

**Syllabus**  
**Extension Course of Study School**  
**Class #224 – Administration and Polity**  
Roy L. Spore, Instructor

**Class Description** (From the Course of Study Curriculum developed by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry)

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**

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

Warner, Lacey C. The Method of our Mission (Abingdon: 2014)

The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church. (The United Methodist Publishing House, 2012)

**Grading**

The overall goal of this course is to enable the participants to discover joy in being a local pastor in today's world. It is the hope of this instructor that the participants will approach the course in this manner and have fun working together. However, we all know that we have to have grades. Therefore, it is only fair that you understand the criteria for grading papers and projects. In general, the following principals apply.

- A (90+)** The student has fully understood the assigned task and has executed that task with great expertise. The work shows evidence of an excellent grasp of the material, the ability to derive new insights and ideas from the material, and the ability to utilize those insights in interpreting and applying the information.
- B (80-89)** The student has a good understanding of the assigned task and has executed the assignment very well. The work shows evidence of a good grasp of the material, some new insights, and some expertise in interpreting and applying the information gained.
- C (70-79)** The student shows some understanding of the assignment and has completed all the work at a satisfactory level. The work shows evidence of having considered the material, but the insights are not original. The material is applied in an acceptable manner based on the work.

- D (60-69)** The student has completed the assignment at an unsatisfactory level. There is no evidence of having struggled with the material or considered the work of others. Application of the material lacks understanding.
- F (-59)** The student has failed to complete the assigned task.

Participants will note that the emphasis in grading is on understanding and original thought. It is the belief of this instructor that real learning is evidenced by the ability to apply information, not simply recite it. It will be important to learn from and refer to the work of others and this reference should always be noted. Plagiarism is totally unacceptable. The class grade will be figured as follows.

Outside Assignments	60%
Class Participation	10%
Final project	30%

## Assignments

**Class Assignments** – Prior to each class participants are expected to complete the assigned readings and respond to the assigned questions in writing. Some of these questions are designed to help the reader focus on the significant portions of the reading and the answers can be found, for the most part, in the texts themselves. There will also be some questions that require the reader to utilize the information from the texts to reflect on the nature of pastoral leadership from the personal perspective of a minister in the United Methodist Church. Obviously, these later questions will be weighted more heavily in the grading and should be considered more critical in the processing of information.

**Class Participation** – This class is designed to utilize a seminar format, meaning that the participants will be responsible for sharing their knowledge and understanding in the process of discussion. The responsible participant will share in the discussion, provide information and insight that is pertinent to the learning process, and raise questions that help guide the discussion. Once again, the emphasis here is on having a good time discussing the issues rather than on having all the right answers. Good preparation for class participation will come through thorough reading of the material and completion of written assignments. Absences from class will result in a reduced grade for class participation.

**Final Project** – After the three class sessions, students will be required to complete a project that enables them to apply the knowledge and skills that they have gained through the reading, reflection and class discussion. This is not a research project, but a practical application of learning in which the participants draw a connection between the cognitive learning of the classroom and the actual role of ministry in the local church. A “good” project will demonstrate the ability of the participant to observe the cognitive knowledge gained in class in an actual ministry setting. The exact nature of the project will be announced and discussed at the third class session.

Written assignments are due before class on the date designated by the instructor. They should be e-mailed to:

roy.spore@yahoo.com

*(When e-mailing assignments, send as an attachment, preferably in “Word” format, and make sure that the document includes your name)*

**Late Work** - All assignments are due on the date designated by the instructor, usually the Monday prior to the class session, in order for the instructor to review the assignments prior to class and to prepare participants for responsible discussion. Work received after the due date may be assessed a 5 point penalty if received before the class session; work received after the class session will be assessed a 10 point penalty.

### **Class Schedule**

- December 11    The pastor as Administrator:  
*Leading the church in the Wesleyan spirit*
- January 8        The polity of the United Methodist Church:  
*Leading from the Discipline*
- February 12    Practical Matters of Administration:  
*Membership, Stewardship and Leadership*

Assignment 1

ECOSS 224 – Administration and Polity

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

*Respond to the following questions with 1-2 paragraphs (10 points each)*

1. On page 20 Weems states “*Faithful and effective leadership begins with people – the people God has given us.*” What does Weems mean by this statement and how do you understand it in relation to local church ministry?
2. Weems summarizes chapter 3 with the statement “*The world hears the gospel when it sees it.*” How do you understand this statement? What are its implications for your ministry?
3. “*The growth of the Wesleyan enterprise is directly related to its identification with the needs of all God’s children*” (p. 43). A) If the Church took this statement seriously, what would its ministry look like? B) In light of your response, what should you be doing in your ministry?
4. On page 55 Weems talks about the “invisible people.” What does he mean by this term? Who are the invisible people in your community?
5. On page 59 Weems states: “*At no time does the leadership position become anything more than a trust from the larger community.*” Explain this statement and its implications for your ministry.
6. Chapter 7 focuses on how the leader lives in “*tension*” and Weems uses the term “*integration*” as a possible solution. How do you understand what Weems is discussing and what are its advantages to ministerial leadership?
7. In chapter 9 Weems introduces what he calls “*the connection principal.*” Explain what he means by this term.
8. The chapter titles in section 3 of the book address the passions of a Wesleyan leader: “*Knows God; Proclaims Christ; Seeks justice.*” What would local church ministry look like if it followed this organizational pattern?
9. On page 124 Weems writes of a vacuum left by religious leaders: how do you discern the difference between “*The proclamation of Christ*” and “*generic spirituality ... grounded in ... self-centeredness?*”
10. Identify one new idea that you encountered in this reading that you would like to explore further and explain why you think it is important.

*This assignment is due on December 6; e-mail your work, preferably in Word format, to:*

roy.spore@yahoo.com