Module Vision Statement:

This course is specifically designed for the person entering pastoral ministry. However, it would benefit anyone who will be employed by the church or who desires an understanding of the Church of the Nazarene, its history, membership, and how it operates. *History and Polity of the Church of the Nazarene* is a prerequisite and foundation for the doing of ministry. The course is designed to produce understanding of the identity of the Church, what is membership and how one becomes a member, and how the Church operates at its various levels of local, district and general. Theoretical insight and practical knowledge are a must for the wide range of tasks which the pastor faces.

**Unit 1** of these lessons considers the historical identity of the Church of the Nazarene. Our understanding of the Church of the Nazarene needs to be grounded in a biblical understanding of what it means to be the Church. It is both in faithful continuity with the New Testament Church and the result of the creative work of the Holy Spirit in history. As we review the development of key formative influences and doctrines through history, we can observe the particular and distinctive development of the Church of the Nazarene. In this way, we can see the particular and distinctive understanding of who we are and of our place in the broader Church. We also will be able to engage effectively in the ongoing dialogue of our identity. We can examine the core values of our Church: Christian, Missional, and Holiness. We understand ourselves as a Protestant church in the Wesleyan-Holiness tradition that was formed initially as an organization out of the American Holiness Movement. Worldwide adaptations of this section should incorporate materials from their personal world area.

**Unit 2** considers the questions of membership in the church. The *Manual* sets forth that membership should be based upon a personal faith in Jesus Christ, a commitment to the distinctive doctrines and practices of the church, and a willingness to work with the administrative structure. Our participation in the Church of the Nazarene is rooted in a profession of personal faith in Jesus Christ. For adults, this profession should be affirmed in the sacrament of baptism. Membership, itself, in the Church of the Nazarene, is a covenant with the church and the commitment of our calling. This includes our doctrines as expressed in our foundational Agreed Statement of Belief and the expanded Articles of Faith. Of central importance to our tradition is the call to a radical commitment to Holiness, life reflecting the likeness of Christ. This call is a biblical imperative to all disciples and the General Rules and the Covenant of Christian Conduct serve to guide and inform our realization of that calling. The work of the church in worship, sacraments, and other means of nurture and spiritual disciplines serve to form our lives into Christlikeness. Every pastor should understand the
meaning of our covenant in membership, be personally committed to it, and be able to lead new believers into membership.

**Unit 3** discusses the polity or government of the church. The context of our church government has been a representative form of government with shared authority between laity and elder. The office of superintendent has been the primary mode of oversight. Ministry is the responsibility of both laity and elder. The church affirms the divine call for pastoral ministry, recognizes various tracks of ministry, and sets forth a program that leads to ordination. The work within the local church is governed by the *Manual.* The church also operates on a district and general level.

**Educational Assumptions**

1. The work of the Holy Spirit is essential to any process of Christian education at any level. We will consistently request and expect the Spirit’s presence within and among us.
2. Christian teaching and learning is best done in the context of community (people being and working together). Community is the gift of the Spirit but may be enhanced or hindered by human effort. Communities have common values, stories, practices, and goals. Explicit effort will be invested to enhance community within the class. Group work will take place in every lesson.
3. Every adult student has knowledge and experiences to contribute to the class. We learn not only from the instructor and the reading assignments, but also from each other. Each student is valued not only as a learner but also as a teacher. That is one reason so many exercises in this course are cooperative and collaborative in nature.
4. Journaling is an ideal way to bring theory and practice together as students synthesize the principles and content of the lessons with their own experiences, preferences, and ideas.

**Outcome Statements**

This module assists the student to develop the following required abilities as defined in the *U.S. Sourcebook for Ministerial Development.* Below each competency are listed specific abilities for the course, which correspond with each particular competency. It must be recognized that the listed abilities below each competency do not necessarily comprehend the entire range of the competency addressed in the lessons.

- Ability to articulate the collective conscience of the Church of the Nazarene and how it is to be communicated to our generation.
- Ability to understand and communicate the distinctive identity and mission of the Church of the Nazarene, to provide a rationale for its existence, and to explain why it came into existence in its present form.
- Ability to understand and communicate the identity the Church of the Nazarene shares with the universal church.
- Ability to understand who can become a member of the Church of the Nazarene, what it means to be a member, and how one can do so.
- Ability to plan and lead a membership class.
- Ability to explain and function within the governmental structures of the church at the local, district, and general level.
- Ability to understand the meaning of ministry, the call and responsibilities of a minister, and the process of becoming ordained within the Church of the Nazarene.
- Ability to use the *Manual* in the service of the Church.
Required Texts


Course Requirements

1. **Class attendance, attention, and participation** are especially important. Students are responsible for all assignments and in-class work. Much of the work in this course is small-group work. Cooperative, small-group work cannot be made up. That makes attendance imperative. Even if one does extra reading or writing, the values of discussion, dialogue, and learning from each other are thwarted. If one lesson is missed, the instructor will require extra work before completion can be acknowledged. If two or more classes are missed, the student will be required to repeat the whole module.

2. **Assignments**

   **Journaling:** The only ongoing assignment for this module is your journal. It is to be used regularly, if not daily. On at least one occasion during the term, the instructor will check the journals. In each lesson a journal assignment is included.

   This journal is not a diary, not a catchall. It is, rather, a guided journal or a focused journal in which the educational experience and its implications are selected for reflection and writing.

   The framers of this curriculum are concerned about the way that students fall into learning “about” the Bible, or “about” the spiritual life rather than learning—that is coming to know and internalize the Bible and spiritual principles. The journaling experience ensures that the “Be” component of “Be, Know, and Do” is present in the course of study. Be faithful with all journaling assignments.

   **Daily Work:** This module has regular homework assignments. It is called daily work because even though the class may only meet once a week, the student should be working on the module on a “daily” basis. Sometimes the homework assignments are quite heavy. The assignments are important. Even if homework is not discussed in class every session, the work is to be handed in. This gives the instructor regular information about the student’s progress in the course. The normal time for homework to be handed in is at the beginning of each class session. All assignments are to be completed.

   The lesson homework assignments are designed to prepare the students for each upcoming lesson. Since the original directive for this module requires that it be “textbook” independent, the homework assignments serve to acquaint the student with key material for the upcoming lesson, as well as involve the student in critical interaction with the material. Student sharing from the product of their homework assignments has been integrated into the structure of many lessons. All assignments should be typed or written out, and brought to class the session in which they are due.
# Course Outline and Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session Date</th>
<th>Lesson Schedule</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>March 10</td>
<td>Lessons 1 - 3</td>
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<td>March 17</td>
<td>Lessons 4 - 6</td>
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<td>March 24</td>
<td>Lessons 7 - 9</td>
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<td>April 7</td>
<td>Lessons 10 - 12</td>
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<td>April 21</td>
<td>Lessons 13 - 15</td>
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<td>April 28</td>
<td>Lessons 16 - 17 &amp; Review</td>
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## Unit 1: Who We Are: Nazarene Identity in History
1. Nazarenes and the Church
2. Historical Development: Reformation and the Wesleyan Movement
3. Formation of the Church of the Nazarene
4. Church of the Nazarene in Local and Regional History
5. Defining Issues of the 20th and 21st Centuries

## Unit 2: Membership: What it Means to be Part of the Church of the Nazarene and the Procedure for Uniting with the Church
6. Becoming a Disciple
7. Membership as Covenant in Community
8. Commitment to Shared Vision of Lifestyle
9. Becoming a Member

## Unit 3: How the Church Functions: Polity of Governance
10. How the Church Functions
11. Lay Ministry
12. Pastoral Ministry
13. Local Church: Pastoral Relations
14. Local Church Administration
15. The District Church
16. The General Church
17. What Is the Church of the Nazarene?

## Additional Information

A reasonable effort to assist every student will be made. Any student who has handicaps, learning disabilities, or other conditions that make the achievement of the class requirements exceedingly difficult should make an appointment with the instructor as soon as possible to see what special arrangements can be made. Any student who is having trouble understanding the assignments, lectures, or other learning activities should talk to the instructor to see what can be done to help.

## Instructor’s Availability

Good faith efforts to serve the students both in and beyond the classroom will be made.
Bibliography


Board of the General Superintendents. *Membership Search, Audit, and Care.* Church of the Nazarene, Kansas City, Missouri.


Commission Reports and General Assembly Addresses are published in the *General Assembly Journal* for each assembly. The following reports and General Assembly addresses are cited and may be of special interest.


Pastor’s Report. The General Secretary’s office electronically mails an address to the local pastor, who then files his or her local church report online annually. The 2001 address was http://nazmrc.nazarene.org/dup. The address may change each year. For a paper copy of the report contact either the General Secretary’s office or a district office.


Wesley, John. These sermons by John Wesley are available in full text on the Wesley Center website at NNU: http://wesley.nnu.edu/sermons/alphabet.htm. The sermon titles are listed in alphabetical order.
  • “Christian Perfection” (Sermon 40)
  • "On Patience" (Sermon 83)
  • "Repentance in Believers" (Sermon 14)
  • "Scripture Way of Salvation" (Sermon 43)
