

**Wesley Theological Seminary  
Course of Study School  
2020**

COS 224 Administration and Polity  
Weekend School @ Wesley – October 9-10 and November 6-7, 2020  
Faculty: Rev. Dr. Timothy R. Baer  
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Please Note: Due to the COVID19 Pandemic, we will meet through (hopefully) an audio/video digital classroom where we can interact with each other in real time through ZOOM! Once the class roster is set, we will try to work out the details. Please keep the original dates of October 9-10 and November 6-7 (and the days around them) open for some virtual class time!!!

**Objectives and Goals**

This course focuses on developing the student's competency as an administrator in a United Methodist congregation. 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.

**Required Texts:**

Dale, Robert D., *Pastoral Leadership*, (Nashville: Abingdon, 1986)

Warner, Lacey C., *The Method of Our Mission*, (Nashville: Abingdon, 2014)

Weems, Lovett H., Jr., *Leadership in the Wesleyan Spirit*, (Nashville: Abingdon, 1999)

*The Book of Discipline, 2016*, (Nashville: United Methodist Publishing House)

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**Supplemental Texts (not necessary but helpful):**

Dudley, Carl S., *Effective Small Churches in the Twenty-first Century*, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2003)

Everist, Norma Cook, *Church Conflict: From Contention to Collaboration*, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2004)

Frank, Thomas Edward, *The Soul of the Congregation: An Invitation to Congregational Reflection*, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2000)

**Reading Assignments:**

Reading all required texts should be completed prior to the first day of class.

**Written Assignments:**

Written assignments Numbers 1, 2, and 3 below are due by October 9, 2020. You may send them in ahead of time by posting them to Blackboard or by emailing them to [tbaer@susumc.org](mailto:tbaer@susumc.org). They **must be** received by October 9<sup>th</sup> in order to receive full credit.

Written assignments Numbers 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9 below are due by November 6, 2020. You may send them in ahead of time by posting them to Blackboard or by emailing them to [tbaer@susumc.org](mailto:tbaer@susumc.org). They **must be** received by November 6<sup>th</sup> in order to receive full credit.

**Instructions:**

Type all papers using 12 point font, double spacing, and one inch margins. Also please:

- *show evidence of reading the book or the assignment as well as integrating your personal reflections and thoughts in response to the writer's comments;*
- *provide clear articulation of concept or idea addressed;*
- *answer the question adequately and fully with specific illustrations;*
- *include personal reflections and insights where requested;*
- *follow prescribed length in response to each question;*
- *follow prescribed format and style guidelines for paper.*

**Questions:**

1. Describe your setting in two ways:

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- a. Provide detail creating a verbal picture of your setting. Describe location, facilities (*property, sanctuary, educational space, office space, etc.*), membership, community setting, worship and Sunday School attendance, and other data or descriptions that make it possible to picture your church(es). Be specific!
  - b. Dr. Lovett Weems talks of “ministry by wandering about.” In the administration of your church(es), what observations (internal and external) would be critical to know, especially as you plan and execute a strategy for leading the church(es). Observe specific relational and visual cues for what is happening in the church(es) as well as the community, and who is a part of it. Be specific in your description. **(3-4 pages)**
2. Dr. Lacey Warner and Dr. Lovett Weems, Jr. remind us our United Methodist system of organization is grounded in Biblical and theological understanding. What is the heart of our governance – Biblically and theologically? **(3-4 pages)**
3. What is United Methodist “conferencing”? What are its strengths? What are its weaknesses? What are the implications for the church(es) you lead and for you as an administrator in the United Methodist connection? **(3-4 pages)**
4. Review Part IV (*pp. 93-103*) and Part VI, Chapter I (*pp. 147-221*) of the ***The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church 2016***. Pay close attention to the paragraphs that relate to the mission of the church. Answer the following:
- a. What is the mission of the church?
  - b. In what ways is your leadership/administration congruent and/or non-congruent with the mission?
  - c. In what ways is your church(es) fulfilling and/or not fulfilling the mission?
  - d. What are the implications for the future? **(2 pages)**
5. With the mission of the church as foundational:
- a. What is the vision where you serve – for you as leader as well as those who you lead?
  - b. With mission and vision in mind, and understanding your setting, write two SMART goals for the next 12 months (*SMART goals are specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, timely*). Answer the who/what/when questions in your goals.
  - c. Explain how these goals are faithful to the mission and vision?
  - d. What resources are available to help you implement the vision? Include connectional and community resources.
  - e. How will they be evaluated/measured/adjusted. Be specific! **(2-3 pages)**

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6. Effective visioning and implementation of the vision requires engaged lay leadership.
  - a. Who are the key leaders in your church(es) and why (*be specific with names and leadership positions they hold*)?
  - b. Who else has power because of relational positions rather than official leadership positions (*i.e. – Who is the matriarch, patriarch? Who do people listen to and seek out their opinion?*)?
  - c. Who are the stakeholders?
  - d. Who else might be recruited to be a part of a leadership team who is not presently in such a position?
  - e. How will you gather, train, and nurture this team? **(2-3 pages)**
  
7. Property issues often cause problems. Review Part VI, Chapter 6 (pp. 733–776) of ***The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church 2016***.
  - a. What did you learn about the responsibility of the trustees and/or the requirements for property administration that you did not previously know?
  - b. Are your trustees functioning according to the guidelines and direction of the ***Discipline***?
  - c. What are the differences? Be specific!
  - d. As administrator, how will you lead the church into compliance? Be specific! **(2-3 pages)**
  
8. Dr. Robert Dale reminds us that as administrator of a local church, the congregation looks to you for leadership when it comes to finances. What is your understanding of Biblical stewardship, and your theology of finance? **(2 pages)**
  
9. Conflict is inevitable in the local church.
  - a. Reflect on your personal “history with conflict.”
  - b. How have you coped with/responded to conflict in the past?
  - c. What is your default response (*that which you do without thinking*)?
  - d. What insights have you gain about yourself and about potential strategies for dealing with conflict in the future? **(2 pages)**

**Grading:**

Papers – 77%  
Attendance and Participation – 15%  
Final Exercise – 8%

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