

# The History, Polity and Theology of the United Church of Christ

(Sponsored by Lancaster Theological Seminary)

Summer, 2017  
Baltimore, Maryland (General Synod)

Instructors: Dr. Lee Barrett  
Rev. Dr. Carolyne Call

## **Course Objectives**

By the end of the course, students will be able to demonstrate:

1. Familiarity with and knowledge of the four founding traditions of the UCC and newer contributory heritages, their histories, informing documents, key principles and premises, and current realities.
2. Knowledge and understanding of the development of the UCC since 1957.
3. Knowledge and understanding of the historical and contemporary principles and patterns of the UCC in the areas of theology, ecclesiology, liturgy, and mission.
4. Knowledge and understanding of the primary assumptions about ministry and its authorization and practice in the UCC.
5. A working knowledge of the structure, operation and mission of the UCC.
6. The capacity to reflect on and “make a case” for the UCC and why they wish to be a part of its leadership.

**Required texts** (We recommend purchasing these texts, as they will be useful resources for any authorized UCC minister)

- Louis Gunnemann, *The Shaping of the United Church of Christ*
- Daniel L. Johnson and Charles Hambrick-Stowe, eds., *Theology and Identity: Traditions, Movements, and Polity in the United Church of Christ*
- Roger L. Shinn, *Confessing Our Faith*
- Randi Walker, *The Evolution of a UCC Style: Essays in the History, Ecclesiology, and Culture of the United Church of Christ*
- Mary Gast, *That We May All (Finally!) Be One*
- *UCC Book of Worship*
- *UCC Manual on Ministry*
- *Constitution and Bylaws of the United Church of Christ*
- *Heidelberg Catechism* (preferred edition: ed., Lee Barrett)
- *New Century Hymnal*

**\*\*This is a tentative syllabus and schedule. Although content won't change substantively, times and particular sessions may change, and other sessions may be added, depending on General Synod scheduling.**

## **Recommended texts**

(These texts, both old and newer, are helpful additions to a personal library)

- Scott R. Paeth, ed., *Who Do You Say That I Am? Christology and Identity in the United Church of Christ*
- David Dunn et al., *History of the Evangelical and Reformed Church*
- Gabriel Fackre, *Believing, Caring, and Doing in the United Church of Christ*

- Sidney D. Fowler, *What Matters to You? Matters to US: Engaging Six Vital Themes of Our Faith*
- Louis Gunnemann, *United and Uniting*
- Frederick R. Trost and Barbara Brown Zikmund, eds., *Living Theological Heritage of the United Church of Christ, Vol. 7*
- Ann Thayer and Douglas Jacobsen, eds., *Christ, Creeds and Life: Conversations about the Center of Our Faith*
- John Von Rohr, *The Shaping of American Congregationalism*
- *UCC @ 50: Our History, Our Future*
- Barbara Brown Zikmund, ed., *Hidden Histories in the UCC, Vol. 1 & 2*

## **Course Requirements**

- Attendance and active participation in all class sessions. We recognize that, with Synod in session, it will not be possible to keep up with all readings assigned for particular sessions. We urge students, insofar as possible, to read assigned texts in advance of Synod (but especially those readings for the earlier class sessions).
- Each student, regardless of whether s/he is taking the course for credit or for a certificate, must do the following:
  - Write an ordination paper (roughly 15-20 pages) that could be presented to your Committee on Ministry/ Church and Ministry Committee, and **following your Association's specific guidelines**. (Please consult separate handout regarding these papers.) Students who are seeking privilege of call, commissioning, or dual standing may substitute papers that meet the goals of these processes, following the specific guidelines of the Association in which they are seeking authorization. **Date due: August 11.** *If you believe you are unprepared to write an ordination paper (for example, because you are just beginning your seminary career), please see the instructors as soon as possible for other options.*
  - Complete a final take-home essay exam that will be handed out during the last class session. **Due date: July 21.**

## **Computers**

Because we will be using materials online, both in and out of class sessions, we strongly urge all participants to bring their laptop or equivalent to Baltimore.

## **Office Hours**

The instructors will schedule office hours once we are onsite. We encourage you to come talk with us about either this course, or about any concerns or questions you have regarding authorization in the UCC.

## **Please Note:**

1. Those students seeking authorization, but who are not taking the course for academic credit, will, upon satisfactory completion of all work, receive a "certificate of completion" that will meet any Association's requirements for an authorized UCC Polity class.
2. Extensions will be granted for extraordinary circumstances.

## Course Outline

### Sessions One and Two: Wednesday, June 28: 2:00-5:00, 6:30-8:30

#### Setting the Stage: An introduction to one another and to the United Church of Christ

(Focus: by learning something about one another, we will also begin to explore the UCC in its diversity.)

#### The Founding Denominations, Part One: The Congregational and Christian traditions

(Focus: In this session and the next, we will look comparatively at five selected historical aspects of each of the four founding denominations: origins, theology and doctrine, denominational identity, education, and mission.)

- Johnson and Hambrick-Stowe, *Theology and Identity*, chapters 1 & 4
- Elizabeth Nordbeck & Lowell Zuck, eds., *Living Theological Heritage of the UCC*, vol. 4, 413-19 and 1-13 (online)
- Gunnemann, *Shaping of the United Church of Christ*, 137-66
- Barbara Brown Zikmund, ed., *Hidden Histories in the United Church of Christ*, Vol. 2, chapter 3 (online)

### Sessions Three and Four: Thursday, June 29: 9:00-12:00, 2:00-5:00

#### The Founding Denominations, part two: The Reformed and Evangelical traditions; and the Formation of the United Church of Christ

(Focus: we continue our examination of five aspects of the founding traditions, and consider realities that both helped and hindered the 1957 union).

- Johnson and Hambrick-Stowe, *Theology and Identity*, chapters 2 & 3
- Gunnemann, *Shaping of the United Church of Christ*, chapters 1-4, 7, 8, and Basis of Union
- Nordbeck & Zuck, eds., *Living Theological Heritage of the United Church of Christ*, Vol. 4, 205-11 and 511-16 (online)
- *Heidelberg Catechism*

#### The Search for a Distinctive United Church of Christ Identity

(Focus: we will reflect on more than half a century of “new” life as the United Church of Christ, and consider how the church’s identity has been shaped and understood over these years, including an examination of General Synod actions and four “defining themes” for the UCC: mission, dialogue, justice, diversity.)

- “Reshaping Mission,” *LTH* 7, 122-46 (online)
- Barbara Brown Zikmund, “Expanding an Ecumenical Vision,” in *Prism*, Spring 2007 (online)
- Articles on justice, *LTH* 7, 65-91 (online)
- Articles on expanding relationships, *LTH* 7, 608-15 (online)
- Trost and Zikmund, eds., *LTH* 7, 1-7 (online)
- Randi Walker, *The Evolution of a UCC Style* (begin reading chapters 1-4)
- General Synod Overview (handout in today’s class)
- Richard Taylor and Marjorie H. Royle, “The New United Church of Christ,” in *Prism*, Fall 2007 (online)

## **Sessions Five and Six: Friday, June 30:9:00-12:00, 2:00-4:00**

### **What the United Church of Christ Believes, and How it Remains “United,” Part One**

**(Focus:** introduction to the “three C’s”—Constitution and Bylaws, Covenant, and Consensual Standards—that both reflect and help to shape UCC ideas and identity; examination of the *Constitution and Bylaws* and the meaning of covenant.)

- Randi Walker, *Evolution of a UCC Style* (complete reading of chapters 1-4), also 5 & 6
- *Constitution and Bylaws* (become familiar with its content; pay special attention to the *Preamble*) [online]
- Four articles on covenant, in *Prism*, Fall 1996, 17-53 (online)
- Johnson and Hambrick-Stowe, *Theology and Identity*, chapter 7
- Peter Schmiechen, “Achievement and Promise,” *LTH* 7, 786-92 (online)

### **What the United Church of Christ Believes, and How it Remains “United,” Part Two**

**(Focus:** exploring and defining consensual standards, including the UCC Statement of Faith and initial examination of *Book of Worship*.)

- Johnson and Hambrick-Stowe, *Theology and Identity*, chapter 7
- Randi Walker, *The Evolution of a UCC Style*, chapters 5 & 6
- Roger Shinn, *Confessing Our Faith*
- Roger Shinn, “Revisiting the Statement of Faith,” in *Prism*, Spring 2007 (online)
- *UCC Statement of Faith*
- Articles on Statement of Faith, in *LTH* 7, 17-32 (online)
- *Book of Worship* (be familiar with its contents, and bring your copy to class, if possible)

**From Saturday, July 1 through Tuesday, July 4 we will spend approximately four hours daily, depending on General Synod schedule and planned special events for Members in Discernment, with specific times to be negotiated with participants after the class begins.**

## **Session Seven (TBA)**

### **What the United Church of Christ Believes, and how it Remains “United,” Part Three**

**(Focus:** finish examination of *Book of Worship*; assessment of *The New Century Hymnal*.)

- *Book of Worship* (bring to class)
- *New Century Hymnal* (be familiar with its contents)

## **Session Eight (TBA)**

### **General Synod debriefing**

## Session Nine (TBA)

### Ministries of the United Church of Christ from Call to Authorization, Part One

(Focus: the essential nature of “call” as not only personal, but also ecclesial; introduction to the process by which credentialing, or “authorization,” of three kinds of ministries is carried out in the UCC.)

- Johnson and Hambrick-Stowe, *Theology and Identity*, chapter 8
- Walter Brueggemann and Browne Barr, “A Note on the Practice of Ministry,” *LTH* 7, 247-54 (online)
- Minister’s Code, in *Manual on Ministry* (Bring *Manual on Ministry* to class, or be prepared to access it online)

## Session Ten (TBA)

### General Synod Debriefing

## Session Eleven (TBA)

### Ministries of the United Church of Christ from Call to Authorization, Part Two

(Focus: ordained, commissioned, and licensed ministries in the UCC.)

- *Manual on Ministry* (bring to class or be prepared to access online)

## Session Twelve (TBA)

### General Synod Debriefing

## Session Thirteen (TBA)

### The Nature and Ethics of Ministry in the United Church of Christ

(Focus: examination of several case studies on ministry.)

- Case studies to be handed out in today’s class

## Session Fourteen: Wednesday, July 5: 9:00-12:00

### General Synod Debriefing

### UCC Ecclesiology: Who We Are As Church

Focus: How we understand ourselves essentially as God’s church; “making a case” for the UCC; closing devotions.)

- Clyde Steckel, “United Church of Christ Ecclesiology at Fifty,” in *Prism*, ISpring 2007 (online)
- Scott Paeth, ed., *Who Do You Say That I Am* (read introduction and at least chapters 3,6,7, and 8)

## Contact information:

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