SYLLABUS FOR STMA 592
UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST POLITY AND HISTORY
Instructor: Rev. Jon M. Luopa

Course Schedule

The course will meet on seven consecutive Thursday afternoons beginning on January 4, 2007 and concluding on February 15, 2007, from 1:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. in Hunthausen 160, AND one six-hour session on either 3/8, 9, or 10, at University Unitarian Church in Seattle.

Material to be covered includes:

January 4	Instructor's introduction to course, discussion of issues, introduction of participants, logistics, questions.
January 11	Polity issues in European Unitarian beginnings; colonial polity in New England.
January 18	North American Unitarianism: 1800 to Civil War.
January 25	North American Unitarianism: Civil War to 1927.
February 1	Universalist Polity in America
February 8	Unitarian Polity: 1927-1961
February 15	Unitarian Universalist Polity since merger (1961)

March date Student presentations

Course Requirements

A. Reading materials assigned before class (see below).
B. Class attendance and participation.
C. Class presentation of a topic drawn from the Discussion Issues enumerated below. Presentation for one half hour and facilitation of fifteen minutes of discussion.
D. A polity paper the topic of which will be negotiated with the instructor. The topic may or may not be the same subject as used in your class presentation of a selected issue in polity. Paper is due no later than March 14 as grades are due on March 21.

Discussion Issues

A. Unitarian Universalist Societies – local congregations, districts and the UUA.

What relationship exists between UU congregations and civil jurisdictions?
What civil powers and rights does a congregation have? What limitations?
How do UU congregations relate to one another? What are the historical changes in these relationships?
Do UU congregations have any bonds to other religious groups?

What is the historic distinction between the local church and parish?
How did the separation of church and state in America begin? How does this differ from other western nations? What are the current 'cutting edge' issues in this area?

B. Unitarian Universalist Membership

Who is a church member? What are the requirements? Who determines if these requirements are met?
What does membership mean?
What are the rights and responsibilities of membership?
What is the expectation of members in terms of the local congregation?
Does church membership mean anything in the wider community?
How is membership in the UUA acquired? Who can be a member? Who votes? How can membership be taken away? What are the responsibilities of member groups? What is the import of the UUA to the local congregation?

C. Church Finance

What ways have been used to provide for the local church in America?
What are the usual sources of fiscal support today? How important is each?
Do churches receive outside support or subsidy? Do they support other institutions in our society?

D. Unitarian Universalist Ministry

Who/what is a minister? How is a minister created?
What functions does a minister perform? Are there limitations to these functions in the church practice and governance? Does a cleric have civil authority or limitations imposed by the state?
How is clergy compensation determined? How are clergy paid if not serving a parish? What does tax law say about compensation?
Who can remove a cleric from office (employment or status) and by what process?
What support systems does a minister potentially have?
What are the sources of ministerial authority?
What comparisons (similarities and differences) can be made between UU ministers and religious leaders in other groups?
Is ministry a matter of 'being' or 'doing'? What is distinctive about an ordained minister serving a congregation?

E. Theology

What makes a church "religious"? What laws (civil and church) apply? What concepts in the Judeo-Christian tradition bear on the matter? Are there particular UU standards or theories?

Is the church different from other voluntary associations? If so, what is distinctive, either in purpose or practice, about the church?
What 'doctrine of the church' is found among UUs? Is the issue important?
How does the congregation relate to god/ultimacy? Is the congregation essential to a religious view of human life and human community?
Can a person be excommunicated from a UU church? If so, how?

F. Other issues

How has geography had impact on Unitarian and Universalist polity?
What factors in history had essential influence on the development of either Unitarian or Universalist polity?
Have secular issues influenced UU polity? How have significant social movements in America influenced the UU movement?
What part have race and class had in UU development?
Where has gender been important in the unfolding of UU polity?
What does the phrase "a nation with the soul of a church" mean?
What issues in contemporary American society have a profound impact on developments within the UU movement?
What changes in UU polity do you see in this century? What evidence can you present to buttress such future developments?

Required Reading Materials

Peter Raible, ed. POLITY AMONG UNITARIANS AND UNIVERSALISTS, 1992. Available through instructor at cost of reproduction.

Conrad Wright, CONGREGATIONAL POLITY: A HISTORICAL SURVEY OF UNITARIAN AND UNIVERSALIST PRACTICE, Skinner House, 1997.

Walter P. Herz, ed. REDEEMING TIME: ENDOWING YOUR CHURCH WITH THE POWER OF COVENANT, Skinner House, 1999.

Conrad Wright, WALKING TOGETHER, Skinner House, 1989.

(Strongly) Suggested Reading Materials

Conrad Wright, A STREAM OF LIGHT: A SHORT HISTORY OF AMERICAN UNITARIANISM, Skinner House, 1989.

David Robinson, THE UNITARIANS AND THE UNIVERSALISTS, Greenwood Press, 1985.

Reading Assignments for Each Session

Please read BEFORE each class:

January 4 Wright, CONGREGATIONAL POLITY, (pages 1-65)

January 11 All in Raible POLITY SURVEY:
Williams, pages 2-15
Diet of Torda, pages 16,17
Cambridge Platform and commentary, pages 73-95
Preface to the Result of 1662, pages 110-127
Proposals of 1705, pages 128-139
Youngs, pages 99-109
Declaration of Pastors, pages 140-142
Goen, pages 143-171
Thayer, pages 172-184
Ellis, pages 264-285

Wright, WALKING TOGETHER, pages 1-35, 63-71

January 18 All in Raible POLITY SURVEY:
Channing, pages 256-263
Murdock, pages 288-303
Wilbur, pages 304-370
Eliot, pages 380-384
Allen, pages 388-411
Pierpont, pages 426-449
Clark, pages 450-471

Wright, WALKING TOGETHER, pages 76-86

January 25 All in Raible POLITY SURVEY:
Judd, pages 505-540
Hedge, pages 541-550, 705-730
Bellows, pages 568-582
Wilbur, pages 584-605
Cooke, pages 606-642, 753-776
Winkey, pages 643-656
Atkinson, pages 676-679
Persons, pages 680-705
Reynolds, pages 732-752
Christie, pages 777-784
Mead, pages 817-822
Eliot, pages 823-858
Handbook, pages 895-903

February 1 Wright, CONGREGATIONAL POLITY, pages 67 to end of book
Herz, REDEEMING TIME.

All in Raible POLITY SURVEY:
Bowen, pages 1017-1020
Fisher, pages 1021-1054
Section IX, pages 1158-1341
Reprints from Russell Miller, THE LARGER HOPE

February 8 All in Raible POLITY SURVEY:
Cornish, pages 904-954
Commission on Appraisal, pages 955-1016

Robinson, THE UNITARIANS AND THE UNIVERSALISTS,
Chapters 11 and 12

February 15 All in Raible POLITY SURVEY:
Walker-Riggs, pages 1343-1345
Holt, pages 1346-1353
Rankin, pages 1354-1366
Commission 1, pages 1367-1386
Beattie, pages 1416-1425
Raible, pages 1426-1435
Bowman, pages 1436-1447

Robinson, THE UNITARIANS AND THE UNIVERSALISTS,
Chapter 12