

STUDENT HANDBOOK

THE UNITED METHODIST
ARKANSAS CONFERENCE
EXTENSION COS SCHOOL



History

The Arkansas Area Extension Course of Study School (COSS) was approved by the Division of Ordained Ministry, General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, and The United Methodist Church, in March 1995. The first classes were offered at Hendrix College in Conway, Arkansas, in the fall of 1995. The Boards of Ordained Ministry of the Little Rock and North Arkansas Conferences had sought this approval for more than a year.

The COSS

The General Conference of the United Methodist Church has assigned the COSS to the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, Nashville, TN, Pamela Frost, pfrost@gbhem.org. (*The Book of Discipline* of the United Methodist Church, 2016; Paragraph 1421.3(d)). It includes License to Preach studies; the five-year COSS; Advanced COSS; and Correspondence Studies. In prescribing the COSS, the Section is responsible for developing curriculum, purpose and learning goals; providing resources; maintaining and evaluating License to Preach and COSS; keeping central records on all students; and reporting student progress to each Board of Ordained Ministry each year.

Regional COSS

The Section establishes Regional COSS at seminaries across the United Methodist Church. There are Regional Schools at Claremont School of Theology, Perkins School of Theology, St. Paul School of Theology, Garrett-Evangelical School of Theology, Candler School of Theology, Duke Divinity School, Wesley Theological Seminary, and The Methodist Theological School of Ohio.

Extension Schools for Part-time Local Pastors

When the Section of Elders and Local Pastors determines that there is a need for a school for part-time local pastors who are unable to attend a Regional School, the Section may negotiate the development of an Extension School as an extension of an existing Regional COSS. The Arkansas Area Extension COSS is an extension of the Regional school at Perkins School of Theology.

Courses offered through the Arkansas Extension School (and thereby through Perkins COSS) are **non-academic courses**. Perkins School of Theology does not accept the COSS classes for a transcript grade. A request can be made, but it would be the seminary's decision if a class is accepted. Classes taken from a United Methodist seminary might count toward the COSS requirements. To verify this, the student would have to contact the General Board of Higher Education. The COSS is **not** a degree program.

Process for Full-time local pastor to take a class at the Arkansas Course of Study School

For extenuating circumstances, a Full-time, local pastor can be given permission to take a course at the Arkansas Course of Study School following these steps:

1. Written permission must be received from the student's:
 - a. District Superintendent
 - b. Local Pastor Registrar
 - c. Director of the Extension School
 - d. Director of the Regional School (Perkins School of Theology)
2. The most efficient method is to email The District Superintendent, the Conference Registrar, and the Director of the Extension School explaining the situation and asking for permission. This should be one email to all three people.
3. Once permission has been given by all three people, the Director of the Extension School will write the Director of the Regional School, asking for permission.
4. If permission is granted from the Director of the Regional School, all four approvals will be sent to

the General Board of Higher Education to receive permission from the Assistant General Secretary for Clergy Formation.

Board of Managers

Each COSS has a Board of Managers. The Board of Managers of the Arkansas Area Extension COSS has ten members: the Chair of the Board of Managers (elected by the board), the Registrar for Local Pastors of the Board, a District Superintendent related to the board, at least one Lay Member of the Board, and a representative for each district. The COS Director serves as an ex-officio member. The board meets twice a year.

Chair: Natasha Murray	North East District Representative: Daniel Brand
DS Representative: Blake Bradford	North West District Representative:
Representative from the BOM:	Southeast District Representative: Bryan Diffie
Registrar: Russell Hull	Southwest District Representative: Gary Maskell
Representative from Perkins: Paul Barton	
Central District Representative: Claire Caldwell	J.J. Whitney: ex-officio

Director

The Director of the school must be a United Methodist and is selected in consultation with the Regional Director of Perkins School of Theology and the Board of Managers, and approved by the Sections of Elders and Local Pastors. Further, the director is appointed by the Bishop of the Arkansas Conference and receives compensation through the Board of Ordained Ministry. The director is responsible for the selection and evaluation of the faculty, after consultation with the director of the Perkins COSS; the administration of the school; the registration of students; the keeping of school records; and reporting to the Section of Elders and Local Pastors. The Arkansas Area COSS Director is accountable to the Regional Director.

Who Can Attend

The Arkansas Area Extension Course of Study School is for the education and training of local pastors in The United Methodist Church. Those admitted to the Basic Five-Year COS program shall have:

- 1) Been certified as candidates for ordained ministry
- 2) Completed the requirements for license for pastoral ministry
- 3) Received the endorsement of the annual conference Board of Ordained Ministry
- 4) Serve 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. Other students, including auditors and students from other denominations, may at the discretion of the Director, be admitted to the program. These other students are to be admitted at their own expense including an agreed upon amount for tuition. Students coming from the AME, AME Zion and CME churches, however, will not be charged a tuition fee. A report on the number of such special students shall be included in the Director's report to the Division of Ordained Ministry at the conclusion of school.

If a person becomes a full-time local pastor, he/she must attend a Regional school such as Perkins School of Theology or St. Paul School of Theology. In certain circumstances, determined by the Board of Managers, a part-time local pastor enrolled in the Arkansas Area COSS and receiving an appointment as a full-time local pastor may be able to complete that particular COSS year in the Extension School. If an individual does not have an appointment but anticipates having an appointment the following year, he/she may enroll. However, if no appointment is given the following year, the individual may not continue in the school. Exceptions must be approved by the staff of the Division of Ordained Ministry at the request of the Regional Director or Conference Board of Ordained Ministry.

According to the *2016 Book of Discipline* (BOD), participation and completion of COSS have no age restrictions. Participation and completion of steps for Associate Membership or Provisional Membership as an Elder do require that a person has reached age 40.

Registration

The registration deadline is approximately one month before the first class. Upon receiving the registration, the student will receive a syllabus and book list via e-mail within two business days of the registration deadline. Please note that the syllabus may not be available to the school until one month before the first class.

Cancellation

If a student informs the director before the first class session of their intent to drop the course, a partial refund is given. If a student informs the director after the first class session, no refund is given. If a student cancels before the first class, nothing is placed on the permanent grade sheet and there is no tuition cost to the annual conference. \$25 of the registration fee will be kept for administrative purposes. If a student attends the first class, but needs to drop for an emergency, a “W” will be given. The student will not receive a tuition or registration refund or credit. If the student fails to complete the class work by the end of the class and has not requested to withdraw, they will receive a failing grade (F) for the class. Once a student attends the first class, cancellation or dropping the class is not an option. See below for financial implications.

Cost

	Arkansas Conference	Out of State	Audit
Tuition	\$150	\$200	\$70
Registration	\$75	\$75	\$50
TOTAL	\$225	\$275	\$120

Each person attending the Extension COSS is required to register. Forms are provided through the office of the Director and the Arkansas Conference website www.arumc.org. The fee pays for the noon meal, refreshments, and a contribution to the Perkins COSS. Tuition for Arkansas students is paid by the Board of Ordained Ministry of the Arkansas Conference. For Arkansas students, if a student fails a course, the student is responsible for the registration and tuition, the next time the class is taken. Checks can be made to the “Arkansas Conference of the UMC.”

Records and Grades

The records of the COSS are kept by the Director under guidelines established by the Section of Elders and Local Pastors. These guidelines can be found in *The Book of Discipline*. Reports are sent after each term to the Section of Elders and Local Pastors. Additionally, a copy of the grade is sent to the COSS at Perkins School of Theology, the District Superintendent, the Registrar for Local Pastors, and the student.

The Arkansas Extension COSS grades on a letter basis, as does the Perkins COSS. Passing grades are “A”, “B”, “C”, or “D”. Students who receive an incomplete, have 30 days, following the last session of a term, to complete the work and change the incomplete, “I” to a passing grade. After 30 days, if work is not completed, the grade becomes an “F”. No incomplete grades will be posted on a permanent record. Grades are due from the faculty to the Director of the Course of Studies 30 days after the last class. Students can expect to receive their grades by U.S. mail 45 days after the last class. For privacy purposes, no grades will be given over the phone or via e-mail.

Class Hours

Twenty (20) classroom hours is the minimum requirement for each course. Half of COSS (10 hours) can be completed by correspondence or online. Contact the General Board of Higher Education for a list of online classes.

Class Attendance

Students are expected to attend every class. Unexcused absences may be cause for loss of credit and dismissal from the school. Students missing more than 20% of the classes (1/2 a day) in one term cannot be given credit for that course. Students with one excused absence may be given credit, with additional assignments completed at the discretion of the faculty member involved.

Class Size

The minimum class size should be at least 5 students and the maximum class size should be 25. If a class falls outside these parameters and decision will be made between the Director and the teacher. If a class goes beyond 25 students, an adjustment in the faculty stipend will be made. A class may be cancelled, if the Director and teacher determine it is too small.

Number of Courses Per Year

Part-time local pastors are required to take two (2) courses per calendar year. (Jan-Dec) (A maximum of four (4) courses per year may be completed in the COSS program.) Part-time local pastors have up to twelve (12) years to complete the prescribed 20 classes. In the event that full-time local pastors are admitted to the COSS, they will have 8 years to finish all 20 classes. In the Arkansas Area Extension COSS, each student takes one course per term. If a student wishes to take more than four classes a year, written permission is the Director of the Course of Study School, and Conference Board of Ordained Ministry.

Format

The Arkansas Area COSS has a spring term and a fall term each year, each with 3 Saturday meetings, meeting either the 2nd or 3rd Saturday. Spring sessions are in the months of March, April, and May. The fall sessions are in the months of September, October, and November. Each day's session begins at 9:00 a.m. and ends at 5:00 p.m. Lunch is from noon to 12:45 p.m. and a chapel service begins at 12:45 and last no longer than 30 minutes. The classes meet at Hendrix College in Conway, Arkansas. Students eat lunch together at Hendrix. The cost of lunch is included in the registration fee.

Worship

Common worship is integral to the school. Worship is from 12:45-1:15 p.m. in Greene Chapel at Hendrix.. Attendance and participation in worship is expected of every student. Failure to attend worship can impact the grade for the course.

Books

Faculty members turn in book lists to the Director of the Extension School. Students will be notified via e-mail the required books for their class at least one month before the first class session. Students may order their books through Cokesbury's website www.cokesbury.com.

Basic Five-Year COS Curriculum

*Pre-requisite for another course, see list below

Focus	Year One Foundation	Year Two	Year Three	Year Four	Year Five Integrative
Bible	121 (111) Bible I: Introduction	221 (211) Bible II: Torah & Israel's History	321 (311) Bible III: Gospels	421 (411) Bible IV: Prophets, Psalms, & Wisdom Lit	521 (511) Bible V: Acts, Epistles, & Revelation
Theology	122 (112) Theological Heritage I: Introduction	222-(212) Theological Heritage II: Early Church	322-(312) Theology Heritage III: Medieval – Reformation	422-(412) Theological Heritage IV: Wesleyan Movement	522 (512) Theology in the Contemporary Church
Congregational Life	123-(213) Formation & Discipleship	223-(413) Worship & Sacraments	323-(314) Congregational Care	423-(513) Mission	523-(313) Evangelism
Pastoral Identity	124-(New) Transformative Leadership	224-(114) Administration & Polity	324-(214) Preaching	424-(414) Ethics	524-(514) Theological Reflection: Practice of Ministry

NOTE: If a student has taken 113 from the pre-2013 curriculum, he/she does not need to take 124 from the revised curriculum. If 113 has not been taken, then the student will need to take 124.

It is best to take classes in sequence. You may take a higher- level class as long as it does not require a prerequisite, but doing so may extend the time it takes to complete the program.

- Pre-requisites:

Students MUST take Bible I: Introduction (121) and Theological Heritage I: Introduction (122) before enrollment in any other Course of Study courses (effective June 1, 2019)

- Must have taken Bible I: Introduction (121) and Theological Heritage II: Early and Medieval (222)* in order to take:
 - Preaching (324)
 - Congregational Care (323)
 - Ethics (424)
 - Theological Reflection: Practice of Ministry (524)
- *Theological Heritage II: (222) in order to take:
 - Our Theological Heritage III (322)

Doctrine and Polity courses, which count toward ordination, are offered in Advanced Courses and not Basic Courses. Arkansas COSS does not offer Advanced courses.

Advance Preparation

Advanced reading and written preparation are required. Faculty members typically make course assignments in three parts. The first 1/3 of the assignment is due at the first session of a term. The second 1/3 is due at the beginning of session two. The final 1/3 is due at the beginning of session three. Therefore, it is strongly recommended that registration be done as early as possible so that books can be ordered and assignments completed in a timely manner.

Evaluation

Each student is expected to participate in a written evaluation for each course taken. The evaluation is done after class of the final session of each term. The purpose of the evaluation is to assist in improving the course. All evaluations are kept anonymous and will in no way impact the grade of the student.

Academic Integrity¹

What is Academic Dishonesty?

Defined inclusively, academic dishonesty is behavior which misrepresents the origin or nature of one's activities in the Arkansas Conference COSS, or which violates the integrity of one's relationship to the Arkansas Conference COSS community, whether by design or accident. Misrepresentation includes both the act of falsification, and the neglect of providing a true representation when it is called for. Maintaining an honest relationship to the Arkansas Conference COSS requires that students learn what constitutes accidental misrepresentation so as to avoid it; not knowing that an action is generally construed as dishonest does not excuse the action. Within this broad definition, academic dishonesty includes (but is not limited to) the following:

1. Cheating or copying on a quiz, test, or examination, or other class exercise which is required to be performed independently and individually.
2. Misrepresenting one's academic standing or record.
3. Misrepresenting the causes for missing quizzes, tests, etc., or for lateness in completing assigned work.
4. Aiding or concealing acts of dishonesty by other persons.
5. Acts of theft or unauthorized access to academic materials belonging to others, whether students or faculty.
6. Soliciting, aiding, or attempting to aid another in planning or committing an act of academic dishonesty.
7. Submitting as one's own work materials that have been wholly or partially prepared by others.
8. Representing that one's work is the result of research or study which one has not personally performed.
9. Stealing or defacing library books.
10. Plagiarism.

What is Plagiarism?

Plagiarism is defined by Alexander Lindley as "the false assumption of authorship: the wrongful act of taking the product of another person's mind, and presenting it as one's own" (*Plagiarism and Originality* [New York; Harper, 1957], p. 2). Plagiarism may take the form of repeating another's sentences as your own, adopting a particularly apt phrase as your own, or even presenting someone else's line of thinking in the development of a thesis as though it were your own. In short, to plagiarize is to give the impression that you have written or thought something that you have in fact borrowed from another.

In some cases, students may be instructed or encouraged to confer with one another or with a tutor or other person not directly involved in the course, as part of the preparation of an assignment. In such cases, a student's integrity must be involved in determining the limits of cooperation and false representation within an instructor's definition. For example, if a tutor has assisted in the preparation of an assignment, the student

¹ Adapted from the Perkins School of Theology Policies

must consult the instructor to learn what kind of assistance is acceptable and what is not. The student should not assume that consulting another person to correct a paper or problem is acceptable.

Again, within the limits defined by an instructor, it may be proper to consult research materials, published work, or even the work of other students; if so, the student must acknowledge his or her indebtedness to these materials, in the form appropriate to the course or discipline. There are several systems for acknowledging such indebtedness, but the general principle is that a person reading the student's work should never be in doubt about the origin and source, the extent, or the nature of the indebtedness; the acknowledgment should make it possible for the reader to consult the source of the indebtedness. If the system of acknowledgment in a particular discipline departs from the standard practices of footnoting and citation, instructors in that discipline will define the appropriate method. If an instructor, for pedagogic or intellectual reasons, prohibits the use of certain source materials, a student's integrity requires that the prohibition be observed.

Plagiarism, in brief, is leading your reader to suppose that your words, ideas, or organization in a piece of writing are your own, when in fact they have been taken from someone else.

Plagiarism, the wrongful appropriation and publication as one's own the ideas or the expression of ideas of another, will not be tolerated. Students who plagiarize will be subject to failing the course and/or immediate dismissal from the course of the Extension COSS. Reapplication is subject to the review of the Board of Managers.

Sexual Harassment²

The COSS is committed by Christian faith to justice for all persons and does not tolerate any behavior, verbal or physical, by any person associated with the school, which constitutes sexual harassment against any other person associated with the school. Any person of the COSS community who believes that he or she has been subjected to sexual harassment should immediately report the situation to the Director of the COSS. When reporting a complaint, the individual should be prepared to furnish accurate information (i.e., date, name, and facts). All such complaints will be treated in a confidential manner to the extent feasible, while permitting the school to investigate the complaint thoroughly and to take appropriate action.

The school expects the cooperation of all members of the school community with respect to avoiding such harassment. The school will investigate all complaints. If it is determined after an investigation, that a member of the school community has violated this policy, he or she will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action up to and including suspension or termination from the school. In addition, a full report will be made to that person's annual conference or judicatory body.

Definition of sexual harassment³:

"Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when:

1. submission to such conduct is made, either explicitly or implicitly, a term of condition of an individual's employment *or academic standing*; *or*
2. submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment *or academic standing* decisions affecting such an individual; *or*
3. such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work *or study* performance or creating an intimidating hostile, or offensive working *or studying* environment."

² Adapted from the Perkins School of Theology Policies

³ The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission Section 1604.11 of Title 29.

Procedures

The COSS is committed to using the process outlined below to handle allegations of sexual harassment within the school community. A sexual harassment allegation may be resolved on an informal basis. Any member of the school community, who wishes to make a formal complaint, must submit a written description of the incident to the Director.

Allegations are thoroughly investigated by the Sexual Harassment Committee which is composed of the Director and two members of the faculty chosen by the faculty. The investigation shall include a meeting with the person alleged to have engaged in harassment. The accused and/or the complainant may bring a trusted colleague (other than an attorney), committed to maintaining confidentiality, with him/her to such a meeting. If the Sexual Harassment Committee decides inappropriate behavior has occurred, after completing the investigation, the Director takes appropriate disciplinary and/or other action related to the accused person's participation in the COSS on that campus. In addition, the Director will inform the accused person's annual conference or judicatory body of the action taken. Those called to investigate the allegations take appropriate steps to ensure that a person who in good faith brings forth a complaint of sexual harassment will not be subjected to retaliation. The COSS also takes steps to ensure that a person against whom such a complaint is brought is treated appropriately and has adequate opportunity to respond to such accusations. The complainant and the person complained against are notified of the disposition of the complaint. If the disposition involves any ongoing process, the Director keeps the complainant informed until the process is completed.

Appeal Process

If the accuser or the accused is not satisfied with the action taken by the COSS, s/he may express such dissatisfaction in writing to the Director of Board of Ordained Ministry Relations, Division of Ordained Ministry, General Board of Higher Education and Ministry within 15 days after receiving the notification of the disposition of the complaint.

Confidentiality

Every effort will be made to ensure confidentiality to the extent feasible while permitting the COSS to investigate the complaint thoroughly and to take appropriate action. The COSS will not tolerate retaliation against any member of the school community who complains of sexual harassment.

Explanatory Notes

If a person alleged to have engaged in sexual harassment is the Director, then the person bringing the complaint shall notify either one or both faculty members who serve on the Sexual Harassment Committee. The two faculty members shall ask the president of the seminary at the host school to appoint an administrative officer to serve as chairperson of the Sexual Harassment Committee and to function as the Director in the process outlined above.

Racial Harassment⁴

Definition of Racial Harassment

Any conduct directed against a person with the effect of insulting, degrading or abusing him/her because of his/her racial background.

Persons enrolled in the COSS come under the jurisdiction of their own annual conference policies on racial harassment. However, while the person is in the COSS the following policy shall also apply. The COSS is committed by Christian faith for justice for all persons and does not tolerate any behavior, verbal or physical, by any person associated with the school, which constitutes racial harassment against any other person

⁴ Adapted from the Perkins School of Theology Policies

associated with the school. Any person of the COSS community who believes that he or she has been subjected to racial harassment should immediately report the situation to the Director of the COSS. When reporting a complaint, the individual should be prepared to furnish accurate information (i.e., date, name and facts). All such complaints will be treated in a confidential manner to the extent feasible, while permitting the school to investigate the complaint thoroughly and to take appropriate action. The school expects the cooperation of all members of the school community with respect to avoiding such harassment. The school will investigate all complaints. If it is determined after an investigation that a member of the school community has violated this policy, he or she will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action up to and including suspension or termination from the school. In addition, a full report will be made to that person's annual conference or judicatory body.

Procedures

The COSS is committed to using the process outlined below to deal with allegations of racial harassment within the school community. A racial harassment allegation may be resolved on an informal basis. Any member of the school community, who wishes to make a formal complaint, must submit a written description of the incident to the Director. Allegations are thoroughly investigated by a Racial Harassment Committee composed of the Director and two members of the faculty. The investigation shall include a meeting with the person alleged to have engaged in the harassment. The accused and/or the complainant may bring a trusted colleague (other than an attorney), committed to maintaining confidentiality, with him/her to such a meeting. If the Racial Harassment Committee decides inappropriate behavior has occurred, after completing the investigation, the Director takes appropriate disciplinary and/or other action related to the accused person's participation in the COSS on that campus. In addition, the Director will inform the accused person's annual conference or judicatory body of the action taken. The COSS takes steps to ensure that a person against whom such a complaint is brought is treated appropriately and has adequate opportunity to respond to such accusations. The complainant and the person complained against are notified of the disposition of the complaint. If the disposition involves any ongoing process the Director keeps the complainant informed until the process is complete.

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If the person alleged to have engaged in racial harassment is the Director, then the person bringing the complaint shall notify one or two faculty members who serve on the Racial Harassment Committee. The two faculty members shall ask the president of the seminary at the host school to appoint an administrative officer to serve as chairperson of the Sexual Harassment Committee and to function as the Director in the process outlined above.

Special needs⁵

The Arkansas COSS endeavors to create an atmosphere in which diversity and individual rights of each member of the college community are respected. Some enter the school aware of their problems and needs, while others discover them as they become engaged in the academic and social endeavors of the school. The

⁵ Adapted from the Hendrix College Policies

Arkansas Conference COSS is committed to providing “reasonable accommodation,” in keeping with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1992. Students requesting accommodations should contact the Director.

Students requesting accommodations must provide appropriate documentation of the disability, which should include a diagnostic assessment and a recommendation report prepared by a qualified professional outside The Arkansas COSS. “Reasonable accommodation” will be determined on an individual basis by Board of Managers in consultation with the student, faculty and/or staff member. Accommodations are not retroactive.

For Additional Information:

Reverend J.J. Whitney, Director
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STUDENT AGREEMENT FORM FOR ARKANSAS COURSE OF STUDY STUDENT HANDBOOK

I (printed name) _____, have read, understand, and will comply with the rules and regulations set forth in the Arkansas Conference Course of Study School Handbook. I realize that failure to do so may result in my dismissal from the school.

Signature_____

Date_____