



Course of Study  
for Ordained Ministry

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Program Guidelines

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## COURSE OF STUDY SCHOOL

The Course of Study has been established by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry of the United Methodist Church (GBHEM) as an alternate educational route for persons seeking to serve as pastors in United Methodist congregations. Duke Divinity School cooperates with the Board to offer the Course of Study and Advanced Course of Study programs over 6 sessions throughout the year. Advanced courses are designed for pastors who have completed the basic course of study and are seeking ordination in full connection. Course instructors include faculty, doctoral students and staff of the Divinity School as well as seasoned practitioners and pastoral leaders. University credit is not granted for basic or advanced courses completed.

### ENROLLMENT

Course of Study (COS) is a year-round experiential and classroom learning process specifically designed for the education and training of local pastors in The United Methodist Church. Local pastors of part and full-time status are permitted to attend any session.

Licensed local pastors in The United Methodist Church attending COS shall have:

1. Been certified as candidates for ordained ministry
2. Completed the requirements for licensing for pastoral ministry
3. Be under appointment in the United Methodist Church. Exceptions to the appointment policy must have annual approval of the conference Board of Ordained Ministry, and cannot exceed two years.
4. Received the endorsement of the annual conference Board of Ordained Ministry
5. Received the endorsement of their District Superintendent

NOTE: Course 121 (Bible I: Introduction) and Course 122 (Theological Heritage I: Introduction) are the prerequisites for enrollment in any other Course of Study courses.

### EDUCATIONAL REQUIREMENTS (See paragraphs 318-324, 2012 Book of Discipline)

Full-time local pastors are required to complete four courses per year in a Course of Study School and, upon completion of the five-year program, are expected to be involved in continuing education. Full-time local pastors cannot be enrolled as a full-time student in any college or university (§318.1e).

Part-time local pastors are required to complete a minimum of two courses per year in a Course of Study School (§318.2i).

It is expected that full-time local pastors will complete the full course of study curriculum within eight years and part-time local pastors within twelve.

2018 POLICY CHANGE: Students may take any number of courses through Course of Study with permission of their District Superintendent. However, the Course of Study School and Conferences will continue the approval process outlined in the Registration section just below.

Local Pastors may apply for and be elected to associate membership within an annual conference once they have satisfied the conditions established by §322.1. If a local pastor or an associate member wishes to pursue membership in full connection within an annual conference, the *Discipline* provides that they may be received as probationary member so long as they satisfy the requirements of §324.6.

## REGISTRATION

Students register for courses through the registration link provided on the Duke Divinity [Course of Study webpage](#).

In order to attend Course of Study, UM local pastors under appointment must receive approval from their District Superintendent and their Local Pastor Registrar after registering for courses. Duke COS staff will request these approvals and will notify any student not approved as soon as possible. Deadlines for registration will be posted on our webpage. **Enrollment is not complete until all registration requirements and fees have been received by the Course of Study office.**

## SESSION DETAILS AND ONLINE COURSEWORK

Duke Divinity School **currently** offers the *Course of Study* in an online format 6 sessions throughout the year. Students may enroll in one course each session. Basic and Advanced courses include both synchronous required learning in Zoom and asynchronous required learning in Sakai. Based on GBHEM guidelines for COS Schools there may be times that require onsite learning at Duke Divinity, in addition to online learning. During these sessions Duke will offer a Hybrid program format with a 2-day face-to-face residential required learning period and 4 weeks of required online learning each session. **Currently we offer only online sessions and the schedule is available on our webpage.**

## PRE-CLASS PREPARATION

Advanced preparation is required of all students. Each course will make available a booklist and pre-work that is to be completed before the session begins, according to the deadlines set by the instructors.

Course of Study at Duke Divinity has provided Writing Guidelines (document linked on our webpage) to assist students in completion of their assignments with best academic practices. We ask that you would take particular note of the sections on plagiarism and contact our office for clarification, if necessary.

Students with learning disabilities should contact the Director to discuss appropriate accommodations.

## TUITION & FINANCIAL AID

The information listed in this bulletin applies to students who are United Methodist pastors under appointment and in the care of their annual conference Board of Ordained Ministry. Duke expects students to pay their own fees and receive any scholarship aid directly from their annual conference.

### *TUITION*

**Tuition will be published on our webpage.**

### *FINANCIAL AID*

Students may be eligible for funds from their conference Board of Ordained Ministry to cover tuition and/or non-tuition expenses. In order to receive an annual conference scholarship, students must be in touch with their Local Pastor Registrar. Conferences will issue financial aid awards directly to the students.

### *CANCELLATION POLICY*

There are times when it is necessary for a student to cancel their enrollment in Course of Study. **Cancellations must be communicated in writing (email is acceptable) to the Course of Study office, your district superintendent and Board of Ministry local pastor registrar.** There are no refunds given for the registration fee. Course tuitions, parking fees, or special event fees are not refundable after the final deadline to withdraw has passed. Fees apply for cancellations that are not received by dates noted on our webpage.

## **THE CURRICULUM**

The Course of Study prepares faithful and effective pastoral leaders for the church. Such leadership is never developed in the abstract but rather in context. The Course of Study curriculum is designed to provide classroom learning that strengthens the pastoral leader's ministry.

Course numbers and titles are provided below. Access to book lists and pre-class assignments for each course will be made available online no later than one month prior to each individual session. Students are responsible for completing pre-class assignments and online components for each course according to the deadlines provided by the instructor in the online learning management system. Access to the online learning management system, Sakai, will be given to students once registration for an individual session has closed.

## **ADVANCED COURSES**

Each year advanced courses are offered in areas that are pertinent to the pastor's role and responsibility in the local church, and are designed to fulfill the Basic Graduate Theological Studies (BGTS) requirements for ordination. Students pursuing Advanced Studies as a route to ordination should choose elective courses based on their individual annual conference requirements. Students should consult their annual conference Board of Ordained Ministry to determine which courses fulfill those specific requirements. Advanced COS requirements and completion checklist can be found on our webpage.

Licensed Local Pastors seeking credit from GBHEM for Advanced COS must have already completed the Course of Study curriculum outlined below. (*If you are entering ACOS via another avenue; call us with questions.*)

## **FIRST YEAR COURSES**

121: *Bible I—Introduction*

122: *Theological Heritage I—Introduction*

123: *Formation and Discipleship*

124: *Transformative Leadership*

## **SECOND YEAR COURSES**

221: *Bible II—Torah and Israel's History*

222: *Theological Heritage II—Early Church*

223: *Worship and Sacraments*

224: *Administration and Polity*

## **THIRD YEAR COURSES**

321: *Bible III—Gospels*

322: *Theological Heritage III—Medieval and Reformation*

323: *Congregational Care*

324: *Preaching*

## **FOURTH YEAR COURSES**

421: *Bible IV—Prophets and Wisdom Literature*

422: *Theological Heritage IV—Wesleyan Movement*

423: *Mission*

424: *Ethics*

## **FIFTH YEAR COURSES**

521: *Bible V—Acts, Epistles, and Revelation*

522: *Theology in the Contemporary Church*

523: *Evangelism*

524: *Theological Reflection: Practice of Ministry*

## SCHOOL POLICIES

### ATTENDANCE POLICY

Students are expected to attend all class sessions during Course of Study. There are no unexcused absences from Course of Study classes. Absences may affect class participation grades, and therefore a student's overall performance at Course of Study. Per the policy set by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry (GBHEM), **a student missing 20% or more of the required contact hours may not receive credit for the course. (For online classes, this equates to only 2 hours of synchronous instruction and only 2 hours of asynchronous instruction.)** It is a student's responsibility to inform their instructor if they must miss a class.

### CONDUCT OF STUDENTS

The Course of Study expects and will require of all its students continuing cooperation in developing and maintaining high standards of scholarship and conduct. The Divinity School expects Course of Study students to participate in a communally-shared concern for growth in faith and life reflecting the dignity of our calling. Each student will sign a conduct covenant, agreeing to abide by these expectations, when he or she applies for Course of Study.

### DIRECTED STUDIES

Effective November 2019, Duke Divinity no longer offers directed studies.

### GRADES

Grades are assigned by faculty following completion of all coursework. Grades range from "A" to "F." While a "D" is considered a passing grade, an annual conference may have different standards. Students are encouraged to be in contact with their local pastor registrar regarding these requirements. Grade reports will be distributed approximately 4-6 weeks following the last day of an individual session.

### TRANSCRIPTS

Duke Divinity School does not hold official transcripts for Course of Study students. Official transcripts for Course of Study work are available through the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry; contact the GBHEM COS Registrar at [cosregistrar@gbhem.org](mailto:cosregistrar@gbhem.org) or (615) 340.7416.

### THE HONOR CODE

Ministerial and theological education involves developing and shaping a life of honor and integrity, virtues rooted in our faith. Therefore, we in the Divinity School of Duke University pledge, individually and corporately, to exhibit our commitment to these virtues by abstaining from any form of cheating, lying or plagiarism and by respecting the facilities of the Divinity School and the property of our peers and professors. We do also assume responsibility for the maintenance of these virtues by pledging, individually and corporately, to report any violation of this code. By agreeing to the terms and conditions and initialing the covenant during the online registration, students indicate their willingness to abide by all policies outlined in these program guidelines and all University policies.

### ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

All students are expected to do their own work. Friends and spouses may help with spelling and punctuation and may proofread papers but should not participate in the research and writing of the papers. **Plagiarism, the use of someone else's work without giving appropriate recognition, is a highly serious matter of academic dishonesty.** Plagiarism and other instances of academic dishonesty will be dealt with harshly and could result in the failure of the class involved. It is at the discretion of the Course of Study Director whether to report academic dishonesty to the student's District Superintendent, their Board of Ordained Ministry, and their Bishop.

## **SPECIAL ACCOMODATIONS**

Students with learning disabilities should contact the Director to discuss appropriate accommodations.

## **HARASSMENT**

Duke University is also committed to the free and vigorous discussion of ideas and issues. To allow this to happen, no form of harassment is acceptable at Duke University. It is inconsistent with the University's commitments to excellence and respect for all individuals. In addition to the University's policy, a student may request a copy of the General Board of Higher Education's policy on harassment as well. Duke Course of Study will follow the procedures outlined in the GBHEM policy handbook in cases of sexual and racial harassment; copies of this handbook are made available upon request by contacting the Duke Course of Study office.

## **INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE**

Using inclusive language that expands and enriches our understanding of God includes the practice, when writing and speaking of persons or God, of using precise language and explicit pronouns; referring to collective and abstract nouns without gender; and avoiding the exclusive use of either masculine or feminine pronouns for God.

## **INFORMATION FOR RESIDENTIAL WEEKEND**

*(ONLY if we require residential days)*

### **LIVING ARRANGEMENTS**

#### **HOUSING and MEALS**

Students are responsible for making their own housing and meal arrangements. Our office will negotiate reduced hotel rates and will share details with registered students once registration is closed.

#### **PARKING**

*Motor Vehicles:* Parking on campus requires the purchase of a parking permit, which can be purchased prior to your arrival on campus by choosing and paying for the permit of your choice online during the registration process. Students must obey all parking and traffic regulations.

*Handicapped Parking:* ***Please designate handicapped parking needs when registering. COS staff will send specific information and details prior to your scheduled arrival on campus.***

*Bicycles:* Bike racks are available for students and are located adjacent to the Divinity School building.

#### **INTERNET ACCESS**

Students have access to free wireless internet on campus.

#### **MEDICAL CARE**

The most convenient and accessible health care to Course of Study students is the Duke University Medical Center, located on the Duke campus. Duke University Medical Center provides a wide variety of health care services, ranging from basic primary care to highly specialized treatments.

## **OTHER SERVICES**

### **LIBRARY ACCESS**

During any required residential days, the Divinity School Library is available for use by Course of Study students. Hours are Monday – Friday, 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

### **COMPUTER SERVICES**

A computer cluster is available in the Divinity School library during regular library hours (Monday-Friday, 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.). Additional computer clusters on the Duke University campus are available for word processing use. Students are also encouraged to bring personal computers from home if they own them. Students will be assigned a guest Duke University network account upon registration. It is important to retain record of this NetID and password; once they are set up, they will never change. This account provides access to the Duke University network both through on-site computer clusters and for remote system access.

### **WORSHIP**

Worship services may be conducted each day in Goodson Chapel during any required residential days. The worship leaders and preachers are chosen from students and instructors to represent the diversity of our community.

### **PROGRAM COMPLETION CERTIFICATIONS**

Students will complete COS and Advanced COS throughout the year. Following the close of each COS session, completion certificates for any student completing a program, will be requested from the GBHEM registrar by the COS office. Once we receive the certificates, they are signed by our COS director and mailed to the students' preferred mailing address.

### **Duke Divinity School**

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Webpage: <https://divinity.duke.edu/events/course-of-study>