

Course of Study

Community Handbook

Saint Paul School of Theology

at Greater Kansas City Area, Springfield, MO, and Oklahoma City University, OK



Academic Policies and Administrative Guidelines



Welcome

The Saint Paul Course of Study School is a part of the larger Christian community of Saint Paul School of Theology. The Course of Study (COS) community is made up of a variety of groups and individuals, each with diverse needs and concerns. In choosing to be a member in the Saint Paul COS community, you are choosing to share in a common life of faith, to participate in the freedoms and structures that make community possible in the context of our diversity.

A goal of the Saint Paul Course of Study School is to create an authentic, celebrating, redeeming, and serving community—a community in Christ. The purpose of this handbook is to provide a reference to the common life and practice of the school. Many questions that you may have can be answered in this resource.

Blessings to you as you join with us in creating this community of faith!

Mission Statement

The mission of the Course of Study School at Saint Paul School of Theology is to educate and share in the formation of Local Pastors as effective and faithful spiritual leaders of the ministry of the Church, the body of Jesus Christ in the world.

This mission is informed by the following values:

- Integrative and interdisciplinary teaching and learning;
- Rooted in the classical theological, doctrinal and spiritual traditions of Christian faith and standing within the heritage of the Wesleyan tradition;
- Affirming the strength of diversity among the people of God;
- Committed to the fulfillment of God's mission through the Church;
- Equipping the leadership of the church to empower the ministry of all Christians;
- Focusing on the practices, functions, roles, and responsibilities of licensed ministry while also providing foundational studies for those who seek and are affirmed by the church in pursuing elders orders;
- Encouraging the formation and continuation of colleague relationships in the Course of Study community; and
- Teaching and modeling critical and constructive thinking and communication skills.

Academic Policies and Procedures

Admission

The COS school is for the education and training of local pastors in the United Methodist Church. Those admitted to the program shall have

- (1) been certified as candidates for ordained ministry,
- (2) completed the requirements for license as a local pastor,
- (3) received the endorsement of the annual conference Board of Ordained Ministry,
- (4) be under appointment in The United Methodist Church, exceptions to be made with the approval of the conference Board of Ordained Ministry for a period not to exceed one year.

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.

Deadline for enrollment for the **Summer term** is **April 15**. Deadline for enrollment for the **January term** is **November 4**. This allows time for students to complete their advanced assignments.

For enrollment deadlines for **Extended Sessions** (week end format for part-time local pastors) please refer to the Course of Study Schedule.

Curriculum

The basic Course of Study Program is a year-round experiential and classroom learning process. This process assumes cooperation between the instructors in the course of study schools and the clergy mentors in the annual conferences. Each regional school shall offer all 20 courses of the basic COS and shall seek to meet the needs of both the full-time and part-time local pastor.

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.

Year 1

- 121 – Bible I: Introduction
- 122 – Theological Heritage I: Introduction
- 123 – Formation & Discipleship
- 124 – Transformative Leadership

Year 2

- 221 – Bible II: Torah & Israel's History
- 222 – Theological Heritage II: Early Church
- 223 – Worship & Sacraments
- 224 – Administration & Polity

Year 3

- 321 – Bible III: Gospels
- 322 – Theological Heritage III: Medieval – Reformation
- 323 – Congregational Care
- 324 - Preaching

Year 4

- 421 – Bible IV: Prophets, Psalms & Wisdom Literature
- 422 – Theological Heritage IV: Wesleyan Movement
- 423 – Mission
- 424 - Ethics

Year 5

- 521 – Bible V: Acts, Epistles & Revelation
- 522 – Theology in the Contemporary Church
- 523 – Evangelism
- 524 – Theological Reflection: Practice of Ministry

Enrollment Limit

The maximum number of courses a student can take in the Course of Study is four courses per calendar year. The maximum amount of time to complete all courses is ten (10) years. Full-time pastors are required to take four (4) classes per year. In unusual circumstances, students may be granted permission to take additional courses with the approval of the Conference Board of Ordained Ministry, the Director of the Course of Study School, and the Division of Ordained Ministry. Send requests in writing to [Pamela Frost, P.O. Box 340007, Nashville, TN 37203](#). Part-time pastors are required to take a minimum of two (2) classes per year.

Advance Preparation

Advance preparation is required of all students. Some of this advanced preparation is to be done in conjunction with a clergy mentor. Assignments will include material related to assigned readings as well as experience in pastoral ministry.

Advance assignments for the Saint Paul Course of Study School are as follows: All advance assignments for Years 1 – 5 shall be posted on MOODLE no later than the date listed on the Course of Study School Schedule on our website. Please refer to www.spst.edu/COS. Students who do not yet have a MOODLE account will need to create the account and notify the Help Desk at helpdesk@spst.edu.

Assignments

The Division of Ordained Ministry recommends that students complete *15 to 20 pages of written work* or their equivalent in class projects *for each course*.

Extension Policy

In the event of an emergency situation, a student may request from the Director an extension to the due date for advance assignments. *Three weeks* is the maximum possible length for an extension. Because the Course of Study is designed to be a yearlong learning experience, students who request an extension because they did not begin their work on time will be denied.

The Director may grant exceptions to first year students who enrolled late due to appointment decisions. A student may only receive **two extensions during their tenure** as a Saint Paul Course of Study student. Appeals to this policy must be made through a student's District Superintendent.

If the advanced assignments are not received in a timely manner, it will adversely affect one's grade for the Course. If assignments are missing, the Director is granted the authority to refuse admission for that term.

Rewrite Policy

Instructors in the Saint Paul Course of Study School may assign a rewrite of a submitted paper or project if a student does not perform at a satisfactory level. All rewrite deadlines and instructions are to be negotiated between the student and the instructors.

Class Hours

The standard number of classroom hours for each of the basic courses is a minimum of twenty (20) hours.

Class Attendance

A student is expected to attend every class session. Unexcused absences may cause loss of credit or dismissal from the school. A student missing twenty percent (20%) or more of the classroom work shall not receive credit for those classes.

Community Meal

The shared meal is the focal point for the community where announcement, joys, concerns, and community news are shared. All students are required to share the noon community meal. Students lead the daily blessing and sharing.

Grades and Grade Reports

Course of Study Schools must now use letter grades. The faculty is committed to keeping a focus on learning, not on grading.

Understanding the Grades

The following grading rubric will help you understand the faculty perspective as they post grades for individual papers and reports, as well as determining the final grade for the course.

A Excellent / Exceptional

Papers, projects, and reports will have a strong thesis, will be persuasively supported with well-chosen examples and quotations from readings and class work; the writing and/or presentations are clear, lucid, without errors in grammar or citations. Class participation is insightful, relevant and builds rapport with others. This work integrates classroom discussions, insights from authors and the student's own context for ministry.

B Very Good /Good

Class work shares many of the previous characteristics, but may have one or two examples that are average rather than excellent, or might have a minor lapse in organization or grammar. Class work reflects the application of learning for ministry.

C Satisfactory/ Adequate

Class work is adequate but lacks some of the coherence, and critical thought evidenced in the above categories. Assertions may lack adequate support; written work may contain errors in grammar or sentence structure. Work may rely on clichés rather than critical thought.

D Marginal

A rating of “marginal” means that the student’s work was only marginally acceptable. Work was submitted but the work reflects several inadequacies. The student would benefit from rewriting a paper or, if it is a final grade, repeating the class to meet the ongoing expectations for ministry.

F Inadequate

A rating of “inadequate” means that the student’s work did not meet expectations and was not acceptable. Courses would need to be repeated in order to meet the minimum standards toward completion of Course of Study School.

If a pre-assignment is late without an official extension, the letter grade will be adversely affected.

It is a serious matter when an assignment contains material that violates the integrity of academic standard by:

- 1) submitting work that is not original, or
- 2) using work that belongs to another without proper credit (plagiarism).

Such a violation may be referred to the Director and may result in rewrites, grade reduction and/or be possible cause for termination. *(Please read the policy in its entirety in the Appendix.)*

Incompletes

In the event of an emergency that prevents a student from completing work to successfully finish an on campus class session, the student may request to receive the grade of “incomplete.” If agreeable to the faculty, the student will be given three weeks to complete all of the requirements for the course. Decisions by the faculty can be appealed to the Director of the school.

Records

The records of the COS school shall be kept by the director under guidelines developed by the Division of Ordained Ministry and the General Council on Finance and Administration. An annual report on the progress of each student shall be sent to the DOM where grades will be recorded on the student's permanent record. Copies of this permanent record shall be sent to the registrar of conference boards of ordained ministry whose responsibility it is to forward this information to the appropriate district committee on ministry.

The instructors for each module may complete a narrative evaluation of each student. The narrative evaluation is sent to the student.

Transferable Credit

If a COS student transfers into the Master of Divinity program at Saint Paul School of Theology, a module graded at the "A" or "B" level may be applied toward the elective hours of the M.Div. requirements. One one-week course in the Course of Study program is equivalent to one semester hour of credit. Up to 9 semester hours may be transferred in this method. Any transfer must be reviewed and approved by the Academic Dean.

Transcript Requests

Official student transcripts shall be issued upon written request to the Division of Ordained Ministry. To request a copy, contact [Pamela Frost at cosregistrar@gbhem.org](mailto:cosregistrar@gbhem.org), or P.O. Box 340007, Nashville, TN 37203.

Refund Policy

The registration fee for all courses is due with the registration paperwork. Registration fees are nonrefundable. Other fees (tuition) are paid prior to class beginning. If a student voluntarily withdraws from a class prior to the class beginning, the tuition fee they paid is refundable to them. If the tuition fee is paid by a third party (i.e., Conference) the tuition fee will be refunded per the policy of the third-party payer.

Governance of the School

The Course of Study (COS) is prescribed by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, Division of Ordained Ministry (*Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church 2008*, paragraph 1424.4). It includes license school, the five-year basic course of study, advanced course of study, and correspondence studies. In prescribing the COS, the Division is responsible for developing curriculum, purpose and learning goals; providing resources; establishing, maintaining, and evaluating license schools and course of study schools; keeping central records on all students, and reporting on student progress to each board of ordained ministry every year.

Course of Study Schools

Saint Paul Course of Study School is one of eight regional COS schools. The regional schools are established by the Division at locations central to the student populations, taking into consideration such factors as availability of United Methodist theological school faculty, library resources, lodging accommodations, the density of student populations, etc.

Full-time local pastors shall attend one of the approved regional Course of Study Schools. Part-time local pastors may attend an Extended Course of Study School. These are offered in a weekend format to allow for other vocational commitments. A list of all regional and extension Course of Study schools can be found on the website of the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry at www.gbhem.org/ministry.html.

Board of Advisors

Each regional Course of Study school shall have a Board of Advisors. The board shall be composed of at least one representative from the conference Boards of Ordained Ministry enrolling the majority of students in the school, the COS director and a representative from the Division of Ordained Ministry, General Board of Higher Education and Ministry.

The COS director shall convene and chair the board. The board shall also include other administrators, faculty and students. Conferences that have more than 10 students in the Course of Study are invited to send an additional representative from the Cabinet. The Board of Advisors shall meet annually and review the program and needs of the school. The board shall seek to promote support of the regional school through its constituent boards of ordained ministry.

Student Council (Summer Session)

The Student Council plays a vital role in the life of the Saint Paul Course of Study community. The Council is the official voice of the students in matters of policy and procedure. There shall be a minimum of one class representative from each class. Three (3) officers will be elected by the Council from their members: a chair, vice-chair, and secretary. The chair is responsible for organizing the work of the council and overseeing the weekly meetings. The vice-chair assists the chair in organizing the council.

The secretary keeps records of all meetings and assists the chair in organizing the council. The Director of the Course of Study School is an ex-officio member of the council. The Student Council oversees the management of the Student Emergency and Student Memorial Fund as well as other student activities.

Student Emergency Fund

This fund is used to assist students who have financial need while they are in attendance at the Saint Paul Course of Study School. The funds are maintained through the financial office of the seminary. The Student Council approves disbursements; requests for fund distribution are made through the Director of the Course of Study.

The following process will be utilized for distribution of the funds:

- Request is made through the Student Council class representative or the Director;
- Request will be presented anonymously to the Student Council for consideration;
- Student Council will disburse the requested amount as a grant, loan, or combination of the two;
- When the request is approved as a loan, students are required to set up a payment contract with the Director;
- All loans from the Student Emergency Fund must be repaid before a student is allowed to enroll for her/his next class.

Student Memorial Fund

The Student Memorial Fund was established to honor the memory of deceased Saint Paul Course of Study students. The funds are maintained through the financial office of the seminary. The Student Council approves all disbursements; requests for fund distribution are made through the Director of the Course of Study. The Student Memorial Fund is used to purchase items that will be beneficial to those who attend Saint Paul in the future. Examples of past items purchased include luggage carts, landscaping material, benches, candlesticks for the chapel and a communion service set.

Communication Specialist

The Communications Specialist works specifically with students in the areas of comprehension, writing, and study skills. The services provided by the specialist are free and a service to the COS community. Communication skills classes are listed in the COS Session calendar of events and are open to all interested persons.

Transcript Evaluation

Evaluation of transcripts for the purpose of transferring credit to the Course of Study shall be done by professional staff of the Division of Ordained Ministry at the request of a conference board of ordained ministry, a district committee on ministry, or an individual. The request of the board shall 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 submitted.

Hospitality Covenant

We seek to be and to model the hospitable and welcoming community that the church is called to be. As a Christian community, we seek to be a faithful and relevant witness to that revelation through language that speaks truthfully of God and of humanity created in God's image. The Saint Paul Course of Study School intentionally expects all students, faculty and staff to use inclusive language in their speaking, their papers, their preaching, their prayers and all other aspects of life. We covenant to show honor and respect as we engage in the critical task of dialogue among our different perspectives regarding language about God and human beings, re-examining our own assumptions and discovering new understandings. Let us covenant together to be inclusive one of another. (For **Inclusive Language** suggestions, see the list in the appendix.)

Likewise, as a community, we govern ourselves with our emphatic **policies against Sexual Harassment and Racial Harassment**. Please read these policies that are included in the appendix.

Saint Paul School of Theology Course of Study Administration:

Director:

Dr. Israel Kamudzandu
Saint Paul School of Theology
913-253-5016
israelk@spst.edu

Coordinator:

Tiana Gatewood
913-253-5023
tiana.gatewood@spst.edu

APPENDIX

Plagiarism and Integrity of Work

All written work submitted by students, whether essays, reports, journals, or examination papers, is assumed to be their own product, prepared without unauthorized assistance. Students shall neither give nor receive such assistance. All students are required to use the Turabian style for academic form and documentation.

Turabian, Kate, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Thesis and Dissertations*, 6th edition, revised by John Grossman and Alice Bennett. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996.

Plagiarism will be regarded as violating academic integrity in the preparation of essays, term papers, advance assignments and any other student work. Such violation may be referred to the Director by the faculty, and may be cause for termination of enrollment.

The following guidelines are to be observed. The format of the correct version C has been changed to correspond to the Turabian Style required at Course of Study.

Plagiarism is using someone else's words or ideas without giving proper credit—or without giving any credit at all—to the writer of the original. Whether plagiarism is intentional or unintentional, it is a serious offense that you can avoid by adhering to (a style manual's) advice for research and composing.

The following excerpt is from Robert Hughes's *The Fatal Shore*, an account of the founding of Australia. The examples of how students tried to use this excerpt illustrate the problem of plagiarism.

Original Version

Transportation did not stop crime in England or even slow it down. The “criminal class” was not eliminated by transportation, and could not be, because transportation did not deal with the causes of crime.

Version A

Transportation did not stop crime in England or even slow it down. Criminals were not eliminated by transportation because transportation did not deal with the causes of crime.

Version A is plagiarism. Because the writer of Version A does not indicate in the text or in a parenthetical reference that the words and ideas belong to Hughes, her readers will believe the words are hers. She has stolen the words and ideas and has attempted to cover the theft by changing or omitting an occasional word.

Version B

Robert Hughes points out that transportation did not stop crime in England or even slow it down. The criminal class was not eliminated by transportation, and could not be, because transportation did not deal with the causes of crime (168).

Version B is also plagiarism, even though the writer acknowledges his source and documents the passage with a parenthetical reference. He has worked from careless notes and has misunderstood the difference between quoting and paraphrasing. He has copied the original word for word yet has supplied no quotation marks to indicate the extent of the borrowing. As written and documented, the passage masquerades as a paraphrase when in fact it is a direct quotation.

Version C

Hughes argues that transporting criminals from England to Australia “did not stop crime. . . The ‘criminal class’ was not eliminated by transportation, and could not be, because transportation did not deal with the causes of crime.”

Version C is one satisfactory way of handling this source material. The writer has identified her source at the beginning of the sentence, letting readers know who is being quoted. She then explains the concept of transportation in her own words, placing within quotation marks the parts of the original she wants to quote and using ellipsis points to delete the parts she wants to omit. She provides a footnote to enable the reader to locate the source.

Notes

Robert Hughes, [The Fatal Shore](#) (New York: Knopf, 1987), 168.

Sexual Harassment Policy

Students, faculty and employees of the Course of Study come under the jurisdiction of their own annual conference policies on sexual harassment. However, while the person is at the Course of Study School campus the following policy shall also apply.

The Course of Study School 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 Course of Study School community who believes that he or she has been subjected to sexual 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 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 Harassment

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 or 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 substantially interfering with an individual's work or *study* performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working or *studying* environment.

Equal Employment Opportunity Commission section 703 of Title VII. Italicized words are added for the academic environment at the Course of Study School.

Procedures

The Course of Study School is committed to using the process outlined below to deal with 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 that 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 participation in the Course of Study School on that campus. In addition, the Director will inform the accuser'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 school 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 Course of Study School, s/he may express such dissatisfaction, in writing to Division of Ordained Ministry, General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, PO Box 340007, Nashville, TN 37203, 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 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 harassment.

Explanatory Notes

If the person alleged to have engaged in sexual harassment is the Director, then the person bringing the complaint shall notify one of the two 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 Harassment Policy

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 at the Course of Study School campus the following policy shall also apply.

The Course of Study School 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 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 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 judiciary body.

Definition of Racial Harassment

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

Procedures

The Course of Study School 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 committee 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 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 committee decides inappropriate behavior has occurred, after completing the investigation, the director takes appropriate disciplinary and/or other action related to participation in the Course of Study School on that campus. In addition, the Director will inform the annual conference or judicatory body of the action taken.

The 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.

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 Course of Study School, she/he may express such dissatisfaction, in writing to Division of Ordained Ministry, General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, PO Box 340007, Nashville, TN 37203, 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 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 racial harassment.

Explanatory Notes

If the person alleged to have engaged in racial harassment is the Director, then the person bringing the complaint shall notify one of the 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 racial harassment committee and to function as the director in the process outlined above.

INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE SUGGESTIONS

(Reviewed in 2001 by the Affirmative Action Committee, now Diversity and Equity Committee)

Situation/Examples of Common Usage	Consider Alternative	Comment
Using different language at Saint Paul than we might use when in the church or parish.	Use Saint Paul as a testing ground for developing ministry relationships and behaviors that will enhance present and future pastoral/ministry roles.	Modeling in our common life at Saint Paul the kind of language that reflects the Christian love we seek to develop in our congregations.
Titles, descriptions, generalizations, and stereotypes, i.e., Liberals, Fundies, Conservatives, Moderates, Aggies, Pollocks, and words or jokes that are offensive to persons of another gender, sexual orientation, race, ethnic group, or nationality.	Avoid jokes, stories, titles, or generalizations that make persons the object of ridicule or laughter. Choose, rather, to discover and honor what groups of persons prefer to be called. Remember that a person's name is almost always appropriate.	If you are offended by language others in the community have used, it is appropriate to speak assertively to those persons, without attacking, and inform them of how and why the language used was offensive to you.
Suspicion of persons who are of a different race, nationality, ethnic group, geographical region, religious affiliation, or theological perspective. Sometimes attributing beliefs and attitudes to them that are unfounded.	Engage persons whose life experiences, faith, or belief systems are different from your own in dialogue. Learn and respect the differences and similarities of each other's belief systems.	Only use generalizations and attributions to help you formulate questions. Avoid drawing conclusions on the basis of stereotypes. Rather, draw conclusions from information acquired from dialogue and discussion.
Traditional practice of using the male gender as the generic designation for persons when gender is unknown or in reference to groups of persons that include both males and females.	<p>Instead of <i>Man, Mankind</i>, try <i>Person(s), One, Humans, Human Beings, People, Humanity, Everyone, All, Us, We (Women and Men)</i>.</p> <p>Instead of <i>Forefathers</i>, try <i>Ancestors, Forebears (Foremothers and Forefathers)</i>.</p> <p>Instead of <i>He, Him</i> try changing the sentence to plural or use <i>She/He or Him/Her</i> (alternating).</p> <p>Instead of <i>Brother(s)</i>, try <i>Neighbor(s), Friends, or Sisters and Brothers</i>.</p> <p>Instead of <i>Man's Achievements</i>, try <i>Human Achievements</i>.</p> <p>Instead of <i>Grow to Manhood</i>, try <i>Grow to Adulthood</i>.</p>	Of course, when the reference is to a group where all are of the same gender the gender-specific designation is appropriate. When the reference is to a person whose gender is known, the gender-specific pronoun is appropriate. In other circumstances the appropriate action is to find an appropriate inclusive word or phrase to use.

<p>When persons are linked together in marriage or on the same staff the male-gender designation is often given prominence and the female allocated a secondary one.</p>	<p>Instead of <i>Man and Wife</i>, try <i>Husband and Wife</i>. Instead of referring to a couple as <i>Mr. and Mrs. John Doe</i>, try <i>Mr. John and Mrs. Jane Doe</i>; or <i>M/M Jane and John Doe</i>; or if the wife is retaining her legal name prior to marriage, try <i>M/M Jane Smith and John Doe</i>.</p> <p>Instead of beginning a general letter to ministers in a conference as <i>Gentlemen</i>, use <i>Ministers or Men and Women or Pastors or Church Leaders</i>, etc. When referring to a couple where one has a doctorate and the other does not, use <i>Mr. Ralph and Dr. Elizabeth Smith</i>.</p>	
<p>When referring to ministers, law-makers, or other officials the male ending of a word is commonly used, i.e., <i>ClergyMan</i>, <i>policeMen</i>, <i>CongressMan</i>, <i>fireMan</i>, etc.</p>	<p>Instead of <i>Clergyman</i>, use <i>Clergy</i> or <i>Clergyperson</i>.</p> <p>Instead of <i>Chairman</i>, use <i>Chair</i> or <i>Chairperson</i>.</p> <p>Instead of <i>Congressman</i>, use <i>Representative</i> or <i>Congressperson</i>.</p> <p>Instead of <i>Policeman</i>, use <i>Police Officer</i>.</p> <p>Instead of <i>Firemen</i>, use <i>Fire Fighter</i>.</p>	
<p>In an attempt to move away from sexist language some use terms like <i>Chairperson</i> or <i>Clergy Person</i> to refer to females and <i>Chairman</i> or <i>Clergyman</i> to refer to males.</p>	<p>Instead of using a nonsexist word, try using words such as <i>Chairperson</i> or <i>Clergyperson</i>, etc. to refer to persons of both genders.</p>	<p>Be consistent in the use of inclusive and nonsexist language.</p>
<p>Traditionally terms used in worship and in Scripture for God are exclusively male in gender. A thorough analysis of Biblical texts reveals that metaphors and names for God include male and female images. Speaking of God as only male or female limits God to human traditions. Many feel that words such as He and Father are inadequate to describe all of God's qualities as God relates to human beings.</p>	<p>Instead of using <i>He</i> or <i>She</i>, use <i>God</i>. Example: "When <i>God</i> created the heavens and the earth, <i>God</i> looked at what <i>God</i> had done and said..."</p> <p>Instead of <i>The Heavenly Father</i> some use <i>The Heavenly Parent</i> or <i>Mother/Father</i>.</p>	<p>While this may not be good sentence construction, it avoids the gender-specific problem.</p> <p>This maintains the warmth of the relationship while avoiding the gender-specific problem.</p>
<p>Some words that have been traditionally used to show honor and respect for God's authority may be exclusive rather than inclusive, i.e., <i>King</i>, <i>Lord</i>, <i>Master</i>.</p>	<p>Instead of <i>King</i>, some use <i>Sovereign</i></p> <p>Instead of <i>King of Kings</i> and <i>Lord of Lords</i>, some use <i>Sovereign of sovereigns</i> and <i>Ruler of Rulers</i>.</p> <p>Instead of the term <i>Lord God</i>, some use an English transliteration of the Hebrew word for God: <i>Yahweh</i> or <i>Jehovah Yahweh</i></p>	<p>A Sovereign can be a male or a female.</p> <p>A Sovereign and/or a Ruler can be a male or a female.</p> <p>This shows respect for God while avoiding the gender bias in an English-speaking culture.</p>

<p>Some (female and male) come to seminary with sensitivity to abuses that have been perpetrated by male authority figures in both secular and religious settings. They are offended by the use of male authority images and metaphors such as Lord, Father, King, etc., in worship.</p> <p>Others (female and male) come from traditions and personal life experiences where their own fathers, etc. as well as God the Father is perceived to be loving, kind, strong, warm and caring. They resent not being able to refer to God as their Father.</p>	<p>Instead of ignoring or criticizing these persons, try to practice the principle, <i>“Seek First To Understand, Then Seek To Be Understood.”</i></p> <p>Instead of confrontation follow the Scriptural admonition in Romans 12:10 <i>“Be kindly affectionate to one another with [sisterly/brotherly] love, in honor giving preference to one another.”</i></p>	<p>Respect for each other’s traditions, experiences and beliefs does not necessarily mean that you agree with them.</p>
<p>Most of the printed pictures of the women and men in the Bible tend to be of Caucasian or White persons. In reality, a search of the Scriptures reveals that there are no Caucasians listed among the major characters in the Hebrew Scriptures or the New Testament. They were all non-white.</p>	<p>Instead of thinking of Jesus and other biblical characters as exclusively white, Caucasian, Western Europeans, consider the fact that <i>God is the God of all Races and Nationalities and that the Message of the Gospel is for all Persons of all Skin Colors and Geographic Locations.</i></p>	
<p>Racial strife appears to be a common experience in many if not most communities in the United States. The conflict appears to be multifaceted. Persons of all skin colors testify to being the objects of discrimination.</p>	<p>Instead of ignoring the problem or hoping that it will go away, try to learn as much as possible about how <i>Racism</i> is experienced by the various groups, especially by African-Americans, and join others in the community who are trying to deal with their own racist attitudes and behaviors, while seeking for a way to reconcile the differences between the races.</p> <p>Instead of using colors to describe something as good or bad (black or red as bad or white as good) look for an alternative word that accomplishes the same objective.</p>	<p>Acquiring knowledge and understanding of the situation and making an intentional effort to bridge gaps can be spiritually, emotionally, and socially rewarding.</p>
<p>“Geezer bashing” seems to be a growing problem in the United States. Some have branded programs like Social Security and Medicare as “Geezerfare.” Older persons, regardless of race or gender, are often targets for discrimination and prejudice, even in the church. Mainline and other major denominations are “graying.”</p>	<p>Instead of <i>Elderly</i> try <i>Older Person</i> or <i>Senior Adult</i>.</p> <p>Instead of <i>Little Old Man or Woman</i> try <i>Older Men or Older Women</i> or practice calling persons by their names without using a qualifying adjective.</p>	

<p>In most communities there will be persons with some form of disability. They are like everyone else—except they happen to have a disability.</p>	<p>Instead of saying <i>The disabled</i>, try saying <i>People with Disabilities</i>.</p> <p>Instead of using derogatory descriptive words such as mute or dumb, slow, crazy or insane, etc. refer to the specific disability as a condition not as a personality trait.</p>	