**Course of Study Information for the West Virginia Annual Conference**

## Richard Justice

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# The Course of Study

The Course of Study (COS) is prescribed by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry – Division of Ordained Ministry **(¶ 1421.3d of the 2016 Book of Discipline**). It includes Licensing School, the Five-Year Basic Course of Study, Advanced Course of Study, and Correspondence Studies. In prescribing the COS, the Division of Ordained Ministry is responsible for developing curriculum, purpose and learning goals; providing resources; establishing, maintaining, and evaluating Licensing Schools and Course of Study Schools (COS); keeping central records on all students, and reporting on student progress to each Board of Ordained Ministry every year.

# Regional Course of Study Schools

Regional Course of Study Schools are established by the Division of Ordained Ministry at locations central to the student populations, taking into consideration such factors as availability of United Methodist theological school faculty, library resources, dormitory space, the density of student populations, etc. **Full time local pastors must attend one of the approved Regional Course of Study Schools.** For a current list of regional schools and contact information check here: https://[www.gbhem.org/education/licensing-and-course-study/resources-forms](http://www.gbhem.org/education/licensing-and-course-study/resources-forms)

West Virginia students often attend COS at MTSO, Duke, Wesley, and through various Hybrid programs. We encourage you to explore many COS programs and choose the one that best fits your needs. Feel free to talk with the Local Pastor Registrar and a seminary representative for more information.

# Extension Schools for Part-Time Local Pastors

The West Virginia Extension School takes place at *Spring Heights* Camp. When the Division of Ordained Ministry determines that there is a need for a Basic Five-Year COS school for part-time local pastors who are unable to attend a Regional Course of Study School, the division may negotiate its development as an extension of an existing Regional Course of Study School. The extension centers usually offer courses on a weekend, which allows bi-vocational local pastors to participate without taking extensive time away from their work or families. **Classes at these schools are only available to part-time local pastors**. Find out more here: <http://coswv.org/>

# Curriculum

The Basic Five-Year Course of Study is a year-round experiential and classroom learning process. Each Regional Course of Study School offers all 20 courses of the Basic Five-Year COS and seeks to meet the needs of both the full-time and part-time local pastors. Normally, courses are to be taken in the sequence prescribed by the curriculum. At a minimum, students are expected to take first year courses in the first year of study and fifth year courses in the final year of study. In addition to these basic curriculum courses, the school may provide a communication skills program for students. Other special

programs may be funded at the discretion of the schools or the Division of Ordained Ministry and other programs that meet student needs. You’ll find an overview of the COS curriculum overview here: https://[www.gbhem.org/education/licensing-and-course-study/resources-forms](http://www.gbhem.org/education/licensing-and-course-study/resources-forms)

# Time Frame for Completing Course of Study Work

**¶319.3 – 2016 Book of Discipline** requires that **full-time Local Pastors complete the Course of Study within eight (8) years and part-time Local Pastors complete the Course of Study within twelve (12) years of being licensed,** unless a family situation or other circumstance limits the Local Pastor's ability to meet the above requirements. Extensions to this time require a ¾ vote of the DCOM, recommendation by the conference Board of Ordained Ministry (BOOM), and the vote of clergy members in full connection.

# Annual Progress

**Local Pastors must make progress in the Course of Study every year.** According to **¶318.1 – 2016 Book of Discipline**, full-time Local Pastors "shall complete four courses per year in the Course of Study." Part- time Local Pastors "shall complete two courses per year" according to **¶318.2**.

# Financial Assistance

Your apportionment dollars help fund the Course of Study program through the Ministerial Education Fund (MEF). Financial assistance is also provided for the Course of Study by the conference. The extension school at Spring Heights will bill the conference directly. Some regional schools require that you pay your entire tuition prior to beginning classes. Upon successful completion of the course and your written request, including a copy of your grade report, the conference will reimburse you for the amount of the scholarship. Other regional schools will bill the conference for your scholarship amount once classes are completed. However, the Annual Conference does not pay for a grade of "F" or a class withdrawal. In those cases, the student must pay for the next completed and passed course before being eligible for financial aid once again.

# WV Conference Scholarship amounts per school:

*Regional Schools:* **$250/course\***

*Extension Schools:* **$200/course**

**\*** *If you are attending a regional school, after you have passed your course(s),* ***you may send a request for an additional $100 grant per course to the Local Pastor Registrar****. The deadline for requesting the balance of the grant is one month after you receive your grades.*

# Online Courses

The Board of Ordained Ministry offers scholarships for the Internet Courses approved by GBHEM. The WV Conference scholarship will pay $100.00 towards the tuition of these courses. You may only take 50% of your courses online. Please contact the Conference Local Pastor Registrar for further information.

https://[www.gbhem.org/education/licensing-and-course-study/online-courses](http://www.gbhem.org/education/licensing-and-course-study/online-courses)

# Correspondence Courses

Correspondence courses are offered by the Board of Higher Education and Ministry in Nashville, TN. Correspondence courses are discouraged but allowed in special situations, and must be approved by the superintendent and the district board. There is no WV Conference Scholarship money for these courses. Applications are available [here](https://www.gbhem.org/loans-and-scholarships/scholarships/list-scholarships) at the GBHEM website. Information about licensed local pastors, part-time, full-time, Course of Study requirements, and continuance is found in ¶¶ **315-320 of the 2016 Book of Discipline**.

# The Local Pastor Registrar

The Local Pastor Registrar (LPR) works with local pastors and superintendents to do the following:

1. The LPR processes applications and maintains grade records for the 5-year course of study.

All records from classes taken at any COS school or schools are maintained in a master file by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry (GBHEM). **All applications must be signed by the LPR** to ensure that conference scholarship funds are released.

1. The LPR is a member on the advisory boards for Course of Study schools at Duke, Wesley, the Course of Study School of Ohio Valley and the Spring Heights Advisory Board, which is part of COS School of Ohio Valley.
2. When candidates for ministry complete **Pastoral Ministry Licensing School (PMLS)**, the LPR sends their names to Duke, Wesley, Course of Study School of Ohio Valley, and Appalachian COS Schools to be included on their mailing lists. Local pastors may also want to contact those schools individually. You are encouraged to explore many schools.
3. The LPR receives information from District Committees on Ministry (DCOM), District Superintendents and GBHEM to compile the Local Pastor’s report at Executive Session of Annual Conference in June each year which, among other things, reflects each local pastor’s progress in Course of Study.

**Helpful websites** https://[www.wvumc.org/passionate-spiritual-leaders](http://www.wvumc.org/passionate-spiritual-leaders) [http://coswv.org](http://coswv.org/) (for part-time local pastors) https://[www.gbhem.org/clergy](http://www.gbhem.org/clergy)

https://[www.gbhem.org/education/licensing-and-course-study](http://www.gbhem.org/education/licensing-and-course-study) https://[www.gbhem.org/education/licensing-and-course-study/resources-forms](http://www.gbhem.org/education/licensing-and-course-study/resources-forms)

# Please keep a copy of all your Course of Study records, including all your coursework.

Feel free to contact me with any questions. The West Virginia Conference Board of Ministry is thankful for your ministry and the ministry we can do together for Jesus Christ.

## Richard Justice

**Local Pastor Registrar**