

# Unitarian Universalist Polity

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## Unitarian Universalist Polity & Mission

### Spring 2019

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#### **General Course Information-**

This course meets for the 10 weeks of the spring 2019 Iliff quarter, starting March 25th and ending May 31st. As an online class there will be no in person meetings, but if you are in the Denver area and would like to meet in person to discuss class materials, I am available by appointment. If you are not in the Denver area you can request time to meet via phone or online video conference.

#### **Expectations-**

My Expectations of You-

You will take responsibility for your own time management. If you are struggling with a portion of the course you are expected to reach out in a timely fashion to ask for the help you need.

All assignments will be due as detailed below, but generally by Sunday at midnight

This is a graduate level course with a commensurate level of difficulty. You can expect to read between 100-200 pages a week.

Late work will not be accepted, unless prior arrangements have been made, or in EXTRAORDINARY CASES, with documentation of the reason.

Incompletes will not be given.

To successfully complete this class I expect you to have a relationship with an actual Unitarian Universalist congregation.

### What You Can Expect of Me-

All assignments will be provided through the Canvas online learning platform.

Every effort has been made to connect this course to requirements of the Ministerial Fellowship Committee

Every effort has been made to keep the cost of this course as low as possible.

I will generally respond to questions within 48 hours. I am a full time minister, and I generally take Mondays off. If you have sent me a question and not received an answer within 48 hours, feel free to send another note to bump up the priority.

### **Book List –**

While every effort has been made to make this course as accessible as possible at the lowest cost to students, some book purchases will be needed. In general, when only a portion of a book is required for the course, scans will be provided on Canvas. When entire books are required you will need to get a copy, either by borrowing or purchasing it. You can often find copies of used books for reduced prices at [www.bookfinder.com](http://www.bookfinder.com). In addition, you may wish to own entire copies of certain books for which the instructor will provide only a partial copy. Lastly, please note that during week 5 you will be required to share a book review of a book not on our class reading list, but on the MFC reading list. Further details are below, but if you need to buy a

copy to do your book review, make sure to do so in a timely fashion. Ensure your access to the following texts –

Governance & Ministry (2nd Edition) – Dan Hotchkiss (NOTE: Do not buy the 1st edition, there are substantial differences and we will be working exclusively from the 2nd edition - ISBN-10: 1566997399 )

Who's In Charge Around Here – UUA Commission on Appraisal - ISBN: 9781558967083

How Your Church Family Works – Peter Steinke - ISBN-10: 1566993296

The Premise & The Promise – Warren Ross - ISBN-10: 9781558964181

In addition you may wish to acquire

A Documentary History of Unitarian Universalism Vol I & II – Editor Dan McKanan

The Cambridge Platform: Contemporary Readers Edition - Editor Peter Hughes

We will read the entire book, and an electronic copy will be available to you, but should you wish to read it on paper you may wish to either print or buy a copy of

Congregational Polity – Conrad Wright

## **Course Overview -**

This course is intended to provide a foundation for understanding Unitarian Universalist governance, that is polity. It is a required course for people seeking

fellowship with the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) through the Ministerial Fellowship Committee (MFC). Because of that requirement for UU seminarians, this course is largely, but not exclusively, built around the required reading list from the MFC. By the end of the course you should be able to accurately describe our governance models at a variety of scales, understand the disagreements present within our faith tradition about matters of governance, have a working understanding of how congregations and ministers make decisions, and be able to situate your own thoughts within the larger context of our history and present. You should also be able to clearly explain the benefits and drawbacks of particular governance models and articulate the considerations that should be brought to bear on governance questions in your leadership. This course will examine the fundamentals of Unitarian Universalist congregational polity and will also examine essential elements of functional ministry: how to minister in a mission-based institution, how to understand and effectively manage conflict, and how successful administrative functioning enhances system health.

Because this course is intended to marry the theoretical ideas about governance with the actual practice of governance you are expected to have access to, and engagement with, an actual Unitarian Universalist body. For most of you that is your local congregation, but for others the requirements may be fulfilled by observing governance in practice through the UUA Board or prior General Assemblies, should adequate material be available. If you do not have an ongoing relationship with an actual Unitarian Universalist body at this point, you should develop one. As a congregational faith tradition all governance decisions are local, and a rich understanding of polity means the ability to apply your learning to local circumstances.

All students are expected to do their own work, and to abide by the academic honesty policies of Iliff, as well as the code of professional conduct of the Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association (UUMA) and the Rules & Policies of the MFC. In addition to those policies, please be aware of the following Iliff specific policies which impact our relationship as student and professor.

## **Iliff Policies-**

As a professor, one of my responsibilities is to help create a safe learning environment on our campus. I also have a mandatory reporting responsibility related to my role as a professor. It is my goal that you feel able to share information related to your life experiences in classroom discussions, in your written work, and in our one-on-one meetings. I will seek to keep information you share private to the greatest extent possible. However, I am required to share with the Title IX coordinator information regarding instances of sex/gender based harassment, discrimination, and sexual misconduct in the Iliff community. Students may speak to someone confidentially by contacting our Confidential Reporters: the Dean of the Chapel and Spiritual Formation, the Associate Dean of Admissions, and the Director of Consultation and Formation. Information on our Title IX Policy can be found on Iliff's website.

Adjunct faculty serve in a different capacity than regular faculty, therefore

Adjunct Faculty are not permitted to supervise Independent Study courses for any students.

Adjunct Faculty are asked to refuse all requests for an Incomplete Grade from students.

## **Grades & Evaluation –**

### **Assignments –**

Weekly Participation on Canvas - Each week, in conjunction with our readings, you will be expected to participate in discussion online. Successful posts will show clear evidence of having read the materials, and thoughtful engagement with the issues at hand. In addition to writing your own material you will also be expected to respond to other students posts, at least one response per week. As noted elsewhere, late work will not be accepted for a grade. Posts about the reading for a week, or response to other questions posed by the professor are due not later than Sunday at midnight.

Posts should exceed 300 words of original content (not including quoted materials). Because I am aware that many students will not post their material until Sunday, responses to other students are due not later than Tuesday at midnight of the following week (48 hours after the original post deadline). Collectively these posts account for 40% of your grade.

**Book Review** – While many of the readings for our class come from the MFC Reading List, there are other materials on the Reading List with relevance to polity that we will not explicitly cover in this class. Therefore, as a service to yourself and your fellow students, you will also be required to read one additional book from the MFC Reading List and share a 3 page summary/response on Canvas. This response should show a clear understanding of the material you read, key questions the material addresses, and information about why the MFC has either required or suggested the text. This book review will account for 10% of your grade.

**Annotated Bylaws and Policies** – In week 5 of the course you will be expected to share an annotated copy of the bylaws and policies of an actual Unitarian Universalist Congregation. In addition, for this assignment you will need to sit in on an actual Unitarian Universalist church board meeting. If you do not currently have an ongoing relationship with such a church, I suggest you start working on that now. More details will be given later, but the total assignment will be worth 10% of your grade.

**Project Proposal & Annotated Bibliography for Final Project** – Your final project in the class will be worth 40% of the grade in the class. This will be broken into two parts. In week 6 you will be required to submit a project proposal, and by the end of week 7 you will be required to submit an annotated bibliography of the sources you'll be using for the project. These two portions will constitute 10% of your grade in the class.

**Final Project** - You will be required to develop a final project to demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of the issues raised in this class. Through a worship service, workshop, or other project show how you would share a piece of our history to highlight a polity issue and provide guidance on an issue facing a congregation (real or imagined). The final project should be complete, meaning that if you choose a workshop, you should include all materials needed by someone to facilitate the project (see Tapestry of Faith for examples) or if you choose a worship service a full order of service including music, readings and the sermon. This project will constitute 30% of your final grade.

**General guidance on professional writing for this course –**

You are in a graduate level program in a religious tradition that prizes academic and professional competence. Materials turned in should be clearly written and understandable by your readers. While I do not require that you use a particular method for citing sources (MLA, etc.) I do require that you cite sources you quote in your work in a manner that would reasonably allow an interested person to find the material you are citing. Plagiarism is never acceptable, and if you are going to quote another author at length, do so in a manner that clearly marks off your writing from the quoted material. In addition, for the ease of grading, use standard and highly readable fonts, font sizes not to exceed 12 points, margins not to exceed 1", and double spacing to allow room for professor comments on submitted materials. Acceptable file formats are PDF, Word & GDoc. Page numbers are always appreciated.

**Grades –**

The following are general criteria for assignments.

**A – 90-100%** All requirements thoroughly and exceptionally completed.

Creativity or original ideas are evidenced.

**B – 80-89%** One or more of the listed requirements is either missing or not

adequately completed. The assignment is prepared at above average standards.

C – 70-79% The assignment has been attempted and criteria have been adequately met at a basic (graduate) level.

D – 60-69% There is evidence that an effort has been made to prepare the assignment; however, the requirements were marginally realized.

F – Anything less than the above. Work that is incomplete, lacks a connection to the material covered in class, is not clearly written or fails to effectively communicate ideas and understanding will result in a failing grade.

Extra Credit/Makeup Work- There will be no opportunities for extra credit or makeup work. Your grade will depend entirely on timely completion of the assignments. Think of it like church - there's a Sunday every week, and you need to be prepared for it. You can't give your sermon on Tuesday and hope people will come back for it. It's Sunday, or nothing.

## **The Calendar-**

Week 1 – In the Beginning – Covenant & Congregationalism

Congregational Polity – Conrad Wright, Forward – 31

Lay & Liberal Doctrine of the Church – Alice Blair Wesley – All 6 Essays

Cambridge Platform – Entire

Edict of Torda – King John Sigismund – Entire



## Week 2 – On Associations

Congregational Polity – Conrad Wright – 33-99

Remarks on Associations – WE Channing – Entire

Articles of Faith and Plan of Church Government – Philadelphia Convention of Universalists – Entire

Dedham Decision – Massachusetts Supreme Court – Selected

First Annual Report of the Executive Committee – American Unitarian Association – Selected

## Week 3 – Thinking Theologically About Governance

Theological Reflection: On the Practice of Ministry – Phil Campbell – Entire

Shriveled Beneath the Clods – Marlin Lavanhar – Entire

The Principles & Methods of the Church of the Disciples – James Freeman Clark – Selected

Interdependence: Renewing Congregational Polity – UUA Commission on Appraisal – Entire

## Week 4 – Belonging: Who Gets To Make What Decisions

Belonging: The Meaning of Membership – UUA Commission on Appraisal – Entire

Congregational Polity – Conrad Wright – 101-178

Congregations & Beyond – Peter Morales – Entire

## Week 5 – Bylaws & Policies

Congregational Bylaws & Policy Examples

Governance & Ministry (2nd Edition) – Dan Hotchkiss – Forward (pg vii) - Chapter 5 (pg 82)

UUA Bylaws & Rules – Entire

UUMA Guidelines & Standards of Professional Practice – Entire

Book review due – Note: this has been changed, and is now due May 5th.

Week 6 – Who’s In Charge Around Here

Governance & Ministry (2nd Edition) Dan Hotchkiss – Chapters 6-9 (pgs 83-164)

Who’s In Charge Around Here – UUA Commission on Appraisal – Entire

The Fellowship Movement – Holly Ulbrich – Selected

Revised Due Date for Book Review

Week 7 – Ministry in Churches

How Your Church Family Works – Peter Steinke – Entire

Governance & Ministry (2nd Edition) – Dan Hotchkiss – Chapters 10-11 (pgs 165-200)

Rivals or a Team – Eileen Guenther – Selected

Changing Face of Ministry – Carl Scovel – Entire

When Moses Meets Aaron – Gil Rendle & Susan Beaumont – Selected

Annotated bibliography due –

Week 8 – Conflict Case Studies

Taft/Holmes Debate – Selected

The Church & The Draft Resisters – Jack Mendelsohn

The Issue in the West – Entire

The Long Challenge: The Empowerment Controversy – Victor Carpenter – Selected

The Iowa Sisterhood – Cynthia Grant Tucker – Selected

Elite – Mark Harris – Selected

The Universalist Klansman – Colin Bossen – Entire

Week 9 – Recent History

The Premise & The Promise – Warren Ross – 13-40, 57-79, 123-135, 189-202



UUA Statements of Conscience – Selected









Final project due –





Week 10 – Final Projects

Student Projects & Responses

## Course Summary:

Date	Details	Due
Tue Apr 2, 2019	 <a href="https://iliff.instructure.com/courses/2398804/assignments/2197074">Week 1</a> <a href="https://iliff.instructure.com/courses/2398804/assignments/2197074">https://iliff.instructure.com/courses/2398804/assignments/2197074</a>	due by 11:59pm
Sun Apr 7, 2019	 <a href="https://iliff.instructure.com/courses/2398804/assignments/2200943">Week 2 - On Associations</a> <a href="https://iliff.instructure.com/courses/2398804/assignments/2200943">https://iliff.instructure.com/courses/2398804/assignments/2200943</a>	due by 11:59pm

Date	Details	Due
Sun Apr 14, 2019	 <a href="https://iliff.instructure.com/courses/2398804/assignments/2206444">Week 3 - Thinking Theologically</a> <a href="https://iliff.instructure.com/courses/2398804/assignments/2206444">https://iliff.instructure.com/courses/2398804/assignments/2206444</a>	due by 11:59pm
Sun Apr 21, 2019	 <a href="https://iliff.instructure.com/courses/2398804/assignments/2210510">Week 4 - Belonging, or Who Gets to Make What Decisions?</a> <a href="https://iliff.instructure.com/courses/2398804/assignments/2210510">https://iliff.instructure.com/courses/2398804/assignments/2210510</a>	due by 11:59pm
Sun Apr 28, 2019	 <a href="https://iliff.instructure.com/courses/2398804/assignments/2206446">Congregational Bylaws/Policies &amp; Board Meeting Observation</a> <a href="https://iliff.instructure.com/courses/2398804/assignments/2206446">https://iliff.instructure.com/courses/2398804/assignments/2206446</a>	due by 11:59pm
Sun May 5, 2019	 <a href="https://iliff.instructure.com/courses/2398804/assignments/2215857">Week 5 - Bylaws &amp; Policies</a> <a href="https://iliff.instructure.com/courses/2398804/assignments/2215857">https://iliff.instructure.com/courses/2398804/assignments/2215857</a>	due by 11:59pm
Sun May 5, 2019	 <a href="https://iliff.instructure.com/courses/2398804/assignments/2208194">Book Review</a> <a href="https://iliff.instructure.com/courses/2398804/assignments/2208194">https://iliff.instructure.com/courses/2398804/assignments/2208194</a>	due by 11:59pm
Sun May 5, 2019	 <a href="https://iliff.instructure.com/courses/2398804/assignments/2217512">Week 6 - Who's In Charge Around Here?</a> <a href="https://iliff.instructure.com/courses/2398804/assignments/2217512">https://iliff.instructure.com/courses/2398804/assignments/2217512</a>	due by 11:59pm
Sun May 12, 2019	 <a href="https://iliff.instructure.com/courses/2398804/assignments/2217468">Annotated Bibliography for Final Project</a> <a href="https://iliff.instructure.com/courses/2398804/assignments/2217468">https://iliff.instructure.com/courses/2398804/assignments/2217468</a>	due by 11:59pm
Sun May 12, 2019	 <a href="https://iliff.instructure.com/courses/2398804/assignments/2219067">Week 7 - Ministry In Churches</a> <a href="https://iliff.instructure.com/courses/2398804/assignments/2219067">https://iliff.instructure.com/courses/2398804/assignments/2219067</a>	due by 11:59pm

Date	Details	Due
Sun May 19, 2019	 <a href="https://iliff.instructure.com/courses/2398804/assignments/2219068">Week 8 - Conflict Case Studies</a> <a href="https://iliff.instructure.com/courses/2398804/assignments/2219068">https://iliff.instructure.com/courses/2398804/assignments/2219068</a>	due by 11:59pm
Sun May 26, 2019	 <a href="https://iliff.instructure.com/courses/2398804/assignments/2237172">Final Project</a> <a href="https://iliff.instructure.com/courses/2398804/assignments/2237172">https://iliff.instructure.com/courses/2398804/assignments/2237172</a>	due by 11:59pm
Sun May 26, 2019	 <a href="https://iliff.instructure.com/courses/2398804/assignments/2236222">Week 9- Recent History</a> <a href="https://iliff.instructure.com/courses/2398804/assignments/2236222">https://iliff.instructure.com/courses/2398804/assignments/2236222</a>	due by 11:59pm
Sun Jun 2, 2019	 <a href="https://iliff.instructure.com/courses/2398804/assignments/2237172">Week 10 - Final Projects Discussion</a> <a href="https://iliff.instructure.com/courses/2398804/assignments/2237172">https://iliff.instructure.com/courses/2398804/assignments/2237172</a>	due by 11:59pm



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