 Called and Set Apart
Reading: Frank chap. 7-8, RR&S 415-430, Discipline Para 301-399, 401-499

May

- 3 Our Connections – Conferences and General Agencies
Reading: Frank, chap. 9; Discipline, Para. 501-599, 701-2499
- 13 Keeping It Together – Annual Conference
Reading: Frank, chap. 10; Discipline, Para. 601-699

20 The Church in the 21st Century

Reading, vol. 1, chap. 15, choose 3 readings from 1980-1990

Final papers due