



CENTER FOR MINISTRY AND LAY TRAINING

DISCIPLES HISTORY AND POLITY

March 5 – April 30, 2023

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PURPOSE: This course will present an overview of the history and practices of the Stone-Campbell movement as foundational to its current forms of Disciples worship, missions, and ministry: denominationally, ecumenically, and culturally.

GOALS/OUTCOMES: 1) To integrate historical understandings with practical application towards the pursuit of leadership and ministry within the Disciples of Christ. 2) To become knowledgeable of resources and content to provide informed, responsible leadership to Disciples congregations and related organizations. 3) To foster an appreciation of the heritage and traditions of Disciples in congregational, regional, and general expressions. 4) To understand ministry in an ecumenical context, along with the historical setting within our own tradition, and how the practice of ministry has changed (and changed again) since 1801 at Cane Ridge, along with what has remained the same.

METHOD: Over an eight-week period consisting of readings, lectures, discussion boards, and research, our own tradition will be studied through its major movements and social shifts from 1801 to the present. Attention will be paid to Disciples leaders, literature, and issues as those relate to concurrent themes in North American Christianity.

The approach will be thematic rather than chronological. Assigned readings will be made and selected topics will be presented through weekly online lectures and discussion boards. There can be specially arranged Zoom meetings to talk with the instructor and each other.

REQUIRED TEXTS

All textbooks are in the Discipliana Collection in the PTS (Phillips Theological Seminary) library, and some could be found in local church libraries.

Cardwell, Brenda and Fox, William K., *Journey Towards Wholeness*, Chalice Press, 2016. ISBN 978-0827217409

Foster, Douglas A., et al., eds. *Stone-Campbell Encyclopedia*. Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2004. ISBN 0-8028-3898-7

Jha, Sandhya Rani. *Room at the Table: Struggle for Unity and Equality in Disciples History*. Chalice Press, 2009. ISBN 978-0-8272-5656-1

Toulouse, Mark G. *Joined in Discipleship: The Shaping of Contemporary Disciples Identity*. Chalice Press, 1997. ISBN 0-8272-1710-2

Williams, D. Newell, et al., eds. *The Stone-Campbell Movement: A Global History*. Chalice Press, 2012. ISBN 978-08272-3527-4

REQUIREMENTS:

Three discussion module posts are required to demonstrate **weekly** attendance and class participation. At the beginning of each class week a question or comment will be posed by the instructor on the discussion board that relates to the weekly topic in the module. You are to make **two informed responses or observations** to the question or comment — don't just say "I think/I feel" but make statements that have some sort of factual basis (hint: refer to the readings, it will make your teacher think you are reading them!). These postings do not need to be long; anywhere from a few sentences to a couple of short paragraphs will do but they should be reasoned, independently supportable statements. They may be in dialogue with classmates, just not "I agree with Jeff!"

A **third posting** each week may be a question from you on the assigned readings or lecture. You are welcome to respond to each other's comments or questions which can fulfill a posting obligation as long as some level of detail is provided.

The class week runs from 12:01 PM Sunday to 11:59 PM Thursday each course period (Central Standard Time). On Sunday, the lecture for the week will be posted. Fridays and Saturdays are freed for the reading of texts and reflection on those readings.

Three postings not made during a scheduled class week will constitute an absence for that week. Each student should make a post on each of three separate days. The purpose of the required posts on three separate days is to engage conversations with each other as well as to avoid clumping posts during the last hour of the class week. It is very helpful if you pace yourselves accordingly, and helps you help each other. I'll chime in as I believe is helpful.

EXPECTATIONS: It is expected that students will keep up with the readings and postings. Participation is important for effective learning. By not making necessary contributions to the discussions, you detract from your ability to learn and adversely affect the vitality and continuity of the whole class.

"Missing" more than 20% of the course is cause for a failing grade—this equates to late or non-posting more than two weeks' discussion participation during the eight-week term. Refer to the CMLT Policies and Procedures.

Auditors are to become acquainted with and adhere to the Audit Policy in the CMLT Policies and Procedures and must meet the attendance requirements in order to receive approval for the course.

Courtesy requires that we respect one another at all times including the opinions of others that may not be consistent with our own. Refer to Etiquette section in CMLT Policies and Procedures.

For proper academic work as defined by PTS, papers must adhere to PTS standards of form and style with proper foot- or end-noting. Citations from historical texts should retain the original language of the writers, though any current interpretation or analysis you prepare should avoid gender assumptions, as well as any bias or stereotypes.

The two assigned papers not received by 11:59 p.m. on the Thursdays they are due will be marked with the loss of one full letter grade for each five calendar days they are late. All papers are to be uploaded into the assignment box in the modules -- they may also be emailed to me in Word format at jeff.gill@ptstulsa.edu, BUT that will slow down my ability to grade and offer feedback, since the online process is designed around the student uploading into the platform.

NOTE: Wikipedia is a tool for research which I recognize many of us use to get started in a subject matter, but to me it's like a rubber mallet. Every tool box needs a rubber mallet, but most repair work and construction in general calls for mitre saws and chisels and wrenches and power drills. Like any blunt instrument, Wikipedia articles are fairly clunky and limited (and they are most assuredly not all created equal). I won't tell you that you can't use Wikipedia at all, because I couldn't enforce it if I wanted to, but I can tell if someone tries to make a birdhouse with a rubber mallet . . . I'll know it if you use Wikipedia for most of your online research. Let's work together to learn how to go further online than the quick think of Wikipedia.

GENERAL INFORMATION: The instructor reserves the right to adjust the syllabus in terms of weekly topics, deadline dates, and class schedules to accommodate holidays or the needs of CMLT, class progress, or the accessibility of materials.

It is my intention to return written work with comments and a grade within one week of the due date, except for late papers. If at any time you need an assessment of your course status and progress, please let me know that.

I will be available for consultation during the week by email and at designated times by Zoom. My e-mail address is listed on the front of this syllabus. Normally e-mail messages will receive a response within 24-hours; if not, holler again!

PTS and CMLT are committed to providing Disability Accommodations. For those needing such assistance, contact the instructor and Leslie LeSieur.

GRADES: a letter grade will be issued at the end of the term using the CMLT standard scale, based upon:

- A. attendance as in engaged & informed class participation (40%);
- B. a research paper (no more than 6 pages, double-spaced in 12 pt. font) which is your retelling of the stories of three individuals influenced by the Restoration Movement, each narrative one and a half to two pages in length. This is due April 6th (but you may turn it in sooner), towards the end of Week 5. PLEASE upload your paper into the assignment block in the modules, which makes my grading process much faster. Be diverse in your selections, chronologically as well as in the more usual senses of the term! (30%);

C. a final paper which will be due by April 27th (30%), which can be either **a)** two written presentations, each 3 pages, double-spaced in 12 pt. font, of a newsletter article, or an offering invitation, or a communion meditation (pick two formats), each of which makes use of an aspect or program of the wider church, regional or general in communicating to the congregation which is receiving them something about what the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) is doing. Week of Compassion, summer youth camp & conference, Disciples of Christ Historical Society, Obra Hispana . . . the options are many & varied, but please be theologically appropriate & morally credible in your statements; (30%) **OR,**

b) a reflection paper (5-6 pages, double-spaced in 12 pt. font) on your *theology of ordination or commissioning* and what it means for your ministry including a statement on accountability and the ministerial code of ethics (30%). Such a paper is required for those pursuing a transfer of credentials or applying for ministerial certification in most regions. This option is not required of anyone, but it is highly recommended in preparation for those meeting with regional committees/commissions on ministry.

Either way, PLEASE upload your paper into the assignment block in the modules, which makes my grading process much faster.

GRADING SCALE:

- 100-97= A+
- 96-94= A
- 93-90= A-
- 89-87= B+
- 86-84= B
- 83-80= B-
- 79-77= C+
- 76-74= C
- 73-70= C-
- 69-67= D+
- 66-64= D
- 63-60= D-
- 59 or below= F

SCHEDULE

The first week reading is brutal, but I promise you it gets better! This course is unusual in how many regions are choosing to accept it for the competency in Disciples history & polity, and as such carries a heavier reading load in sum than most other CMLT courses. There are expectations of content being shared with students that can only be met through readings, along with my video lectures.

There will be a mandatory but UN-graded pre-test, which you will take again at the conclusion of the course; this is part of an ongoing effort to learn what we are teaching students in terms of content. It is a module included in the Week 1 materials; again, just answer the best you can!

Week 1 Simple Gifts and Pastoral Theology on the American Frontier Mar. 5-9

[The first video lecture was originally recorded in March of 2022, but my reference to the significance of March 8, 1782 stands. It's on Wednesday of this week in 2023.]

In preparation for class, please read “Last Will and Testament of the Springfield Presbytery” by Barton Stone, et al.:

https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Last_Will_and_Testament_of_The_Springfield_Presbytery

and Thomas Campbell’s Declaration and Address:

<https://www.therestorationmovement.com/states/wv/declaration.htm>

as well as this atypical selection, from the Ohio Historical Journal archives, vol. 3, pp. 276-300:

[https://resources.ohiohistory.org/ohj/browse/displaypages.php?display\[\]=0003&display\[\]=276&display\[\]=300](https://resources.ohiohistory.org/ohj/browse/displaypages.php?display[]=0003&display[]=276&display[]=300)

Encyclopedia (E) – Biblical Authority, Biblical Interpretation, Calvinism, Christology, Eschatology, God (Doctrine), Grace, Holy Spirit, Regeneration; also Alexander Campbell, Thomas Campbell, Walter Scott, Barton Warren Stone;

Williams (W) – Chapt. 1

Week 2 Congregations, Ordinances, & the challenge of Ministerial Accountability Mar. 12-16

E – Deacons/Diaconate, Elders/Eldership, Ministry, Baptism, Ordinances, Sacraments;

T – Chapt. 7; also, read <http://www.robertburns.org/works/68.shtml> for the footnotes, and even better, also listen at https://www.bbc.co.uk/arts/robertburns/works/the_holy_fair/

These two may seem out of left field, but bear with me (none are long or wearing):

<https://www.plough.com/en/topics/faith/discipleship/forget-the-commentators>

<https://www.walden.org/quotation-category/morals-and-values/simplicity/> (all three pages, esp. pg. 2)

If you can, read **Straub** and **Straub & Trader** [do NOT panic if you can’t!]

Week 3 Reformed Revivalists - Disciples Worship in Theology and Practice Mar. 19-23

T – Chapt. 6; **E** – Baptism, Hymnody, Lord’s Supper, Worship.

Week 4 Ministry and the State

Societies Mar. 26-30

Do a search engine inquiry for: Disciples.org – Search and Call, Theological Foundation and Policies and Criteria for the Ordering of Ministry, Ministerial Code of Ethics, The Design of the Christian Church – paragraphs 84-87; **E** - Ministry

Week 5 Missions and Education as the New

Frontier Apr. 2-6 [yes, this is Holy Week, plan accordingly]

E – College of Missions, Foreign Christian Missionary Society, Missions/Missiology, Africa, Asia, Australia, Canada, Latin America, and the Caribbean, New Zealand, Puerto Rico [Missions in these countries], Education, Higher Education, Journalism, and as many entries as you can find on undergraduate and graduate schools beginning with Abilene Christian;

T – Chapt. 8; **J** – Chaps 3 and 4

Research/Biography Papers Due Apr. 6th – again, this is Maundy Thursday; since this is the period across which this course is offered, all I can say is plan ahead. I know many of you are currently serving churches, but the eight week course does not include a break for this week. My prayers will definitely be with you all this week more than even the other seven!

Week 6 Constituent Groups, New Leadership, & Multiplication by

Division Apr. 9-13

E – African Americans in the Movement, Asian American Disciples, Samuel Cassius, Hispanics, National Christian Missionary Convention, National Convocation of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Christian Woman’s Board of Missions, Christian Women’s Fellowship, Church Women United, Caroline Neville Pearre, Preston Taylor, Women in Ministry;

W – Chaps. 3 and 4. **Jha (J)** – Chaps. 1, 2, and 6; **Cardwell & Fox (CF)** – first half, and: If you can read **Hull** (if you can’t, don’t worry, but it’s an excellent short history of the CWF movement and about the only one available).

Week 7 Missionary Societies to General

Assemblies Apr. 16-20

E – American Christian Missionary Society, Conventions, Council of Agencies, International Convention, Louisville Plan, United Christian Missionary Society, World Convention of Churches of Christ;

T – Chapt. 5; **W** – Chapt. 7; **CF** – second half, and watch <https://youtu.be/2w7FsSiN3Mk>
The independent branch’s point of view is vividly depicted in brief here, and I call your attention to the closing four observations: <https://www.disciplescuim.org/what-could-we-have-done-differently-1926-1946/>

Week 8 Ecumenism and the

Design Apr. 23-27

E – Peter Ainslie, Jesse Bader, Consultation on Church Union, Council on Christian Unity, Edgar DeWitt Jones, Disciples Ecumenical Consultative Council, Ecumenical Movement, Lyndon Baines Johnson, Lunenburg Letter, United Church of Christ-Christian Church

(Disciples of Christ) Ecumenical Partnership, Unity;
T – Chapt. 4 and 9; **E** – Atlanta Declaration Committee, James DeForest Murch,
 Restructure, “The Design;” **J** – Chapt. 5

Due Dates:

Research/Biography Papers – Apr. 6th

Final Paper – Apr. 27th

Strongly recommended for class reference and building a ministerial library:

Boring, M. Eugene. *Disciples and the Bible: A History of Disciples Biblical Interpretation in North America*. Chalice Press, 1997.

Cartwright, Colbert S. *Candles of Grace: Disciples Worship in Perspective*. Chalice Press, 1992.

Cartwright, Colbert and O.I. Cricket Harrison, comps. & eds. *Chalice Worship*. Chalice Press, 1997.

Cummins, D. Duane. *The Disciples: A Struggle for Reformation*. Chalice Press, 2009.

Hull, Debra B. *Christian Church Women: Shapers of a Movement*. Chalice Press, 1994.

Kinnamon, Michael and Jan Linn. *Disciples: Reclaiming Our Identity, Reforming Our Practice*. Chalice Press, 2009.

Kinnamon, Michael and Jan Linn. *Disciples: Who We Are & What Holds Us Together*. Chalice Press, 2019.

Straub, Gary. *Your Calling as an Elder*. Chalice Press, 2003.

Straub, Gary and James Trader II. *Your Calling as a Deacon*. Chalice Press, 2005.