



ALABAMA
COURSE OF STUDY

**Student
Handbook
2015 - 2016**

Administrative Policies
Alabama Course of Study School
An Extension of Emory Course of Study
Revised September 18, 2015

The Course of Study

The Course of Study (COS) is prescribed by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry (GBHEM) - Division of Ordained Ministry (DOM) (§ 142.3d, **2008, The Book of Discipline**). In prescribing the COS, the Division of Ordained Ministry is responsible for developing curriculum, purpose, and learning goals; providing resources; establishing, maintaining, and evaluating Course of Study Schools (COS) and Extension COS Schools, keeping records of all students, and reporting on student progress to each Board of Ordained Ministry (BOOM) every year. The Course of Study curriculum may be offered in languages other than English to meet the needs of a multicultural church.

- Full-time licensed local pastors who have not completed the Basic Course of Study are required by The United Methodist Church to complete a maximum of four (4) courses per year through an approved Regional Course of Study School or the correspondence curriculum prescribed by GBHEM. Only with the approval of GBHEM, the student's Annual Conference BOOM, and the director of the local COS may a FTLP attend a weekend Extension School. Full-time licensed local pastors must complete the Basic Course of Study within eight (8) years.
- Part-time licensed local pastors are required to take two (2) but not more than four (4) courses per year at an approved Regional COS School or Extension COS School and must complete the Basic Course of Study program within twelve (12) years. Further information on these guidelines may be found in § 318 ff of the **2008, The Book of Discipline**, and the Administrative Policies – Course of Study for Licensed and Ordained Ministry and Advanced Course of Study from GBHEM. Questions regarding the COS program and available correspondence courses may be directed to:

Lynn Daye
Section of Elders and Local Pastors at GBHEM
P.O. Box 340007 (1001 19th Avenue South)
Nashville, TN 37203-0007
615-340-7416 cosregistrar@gbhem.org

Curriculum

The Course of Study is a year-round experiential and classroom learning process. This process involves cooperation between students, the Alabama Course of Study School (ALCOS) Instructors, and the Annual Conference Mentors. ALCOS seeks to meet the educational needs of part-time local pastors. Full-time local pastors may attend with the approval of GBHEM, the student's Annual Conference BOOM, and the director of the Alabama Course of Study School. Normally courses are taken in the sequence prescribed by the COS curriculum. At a minimum, students are expected to take first year (1st) courses in the first year and fifth (5th) year courses in the final year of study. Other specialized programs may be funded at the discretion of the schools and/or Candler School of Theology and/or the Division of Ordained Ministry.

Admission

The Course of Study School is basically for the theological education and training of Local Pastors in the United Methodist Church. It is designed to meet the needs of Local Pastors who choose not to enroll in a graduate level seminary degree program. Those admitted to the Basic Five-Year COS program will have:

- a high school diploma or equivalent;
- been certified as candidates for ordained ministry;
- completed the requirements for license to pastoral ministry;
- received the endorsement of the Annual Conference Board of Ordained Ministry (BOOM)
- be under appointment in the United Methodist Church (exceptions to be made with the approval of the Annual Conference Board of Ordained Ministry BOOM)

Registration Procedure

Please use current registration forms only.

- Forms may be obtained from Walter Cash at the address listed below.
- Forms may be obtained by calling the COS Office at 256-747-3329.
- Forms may be obtained online from the North Alabama and Alabama-West Florida websites as well as from the Emory COS website.
- Forms may be obtained by emailing Walter Cash at Cashdepost@aol.com.

You will not be enrolled unless all of the following items are complete and sent to ALCOS by the following deadlines: Registration form and fees are due **one month before first class session** and should be mailed to:

**Alabama Course of Study School
P.O. Box 93
Crane Hill, AL 35053**

Registration Process

After completing all parts of the registration form, secure the signatures of both your District Superintendent and the Board of Ordained Ministry Representative from your Annual Conference (note: both signatures are necessary). It is important to secure the appropriate signatures, as they are required for financial assistance. When obtaining signatures, make sure the registration is returned to you so you can submit it by the deadline. For your protection, please keep a copy of your completed registration. It will be helpful to the Alabama Course of Study School if you would indicate your course plans (and send in your registration fees) for the whole year when you register for your first course of the academic year.

Tuition and Fees

There is a \$75.00 registration fee per course, which must be paid by the student and received at least one month before the first class session (with the completed registration form). After the deadline, a late fee of \$10 will be charged. The appropriate registration fee (in the form of a check or money order) should be payable to the North Alabama Annual Conference and included with your completed registration form. **Note: The Registration fee is not refundable for any reason.** The signatures of the Board of Ordained Ministry registrar and District Superintendent insure that the student will receive his/her Annual Conference scholarship for the ALCOS tuition which is \$275.00/course. Students will be responsible for paying whatever portion of the tuition not paid by the Annual Conference.

Housing and Meals

Neither meals nor housing are included in the tuition and fees. Each student will be responsible for his/her own meals, snacks, and housing. Prior to the beginning of each course, a list of housing options will be made available.

Course Load

The maximum number of courses a student may take in the Course of Study program, regardless of the school(s) attended is four courses per year. Under unusual circumstances, students may be granted permission to take additional courses with the combined approval of the Board of Ordained Ministry, the Director of the Course of Study School, and the Division of Elders and Local Pastors.

Class Hours

The number of classroom hours for each of the basic courses is a minimum of twenty. The class times are from 6:00 p.m. until 9:00 p.m. on Friday and from 8:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. on Saturday. The fall session is usually held in September/October/November; winter in January/February; spring in March/April; and summer in July/August. Sessions alternate between Birmingham-Southern and Huntingdon.

Attendance Policy

Each student is expected to attend every class session (including worship). Any absence may lead to loss of credit or dismissal from the school. A student who misses more than one session (Friday night, Saturday morning, or Saturday afternoon) of the classroom work will not receive a grade for that class and will be required to refund the cost of their tuition to the Annual Conference.

Cancellation Policies

In the event a student cannot attend as planned, the student must contact the ALCOS office. This may be done by phone, email, or letter. Otherwise, the student will be responsible for paying the entire cost of the course for which he/she is registered. Also, students who attend one weekend but not the other will be responsible for paying the entire cost of the course.

The ALCOS retains the right to cancel any course that does not have a minimum of five (5) students registered at least four (4) weeks before the first class meeting. Affected students will be notified and every effort will be made to enroll them in another class.

Orientation and Worship

On the first weekend of each quarter, the session begins at 6:00 p.m. with worship, a brief orientation, and announcements. All students should be present at this time. Classes begin immediately upon dismissal from worship. A closing service of graduation and Holy Communion is held at 2:15 p.m. on Saturday of the last weekend. Attendance at opening and closing worship is required. Finals (where applicable) will be given following the worship service. If no final is scheduled, normal classes will resume.

Advance Preparation

Advance preparation is required of all students. Some of this advance preparation may be done in conjunction with an Annual Conference mentor. Assignments will include material related to classroom studies as well as experience in pastoral ministry. It is important that pre-work assignment sheets for the current year be used. Professors do change assignments from year to year; consequently, assignment sheets from the previous year(s) will be incorrect. An ALCOS cover sheet should be stapled to each course assignment. ALCOS cover sheets may be obtained from the ALCOS office, online, or during class weekends.

Pework Assignments

A copy of the pre-work assignments for each class will be sent after registration forms and fees are received. They are also available online and during class weekends.

Pework Policy

We all have deadlines that govern our lives. It is crucial that you take seriously your commitment to complete the pre-work assignments by the deadline. Extensions are granted only for extenuating circumstances. Normal pastoral duties do not constitute extenuating circumstances. Late work will be penalized. Any extension must be granted by the instructor of the class. For your protection, please keep copies of your pre-work assignments.

- All precourse work must be submitted to the professor on the Friday of the first weekend or by the date indicated on the assignment sheet.
- Late precourse work will be accepted for two weeks following the due date (but not beyond) with the following penalties:
 1. Precourse work submitted within one week of the due date will receive a **one letter grade deduction**
 2. Precourse work submitted after one week of the due date but within two weeks will receive a **two letter grade deduction**
 3. **No precourse** assignments will be accepted after two weeks from the due date and a grade of "F" will be given in the course.
 4. **In cases where the student has registered late the same precourse policy applies.**
- All midcourse work must be submitted to the professor on the Friday of the second weekend or by the date indicated by the professor.
- Late midcourse work will be accepted for two weeks following the due date (but not beyond) with the following penalties:
 1. Midcourse work submitted within one week of the due date will receive a **one letter grade deduction.**
 2. Midcourse work submitted after one week of the due date but within two weeks will receive a **two letter grade deduction.**
 3. **No midcourse** assignments will be accepted after two weeks from the due date and a grade of "F" will be given in the course.

Grading System

The quality of work done by students in courses is reported by using the following symbols: "A" is the highest grade given, reserved for outstanding work." B" is given for a high standard of work (though below the level of highest excellence). "C" is given for acceptable work. "D" is given for work that is below average and may or

may not be accepted for credit in your Annual Conference. "F" is given for failure and indicates that no credit will be received for the course. Quality points (QP) are assigned to each letter grade and enable the registrar to calculate a student's grade point average. Grades are reported to the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, to the student's Annual Conference local pastor registrar, and to the student.

Incomplete Policy

An incomplete may be granted to students who, because of special circumstances, are not able to complete the required work during a given session. To receive an incomplete, the student must submit the appropriate form (available from the ALCOS office) and receive written permission from both the faculty member and the Director of ALCOS before the end of the session for which the incomplete is being requested. *The completed work must be sent to and received by the instructor **no later than 30 days after the last class**. The instructor will send the grade and completed work to the Director. If the work is not received within 30 days of the last class session, the incomplete will automatically be changed to an "F".*

Honor Code

1. **Student Academic Honor** - The Alabama Course of Study school requires that all material submitted by a student in fulfilling his or her academic requirements be the original work of the student.
2. **Violations of Academic Honor** – violation of the academic honor include any action by a student indicating dishonesty or lack of integrity in academic ethics.
3. **Cheating** – includes seeking, acquiring, or passing on information about the content of an examination prior to its authorized release or during administration. Cheating also includes seeking, using, giving, or obtaining unauthorized assistance in any academic assignment or examination. Cheating is more than a violation of rules. It is a violation of the "Honor Code," a covenant relationship shared by the students, faculty, and administration of ALCOS to maintain academic honesty.
4. **Plagiarism** – is an act of presenting the work of another (whether published or unpublished), including the work of another student, as one's own work. A writer's work should be regarded as his or her own property. Any person who knowingly uses a writer's distinctive work without proper acknowledgement is guilty of plagiarism. Studying together is allowed, but all written work submitted must be the student's own work.
 - Plagiarism Defined - "You plagiarize when, intentionally or not, you use someone's words or ideas but fail to credit that person. You plagiarize even when you do credit the author but use his exact words without so indicating with quotation marks or block indentation. You also plagiarize when you use words so close to those in your source, that if your work were placed next to the source, it would be obvious that you could not have written what you did without the source at your elbow. When accused of plagiarism, some writers *claim, 'I must have somehow memorized the passage. When I wrote it, I certainly thought it was my own'*. That excuse convinces very few."¹

1. From page 167 of *The Craft of Research* by Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams, published in 1995 by the University of Chicago Press in Chicago.

- Plagiarism Policy – I have read the plagiarism policy printed above and verify that this assignment represents my own work, except where credit is given. I have also made copies of this assignment and I will bring them to class with me in the event any of my work is misplaced.

5. Guidelines for Addressing An Allegation of Cheating

a. First Violation

1. Step one – Faculty member reports incident to ALCOS director.
2. Step two – ALCOS director creates a committee composed of the director and two faculty members.
3. The committee will convene as soon as possible to discuss the incident and to determine whether cheating has taken place. If cheating is found to have indeed occurred, the committee will decide what course of action is to be taken. Any decisions made will be communicated directly to the student or students involved by the director of ALCOS.

b. Second Violation

1. Step one – Faculty member reports incident to ALCOS director.
2. Step two – ALCOS director creates a committee composed of the director, two faculty members and the student(s) district superintendent.
3. The committee will convene as soon as possible to discuss the incident and to determine whether cheating has taken place. If cheating is found to have indeed occurred, the committee will decide what course of action is to be taken. Any decisions made will be communicated directly to the student or students involved by the director of ALCOS.

c. Third Violation – Permanent suspension from Course of Study.

Harassment

1. Sexual Harassment

- a. Definition –“Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when:
 - submission to such conduct is made, either explicitly or implicitly, as a term of condition of an individual’s employment or academic standing;
 - or 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 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
- b. Any person of the Course of Study School community who believes that he or she has been subjected to racial harassment should immediately report the situation to the Director of the Course of Study School. When reporting a complaint, the individual should be prepared to furnish accurate information (date, name and facts). All such complaints will be treated in a confidential manner as far as possible, while permitting the school to investigate the complaint thoroughly and to take appropriate action.
- c. 2010 Emory Course of Study Handbook, Sexual Harassment policy. 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.

2. Racial Harassment

- a. Definition - Any conduct directed against a person with the effect of insulting, degrading or abusing him/her because of his/her racial background.
- b. Persons enrolled in the Course of Study come under the jurisdiction of their own annual conference policies on racial harassment. However, while the person is in the Course of Study School the following policy shall also apply.
- c. The Course of Study School 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 associated with the school. Any person of the Course of Study School community who believes that he or she has been subjected to racial harassment should immediately report the situation to the Director of the Course of Study School. 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.

3. Procedures For Handling Harassment

- a. The Course of Study School is committed to using the process outlined below to deal with allegations of sexual and racial harassment within the school community. A sexual or 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.
- b. Allegations are thoroughly investigated by a Sexual or 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.
- c. If the Sexual or 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 Course of Study School on that campus. In

addition, the Director will inform the accused person's annual conference or judicatory body of the action taken.

- d. The Course of Study School 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.
 - e. 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.
- 4. Appeal Process** - If the accuser or the accused is not satisfied with the action taken by the Course of Study School, he or she 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 notification of the disposition of the complaint.
 - 5. Confidentiality** - Every effort will be made to ensure confidentiality to the extent feasible, while permitting the school to investigate the complaint thoroughly and to take appropriate action. The school will not tolerate retaliation against any member of the school community who complains of sexual or racial harassment.
 - 6. Explanatory Notes** - If the person alleged to have engaged in sexual or racial harassment is the Director, then the person bringing the complaint shall notify one or two faculty members who serve on the Sexual or 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 or Racial Harassment Committee and to function as the Director in the process outlined above.

Academic Records

The academic records of the Alabama Course of Study School are kept by the Director under the guidelines developed by the Division of Elders and Local Pastors and the General Council of Finance and Administration. A report of the progress of each student shall be sent to the Division of Elders and Local Pastors (where grades will be recorded on the student's permanent record). Copies of this permanent record will also be sent to the Boards of Ordained Ministry by the Division of Elders and Local Pastors. A grade report will also be sent to each student and to the Annual Conferences by the Alabama COS School.

Transcripts

You may obtain a copy of your current transcript by contacting Lynn Daye at the Division of Ordained Ministry in Nashville. Her email address is Ldaye@gbhem.org, and her phone number is 615-340-7416.

Credit Evaluation Policy

1. Evaluation of college/seminary/graduate school transcripts for the purpose of transferring credit to the Course of Study will be done by the professional staff of the Division of Ordained Ministry (DOM) at the request of an Annual Conference Board of Ordained ministry (BOOM). Copies of the evaluation are sent to the Conference Board of Ordained Ministry registrar.
2. The request should be accompanied by the official transcript(s) to be evaluated and a general description of the applicant's educational background. When it is not possible to send an official transcript, a photocopy may be substituted.

3. Seminary or graduate school credit for courses with grades of less than "C" will not be allowed as applicable to the Course of Study.

Books

Alabama COS works closely with the Cokesbury Bookstores at Candler Seminary (404-727-6336) and Birmingham (205-822-5190) regarding the Course of Study Book List. When ordering books, please state the title of the books, their authors, and their ISBN number. Books may also be obtained from Amazon.Com.

Note: Portions of this handbook were used by permission and modified to fit our school. Sources used include:

- GBHEM Administrative Policies – Course of Study for Licensed and Ordained Ministry and Advanced Course of Study (Revised 10/3/08)
- Candler School of Theology – Emory University of Study School for Local Pastors, 2010 Handbook
- Mississippi Course of Study School – 2010 Handbook
- The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church 2008, The United Methodist Church, Nashville, TN.