

# Hispanic Christian Academy (HCA)

Student Handbook **2016** | **2017**

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Spirit Led, Renewing the Church!

United Theological Seminary • 4501 Denlinger Road • Dayton, Ohio 45426



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## 1. Welcome

Greetings brothers and sisters in the name of God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

The School for Discipleship and Renewal (SDR) welcomes you to the Hispanic Christian Academy. The purpose of SDR as the missional arm of United Theological Seminary is to provide enrichment and training in practical ministry for clergy, lay leaders and congregations. Our goal is to renew, retool, refuel and refresh the Church for the mission of Jesus Christ to make disciples for the transformation of the world. We believe that you will find this learning experience to be an opportunity to be challenged and to grow in your call and preparation for ministry. Allow the Lord to use this as a time of equipping and impartation. May God grant you grace and strength for the journey.

Grace and Peace,  
Rev. Peter Bellini, Ph.D.  
Director of Non-Degree Programs

## 2. Who We Are

### Our mission

The Hispanic Christian Academy (HCA), part of United Theological Seminary's Center for Hispanic/Latino Ministries, is designed to impact the local church by equipping and training Hispanic leaders to serve as lay pastors and leaders. It is a three-year Course of Ministry program taught online in Spanish or English. The basic curriculum includes: Bible, Theology, Church and Mission, and Ministry.

The Hispanic Christian Academy intends to:

- Educate church leaders in foundational knowledge and practical training for ministry
- Equip and train leaders in Scriptural preaching, teaching, ministry and pastoral care
- Encourage personal spiritual growth of leaders to mature in Christ
- Train leaders to equip and train others for serving in ministry
- Encourage leaders to high standards of integrity

### Our history

In February 2013 United Theological Seminary (United) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Global Empowerment Ministries (GEM) to launch the first Regional Online Campus (ROC) of the Hispanic Christian Academy. The HCA had been housed under GEM, with the support of the Kentucky Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church. In the spring of that year 17 students from Kentucky took two HCA courses online.

In April 2013 the Northwest Texas Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church signed an MOU with United, expanding the ministry to more Hispanic

leaders, equipping them for ministry. That fall 16 students completed their first HCA course.

#### Our structure

United seeks to partner with already established church agencies to bring the HCA to their area, forming an ROC. Memoranda of Understanding are written between United and the agency to set up the terms for scholarships and financing, recruitment of students, provision and training of Instructors, and administrative needs.

United will also partner with students who apply on an individual basis and will work to provide necessary support and scholarships.

### 3. Key Terms

- a. **Regional HCA Partner:** any organization/denomination United partners with to offer the HCA to that group/area
- b. **Regional Online Campus (ROC):** locations outside of the Dayton campus of United where HCA courses are offered through our Regional HCA Partners
- c. **Non-Degree Programs:** programs or courses offered at United that offer continuing education units (CEUs) or certificates of completion but do not provide graduate level credit or degrees
- d. **School for Discipleship and Renewal (SDR):** one of the two areas under Non-Degree Programs which houses several centers providing enrichment and training in practical ministry for clergy, lay leaders and congregations through continuing education courses and events
- e. **Center for Hispanic/Latino Ministries (CHLM):** housed under the School for Discipleship and Renewal, the CHLM aims to reach, empower, educate and support the ministry to Hispanics/Latinos through programs, events, and theological education
- f. **Memorandum of Understanding (MOU):** a written agreement between United and an ROC or other entity that defines the terms for scholarships and financing, recruitment of students, provision and training of Instructors, and administrative needs
- g. **ROC Assistant:** the point person from an ROC that works with United staff to handle the administrative responsibilities needed to manage the HCA in their location
- h. **United Online:** the learning portal of United and the department that works with the technology and online aspects to assist students, staff and faculty as needed
- i. **HCA Online Student Orientation Course (OSO):** the online orientation course offered to all new students which teaches them to use the online portal for their courses

### 4. Program Description

The program consists of 12 online courses offered over a 3-year period. Each online course will be equivalent to two credit hours (this equals 2.4 CEUs per course). The duration of each course is an 8-week term, with two terms

offered back to back per semester. Students will receive a Certificate of Completion in Theology and Ministry after the 12 courses have been completed. The program is offered in Spanish or in English.

- Note: All Spanish courses are taught from a culturally Hispanic perspective and will seek to express and interact with a variety of viewpoints within that perspective.

The following is an outline of the 3-year program courses:

FOCUS	Year One	Year Two	Year Three
<b>Bible</b>	101 Strategies of Bible Reading	201 Old Testament	301 New Testament
<b>Theology</b>	102 Introduction to Christian Theology	202 Early & Medieval Church	302 From the Reformation to the Contemporary Church
<b>Church &amp; Mission</b>	103 Basic Principles of Church Life	203 Congregational Discipleship	303 Mission: Evangelism, Outreach & Transformation
<b>Ministry</b>	104 Leadership & Administration	204 Preaching & Teaching	304 Pastoral Care

- Note: United's fiscal year runs in conjunction with the academic year. It begins July 1 and ends June 30 each year. Each academic year is made up of two semesters, Fall and Spring. HCA's semesters, comprised of two 8-week terms offered back to back within each semester, are referred to as Fall A or Fall B and Spring A or Spring B.

5. Contact Information of HCA Staff

HCA Coordinator: Erin Gildner ([ergildner@united.edu](mailto:ergildner@united.edu) / 937-529-2382)

HCA Director: Dr. Peter Bellini ([pbellini@united.edu](mailto:pbellini@united.edu) / 937-529-2201)

6. Applying and Registering

a. The Application Process

- All students who wish to apply for the program must complete the online application found on the HCA web page (<http://united.edu/hispanic-christian-academy/>) or click on the following direct link: (<http://united.force.com/HispanicChristianAcademyApplication>)
- **IMPORTANT: Each student MUST have a working email account which must be entered correctly on the application.**

- Please be sure to submit the application one time only to prevent repeated records from being created.
- All fields marked with a red line are required fields.
- The HCA Coordinator approves the applications.

b. Preparing to Register

- Once the student is approved/confirmed, they are sent to their personal email account a welcome and first step email as well as an email with their credentials.
- Students are issued a United email account. This account will be the main form of communication used by all United personnel and course notifications from United Online.
- Students receive a “Next Steps” email in their United email accounts that outlines instructions for registering.
- Students are automatically enrolled in the HCA Online Student Orientation course. All new students are required to work through this course which teaches some of the necessary skills and practical tips for preparing them to take their HCA courses online.
- Students are expected to take HCA courses in sequential order, beginning with 100 level courses, followed by 200, then 300 level courses. A student who desires to take a course out of order, such as a 300 level course before a 200 level course, must get written permission from the HCA Director as well as the Instructor of the course.
- BIB 101 is a prerequisite for BIB 201, BIB 301, and MIN 204.
- THEO 102 is a prerequisite for THEO 202, THEO 302, and MIN 204.

c. Registering for Courses

- Registration opens 5 weeks before the courses begin.
- Students need to access the Student Portal and register for their course.
- Registration tutorials and videos are available on the HCA web page to assist students in registering.
- The HCA Coordinator must approve all requests for registrations.
- **NOTE: Students who have failed to pass any two courses must recover those two courses before advancing.**

7. Student Payment

- a. Students registering alone (not under an ROC) are billed for payment directly. Payment is due upon receipt of the statement.
- b. Students registering under an ROC will need to submit to their ROC all student portions of the course fees as determined by their ROC: the student’s portion of the tuition, any church sponsorship, the application fee (\$25, non-refundable, as applicable), and/or book fees. ROCs are billed for each term.

## 8. Drop/Add/Reimbursements

- a. Students may **add** a course *only* within the first week after the course has begun. Students must add the course from the Student Portal.
- b. A student wishing to add a course after the first week is to make a formal request to the HCA Coordinator with the support of their ROC to receive written permission.
- c. Students may **drop** a course *only* within the first week of the course to receive full reimbursement for the tuition fees of the course (this excludes the \$25 application fee). The student is to drop the course from the Student Portal.
- d. **HCA's refund policy: student tuition and conference scholarships are refundable if the student withdraws from the course within the first week of the course.**

## 9. Inactive Students

Students who are inactive for one full year (4 consecutive terms) will be considered officially withdrawn from the program and will be given an official withdrawal notice. They will need to submit a new application in order to reenroll in the program and will be charged another \$25 application fee.

## 10. Enrichment Event

- a. ROCs are encouraged to coordinate an Enrichment Event with Instructors and enrolled students prior to the beginning of each term. (e.g., Fall A and Fall B)
- b. The Enrichment Event should be a time of orientation, community and fellowship between Instructors, students, ROC personnel and United staff.
- c. The Enrichment Event should include training on the online course technology for new students, including the HCA Online Student Orientation course.
- d. ROCs are highly encouraged to include a time of worship, spiritual formation, team building, and community meals.

## 11. Ministry Expectations

Students are highly encouraged to be in some form of supervised ministry, under the leadership and supervision of their ROC.

## 12. Evaluations

Students are encouraged to complete the online evaluation of their course experience during the last week of each course. The student's response is anonymous. The Instructor receives the compiled results at the end of the term, once grades are submitted.

## 13. Tuition, Fees and Scholarships

United provides scholarships and other assistance as outlined in the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between United and each Regional Online Campus (ROC) or Regional Partner (RP) for students participating in the HCA. Students can receive a scholarship from their regional agency and/or United. Other assistance includes the student's local church.

**United will not scholarship a student twice for the same course.**

Students whose financial obligations are not paid in full are not eligible to register for the next term or receive transcripts, grades or their Certificate in Theology and Ministry.

All costs for books and computers are the responsibility of the student or ROC; United does not provide scholarships or aid for these items.

The following is the breakdown of student fees:

- \$25 – one-time, non-refundable application fee
- \$350 – fee per course

Any US Veteran may apply for benefits towards this program under Chapter 30, 31, 33, 1606 or 1607 of the GI Bill. Please contact the HCA Coordinator who will direct them to United's Registrar for assistance.

14. Grading system

Quality of Performance		Grade	Numerical Value	Grade-Point Equivalent
Excellent	Exceptional achievement	A	95-100	4.00
		A-	90-94	3.67
		B+	88-89	3.33
Good	Extensive achievement	B	84-87	3.00
		B-	80-83	2.67
		C+	75-79	2.33
Satisfactory	Acceptable achievement	C	70-74	2.00
Failure	Inadequate achievement	F	0-69	0.00

- a. **D**=Drop (refundable)
- b. **W**=Withdrawal (non-refundable)
- c. **I**=Incomplete
  - Incomplete grades may only be granted by the official request of a student for an extension at the end of the course to complete the course work. After 30 days the grade will be changed to either the earned grade or to an "F".
- d. **U/W**=Unofficial Withdrawal
  - A student who ceases to participate in the course before the completion of 60% of the course will receive a U/W. A student who has submitted work past the 60% mark of the course will receive whatever grade he/she has earned, including an "F".
  - A student who registered for the course but did not officially drop or withdraw from the course will receive a U/W.
- e. **Students can view their final grades in the Student Portal.**

### 15. Advanced Standing

Previous theological studies may be recognized with credit applied to the HCA Certificate in Theology and Ministry. A maximum of one half of the program (6 courses) may have credit applied towards the HCA Certificate.

The written petition for advanced standing must be accompanied by the appropriate documentation of previous studies. The evaluation will be based on a comparison of the course learning objectives. The Director of the Hispanic Christian Academy has the final decision on all cases.

### 16. Single Courses for Continuing Education Credit (CEUs)

Persons who are not enrolled in the Certificate program may take individual courses for continuing education credit (CEU). Each course is 2.4 CEUs. This provision is designed for persons who already have their basic theological education.

In addition to the application and course fees, the student must pay the \$10 CEU fee and fill out the designated form.

### 17. Student Conduct Policy

- a. Students are expected to follow the Sexual Harassment Policy as well as the Academic Honor Policy as outlined in the following sections.
- b. Students are to use the course portal for class use only, respecting and honoring others.
- c. Sexual harassment

United Theological Seminary is a Christian institution that considers human relationships to be sacred and the human body to be holy. Therefore, it seeks to create a safe, grace-filled environment for all persons in which human worth and relationships are honored and respected.

It is the policy of United Theological Seminary to provide all of the members of its community (students, faculty, staff, consultants, mentors, facilitators, field education supervisors, employees, and anyone acting on behalf of the Seminary) with an environment free of sexual harassment and its interference with their comfort or performance in the classroom or the workplace. Any behavior that constitutes sexual harassment is a violation of human dignity and rights and will not be tolerated.

Sexual harassment in the workplace is a prohibited practice under Section 703 of Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act as amended by the Equal Employment Opportunity Act of 1973. In 1980, The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission established guidelines, revised in 1990, which defined sexual harassment as a form of illegal sexual discrimination. In 1986 the Supreme Court of the United States and the state of Ohio adopted the EEOC's definition of sexual harassment in the guidelines and ruled that sexual harassment on the job is illegal discrimination even if the victim suffers no economic loss.

Sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

1. Submission to such conduct is used either explicitly or implicitly as a condition of employment, admission as a student to the school, or participation in any program or activity;
2. Submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as a basis for employment decisions, such as promotion, demotion, or raises, or as a basis for academic decisions, such as grades, evaluations, or references;
3. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working or academic environment. Examples of acts that create a hostile environment include, but are not limited to, repeated unwelcome sexual comments or advances, inappropriate or unwelcome and uninvited touching, repeated unwanted asking for dates, taunts regarding sexual preference, taunting jokes directed to a person by reason of their gender, obscene posters, threats, and favoritism based on gender. One's intent of behavior may not coincide with and does not supersede the effect of the behavior upon another person.

Any person who is in the United workplace and/or the classroom and feels that s/he has suffered sexual harassment, is encouraged to issue a complaint and follow the steps as outlined in the Problem Clearance Procedure. Sexual harassment will not be tolerated and the sexual harassment policy will continue to be scrutinized so that the United community can be reasonably assured of a safe and enjoyable working and learning environment.

d. Academic Honor Policy

All students are expected to honor this policy.

The following is taken from United's student handbook:

**Academic Integrity:** United Theological Seminary is an institution of graduate theological education affiliated with the United Methodist Church. The central purpose of United is the formation of pastors and leaders for the Christian ministry. Academic integrity is held in high esteem at United; it is considered one of the foundations of formation of Christian character in servant leadership for the Church.

Academic integrity is characterized by diligence and honesty in research, writing, preaching, and all communications related to worship and learning in this community. Several commonly used guides to research and writing are available in the library. Some instructors may include detailed guidelines in a syllabus, and others may simply refer to the writing

guides that are available. If you feel unprepared or uninformed about an instructor's expectations for academic performance, you may ask for clarification. All students will be held accountable for academic integrity.

Policy: This policy is in effect by the vote of the faculty and approved by the Board of Trustees as binding for all students of United Theological Seminary: degree and non-degree, all Masters Programs, and the Doctor of Ministry program. The purpose of this policy is to clarify and codify the rights and responsibilities inherent in the faculty-student relationship of this community. Academic integrity is integral to formation of Christian character in servant leadership for the church. Academic integrity is characterized by mutual respect, honest inquiry, and honesty in the discovery and dissemination of knowledge, including academic instruction, evaluation, study, research, writing, preaching and all communications related to worship and learning in this community. Dishonesty in academic work is a serious violation of scholarship and community, just as stealing another person's property is illegal and harmful to persons. Students are to accept, embrace, and live in harmony with the concept of academic integrity. Academic integrity includes fair and impartial evaluations on the part of faculty and honest conduct on the part of students. Consistent with Christian and academic standards, the following conduct is expected:

1. Faculty and students are expected to attend classes when scheduled, keep scheduled appointments, make appropriate preparations for classes and other meetings, students should submit assignments when due and faculty should perform evaluations and grading in a timely manner.
2. Faculty should use reasonable accuracy in describing course expectations and standards of evaluation, inclusive of the limits of permissible assistance available to students during a course or academic evaluation.
3. Academic evaluations should be based upon good-faith professional judgment in accordance with applicable standards.
4. Cheating, fraud, and plagiarism are three types of academic dishonesty that are a violation of this policy inasmuch as the integrity of the academic process requires that credit be given where credit is due.

Cheating may include stealing another person's answers to items on an examination or breaking rules in order to gain an advantage, as well as providing assistance during an academic evaluation. Cheating includes engaging in the intentional and unauthorized purchase, sale, or use of any materials intended to be used as an instrument of academic evaluation in advance of its administration and engaging in conduct that is so disruptive as to infringe upon the rights of faculty members or fellow students.

Fraud is also known in biblical language as "bearing false witness" and may include lying; giving false information in admission documents;

altering records of grades and narrative evaluations; misrepresenting your status in relation to the Seminary in any setting of course work, contextual education, Clinical Pastoral Education, Intercultural trip, or other off-campus Seminary related experience; acting as or utilizing a substitute for another person in any academic evaluation; and attempting to influence or change your academic evaluation or record for reasons other than achievement or merit.

**Plagiarism is submitting the work, ideas, representations, or words of another and claiming it as your own, such as copying text from a book or journal, copying text posted on an internet site, or purchasing a paper from someone (a “paper mill”). Plagiarism can also be called “stealing,” as in the practice of claiming as your own the information or results of research projects that were actually conducted by someone else. Plagiarism is also knowingly permitting another to present your own work without customary and proper acknowledgement of the source.**

Violations of this policy may have serious consequences for students as explained in the procedures below.

Instructors are encouraged to post a reference to this policy, a statement of standards for assignments, and consequences for violation of the policy and course standards in their syllabi. Not doing so does not constitute exemption of anyone from adherence to this policy or the enactment of the procedures described below. For additional information, students may find helpful the discussion of intellectual honesty in Vyhmeister's guide.

## 18. Student Records

Records on each student are found on the Student Portal. Students can make changes to their personal information at any time on the Student Portal. Students are also able to print their degree audits and/or unofficial transcripts from the Student Portal.

Under the provisions of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (Buckley Amendment, FERPA), students have the right to inspect and review their educational records held by United and to request correction of any inaccurate data. (<http://www.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/index.html>)

Due to FERPA regulations United will disclose student information only to those who are authorized and have legitimate need for such information. No records will be released without a written consent from the student. No third party requests will be honored without a signed waiver. Scholarship-granting agencies will be informed of failed grades and incomplete courses.

APPENDIX A

**STUDENT ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM**

The HCA Student Handbook describes important information about the Hispanic Christian Academy and United. Since the information, policies, and benefits described here are necessarily subject to change, I acknowledge that revisions to the handbook may occur. All such changes will be communicated through official notices, and I understand that revised information may supersede, modify, or eliminate existing policies.

I have received the HCA Student Handbook, and I understand that it is my responsibility to read and comply with the policies contained in this handbook and any revisions made to it.

STUDENT'S NAME (printed): \_\_\_\_\_

STUDENT'S SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_