

## **Polity Immersion Class at General Assembly**

June 25-29 2014

Class to be held at the site of the UUA General Assembly, Providence, RI

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### **SUMMARY**

The Polity Immersion Class will run from June 19-23 at the site of the Unitarian Universalist Association's General Assembly in Louisville, KY. Participants will attend plenary (general) sessions (on one's own or with classmates) as well as share classroom time to explore how changing cultures and theologies of leadership, authority and church shape our institutions; how polity helps or hinders our commitment to social justice; what the historical roots are for many of our traditions; and how to bring back the insights and learning from the class to home congregations and communities. While the course includes the traditional content of a UU polity course, the setting at General Assembly will allow all involved to move beyond past history towards an understanding of what it takes to be an effective and responsible political actor in contemporary UU settings. Students will be responsible for their own travel, food, lodging, and GA Registration.

Susan also promises Special Surprise Denominational Leader Guests to our class.

*Starr King Students and Meadville Lombard students may be eligible for a \$500 grant to help with travel, housing and registration:*

<http://www.meadville.edu/news-view.php?id=475>

Be sure to also check for other scholarship opportunities noted on the UUA's GA 2014 page.

### **LOGISTICS**

We will be alternating between classroom time, attending General Assembly events, gathering together to share our observations about the live polity of GA in the classroom. You will have the option of attending the GA events either on your own, or with the class. If you attend with the class, Susan is working on getting us some seating we can share together up front near or with the UUA Board. You will need to register for General Assembly in addition to the class in order to be able to attend GA events. You can do that at the UUA website at [www.uua.org](http://www.uua.org). Also at that site are options for housing. You can make your housing arrangements through the uua options, or on your own. If you would be interested in sharing a room, please let me know and I will do all I can to connect you with a fellow student. Our classroom time will be in a meetings space in or near the convention center, TBA.

## GRANT OPPORTUNITY FOR HELP ATTENDING

### READINGS

Students will be expected to have completed the following readings before arriving. This list represents all of the required readings on polity for the UUA Ministerial Fellowship Committee. They are all available in electronic form at:

<http://www.uua.org/leaders/leadership/ministerialcredentialing/16224.shtml>

*UUA Bylaws and Rules*

*Ministerial Fellowship Committee Policies*

*Ministerial Fellowship Committee Rules*

*UUMA Guidelines and Code of Professional Practice*

Conrad Wright, *Congregational Polity* (1997)

### SAMPLE TOPICS

What Is Congregational Polity? What our Historical and Current Deviations from It?  
Congregational Polity as a Puritan legacy  
The Role of Covenant in Congregational Polity  
What Polity process led to last year's "Justice" GA?  
What is the connection between the Black Empowerment Controversy in the UUA and last year's "Justice" GA?  
How does congregational polity support or hinder social justice?  
Ordination and Fellowshiping of Ministers—History, Current Practice, and Clergy Fashion: Or, What Not to Wear to the Service of the Living Tradition  
The Role/Authority of the Minister  
The Role/Authority of the Laity  
Polity Distinctions between Power, Authority, Bureaucracy  
The History of our Democratic Governance: Associations and Conventions  
Unitarians and Universalists: Comparative Polities and Consolidation Issues  
The Current UUA: As an Administrative Organization  
The Current UUA in Governance  
How General Assembly Works (and how it doesn't Work!)  
GA Controversies in History  
Anti-Associationalism within the UU Tradition  
Current Issues/Crises/Opportunities in Congregational Polity

### LOCATIONS

TBA, but will be in the Convention Center or with short walk.

## **SCHEDULE**

### **Wednesday, June 25**

Students are welcome but not required to sit in on all or part of the UUA Board meeting, 1:15-3:00 PM.  
*Please let Susan know if you are interested in doing this.*

We will meet for first classroom time 3:30 PM- 5:30 PM. Students are required to attend Opening Celebration and General Session 1, 7:30PM-9:00 PM.

### **Thursday, June 26**

Required: General Session and Worship, 8:00-9:45AM  
Classroom time: 10:30-Noon; 1-5 PM

### **Friday, June 27**

Required: General Session, 8:00-9:45 AM  
Classroom: 10:15-Noon  
Classroom: 1:00 PM-2:00 PM  
Required: General Session, 2:15-4:30 PM  
Required: Service of the Living Tradition, 7:30-9:00 PM

### **Saturday, June 28**

Required: General Session, 8:00-9:45 AM  
Classroom, 10:15-Noon  
Required: General Session, 2:15-4:30 PM  
Strongly Recommended, Ware Lecture: 5:00PM-6:00PM

### **Sunday, June 229**

Required: General Session, 8:00 AM-10:30 AM  
ClassroomL 11:00-Noon  
Required: General Session and Closing Ceremony, 1:30-4:00 PM  
Final Classroom: 4:00-5:00 PM

## **REQUIREMENTS**

Readings as outlined above; attendance at events and class time as outline above; participation in class; a very tiny final project, the format of which to be negotiated during class (the goal of this will simply be to briefly capture some of what you learned at GA, this is not a monster paper or a research project, just some notes) and due a month after we leave General Assembly.