

DS525 UCC Studies: Polity for a New Day
January Interterm 2020

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A Note About January Interterm UCC Studies:

With recent restructuring and continuing change in The United Church of Canada, VST is offering two UCC Studies courses during January Interterm. The goal of these courses is to prepare learned and able leaders to contribute to the health and well-being of the church at all levels through its polity/governance and faith formation. These two courses can be taken separately or consecutively. The first course (DS525 January 8-10) will consider the development of recent changes in the polity of the church and provide opportunity to understand the United Church's current organization of its life – from communities of faith to regions and the denominational council - in a context of faithful discipleship. Students who have previously taken DS525 may want to register to audit this updated course. The second course (DS521 January 13-15) will engage and enable students in the leadership of faith-forming and community-shaping in an intercultural church. These courses are required for United Church MDiv. students.

Purpose:

This course considers the development and current implementation of recent changes in the structure of the denomination. The seminar will provide an overview of the governance system, church policies and practices and the ways in which they intersect with the life of communities of faith and with individuals. It will seek to assist in the preparation of leaders to function well within that governance system. Extensive use will be made of *The Manual* and other UCC policy documents.

Competencies Related to Course

- an ability to describe, interpret and analyze, both orally and in writing, current issues facing the United Church with relevance to its polity and governance
- an ability to locate relevant sections of *The Manual* (and other documents) in response to questions and issues
- an ability to describe and analyze the authority and function of the councils of the church
- an ability to critically and constructively articulate how UCC polity supports or hinders practices of church mission and ministry
- knowledge of the expectations of ministerial leadership as it pertains to UCC ethical standards, standards of practice, duty of care, authority and power of ministry personnel, oversight and discipline, sexual conduct
- knowledge of official document keeping procedures

Format of the Course

This 1.0 credit class will meet January 8-10, from 2-5:30. The course is taught as a seminar with instructional input. Participation is through active listening, collegial group work, in-class discussions and guest presentations. Preparation for the course includes pre-course reading and writing. A final paper will be due by the end of the term.

Required Reading

John Young, "Introduction," in Don Schweitzer, Robert C. Fennell, Michael Bourgeois, eds., *The Theology of The United Church of Canada*. Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier Press, 2019, pp. 1-20.

Gail Allan and Marilyn Legge, "Ecclesiology: 'Being the United Church of Canada'," in Schweitzer, Fennell, Bourgeois, eds., *The Theology of The United Church of Canada*, pp. 173-202.

Students are required to become familiar with these documents prior to the course.

- *The Manual, 2019*. United Church Publishing House. <http://www.united-church.ca/sites/default/files/manual-2016.pdf>
- *Trustees Handbook with Concordance (2016)* http://www.united-church.ca/sites/default/files/resources/handbook_trustees.pdf
- *Ministry and Personnel Committees: Policy, Procedures, Practices*. (2019). https://www.united-church.ca/sites/default/files/ministry-personnel-committees_policy-procedures-practices.pdf
- *Dispute Resolution (2016)* http://www.united-church.ca/sites/default/files/handbook_dispute-resolution.pdf
- *Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Response Policy and Procedures*. (2019). <https://www.united-church.ca/sites/default/files/resources/sexual-misconduct-prevention-response.pdf>
- *Ethical Standards and Standards of Practice for Ministry Personnel* <https://www.united-church.ca/sites/default/files/resources/ethical-standards-practice-ministry-personnel.pdf>
- *United in God's Work*, Final Report of The Comprehensive Review Task Group (CRTG), March 2015. [https://commons.united-church.ca/Documents/Governance/General%20Council/42nd%20General%20Council%20\(2015\)/Comprehensive%20Review/CRTG%20Report%20-%20United%20in%20God's%20Work.pdf](https://commons.united-church.ca/Documents/Governance/General%20Council/42nd%20General%20Council%20(2015)/Comprehensive%20Review/CRTG%20Report%20-%20United%20in%20God's%20Work.pdf) and GC42 CRTG Final Omnibus Motion as Passed [https://commons.united-church.ca/Documents/Governance/General%20Council/42nd%20General%20Council%20\(2015\)/Comprehensive%20Review/GC42%20CRTG%20Final%20Omnibus%20Motion%200as%20Passed.pdf](https://commons.united-church.ca/Documents/Governance/General%20Council/42nd%20General%20Council%20(2015)/Comprehensive%20Review/GC42%20CRTG%20Final%20Omnibus%20Motion%200as%20Passed.pdf)

Other documents will be noted on the syllabus.

Course Expectations and Assignments

- 100% attendance of the class
- Appropriate preparation for participation in class activities and discussion
- Pre-reading, pre-course written assignment (250-300 words) and post-course written assignment (1000 words) as detailed in syllabus.