

The United Methodist Church
Memphis/Tennessee/Holston Conferences Course of Study

Theology in the Wesleyan Spirit
COS 112

Instructor: Rev'd Dr Robert Webster

Fridays: 6.30-9.00 p.m.

Saturdays 8.00 a.m.-Noon, 1.15-4.45 p.m.

April 19-20, 2013

May 17-18, 2013

Martin Methodist College

Pulaski, Tennessee

Theology in the Wesleyan Spirit COS 112

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Teacher's Bio

I have been a minister in the Tennessee Annual Conference for twenty-years and served a variety of small and large churches. Additionally, I have earned a B.A. (The Methodist College-Fayetteville, NC) in Philosophy and Religion; M.Div. (Vanderbilt University-Nashville, TN.); M.A. (University of the South-Sewanee, TN.) in Historical Theology; and D. Phil. (Oxford University-Oxford, United Kingdom) in Ecclesiastical History. I currently teach Methodist Doctrine, History, and Polity at the University of the South in Sewanee, TN. In addition to serving as the lead pastor at Ashland City United Methodist Church. I have taught Methodist Theology in the Course of Study Program for three years.

Objectives

The objectives of this course are as follows:

- To provide a general understanding of theology and its importance for an understanding for ministry and proclamation.
- To show the particular contribution that the rise and development of the Methodist movement made to Christian history and theology.
- To examine the cultural and social implications of key theological doctrines which have been emphasized in Wesleyan and Methodist history.
- To expose the student to some of the key methods of inquiry and important theological sources for further investigation into Methodist theology and history.

Assigned Readings

The following texts are **required** for the course and *need to be read thoroughly* before the meeting of the classes.

The Book of Discipline (2008). Nashville: The United Methodist Publishing House, 2004.

Gunter, W. Stephen, et. al., *Wesley and the Quadrilateral: Renewing the Conversation*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1997. ISBN 0-687-06055-9.

Heitzenrater, Richard P., *Wesley and the People Called Methodists*, Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995, ISBN 0-687-44311-3.

Richey, Russell, et. al. *Marks of Methodism: Theology in Ecclesial Practice*. Volume 5 in United Methodism and American Culture Series. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2005. ISBN 0-687-32939-6.

Strong, Douglas. et. al. *Reclaiming the Wesleyan Tradition: John Wesley's Sermons for Today*. Nashville: Discipleship Resources, 2008. ISBN 978-0-88177-519-8.

Webster, Robert. *Methodism and the Miraculous: John Wesley's Idea of the Supernatural and the Identification of Methodists in the Eighteenth Century*. Wilmore: Emeth Press, 2012.

Requirements

Attendance is mandatory for all sessions and can only be excused by an emergency. Written Work and Class Participation shall be a part of the overall class work and your evaluation will be evaluated on these two aspects of the students contribution. All papers are expected to be written in good English grammar and turned in on time. If a student turns in a paper late, the grade will be lowered one letter grade for every week the assignment is late. Written comments and grades on papers will be evaluated for style and content. **Note: All written work should be placed in an envelope with your name, address, and telephone number clearly printed on the outside in a way that it can be mailed back to the student by the professor after grading and handed to the instructor at the beginning of the class.**

Pre-Class Assignments (Due at First Session in April 19, 2013)

- A written evaluation of the Methodists doctrinal heritage as included in pp. 41-86 of *The Book of Discipline* (2012). What is Methodism's strengths and weaknesses for the modern world? **One copy should be presented to instructor at class time.**

- An Aldersgate Sunday Sermon which celebrates the history and heritage of some aspect of John Wesley's life and ministry suitable for proclamation in the local church. This sermon manuscript should be instructional **and** inspirational. It should also be written in a concise grammatical style and no longer than 6-7 pages in length (1500-1750 words). **One copy should be presented to instructor at class time.**
- An essay describing the students view of the "quadrilateral" based on Gunter's book, *Wesley and the quadrilateral: Renewing the Conversation*. What do you think is the value of the quadrilateral in the mission and ministry of the church in the modern world? Which authors did you find most helpful in understanding the quadrilateral? Which least helpful? Why or Why not? This essay should be between 5-7 (1250-1750 words) pages double spaced with footnotes at the bottom of the page. **Two copies should be brought to class. One for use with a roundtable discussion and one to be handed into the instructor.**

Pre-Class Assignment (Due at Second Session in May 17, 2013)

- Write a book review on Webster's *Methodism and the Miraculous*, 10-15 pages (2,500-3,750 words). How does the author view the importance of a belief in the supernatural for Methodists living in the eighteenth century? How did this belief contribute to their own religious self-understanding? **Bring one copy for instructor at class.**
- Work through Strong's *Reclaiming the Wesleyan Heritage* that deals with Wesley's sermons. We will use this book in small group discussion.
- Write a narrative paper (2 pages, 500 words) outlining the major items you have gained from the course. What new things did you learn from this course about Methodist theology? What opinions did you change your mind about or are currently struggling and thinking about in regard to Methodist theology?

Course Outline

Session One: Friday, April 19, 2013

6.30-9.30 p.m.

Introductory Overview of the Course

Presentation: "*The Theological Importance of the Past for the Future*".

Conferencing around the Table: A Discussion of Major themes of the Evangelical Movement and how Methodism in the eighteenth century contribute to this theological movement, (*Book of Discipline*).

Session Two: Saturday, April 20, 2013
8.00 am-12.00 noon

Presentation: *“The Theological Implications of John Wesley’s Mission and Ministry”*.

Conferencing around the Table: What ideas of historical Methodism were fundamental in creating and sustaining the self-identification of Methodism in the eighteenth century. Has this self-identification survived or been modified in the modern world? (Heitzenraater).

Session Three: Saturday, April 20, 2013
1.15-4.45pm

Presentation: *Sine qua Non: The Wesleyan Idea of Grace*

Conferencing Around the Table: A Discussion of Grace and how it works in the life of the Church, How does the Quadrilateral aid in this? (Gunter)

Session Four: Friday, May 17, 2013
6.30-9.30pm

Presentation: *“The Wesleyan Idea of Proclamation and its Viability for a Theology of Conversion”*.

Round Table Conferencing: Discuss some of Wesley’s Sermons (Strong) relating not only their content but in what ways you think they served to formulate a Methodist Identity of Conversion.

Session Five: Saturday, May 18, 2013
8.00-12.00noon

Presentation: *“The Healing Nature of the Eucharist in Wesleyan Theology”*.

Round Table Discussion: Discuss and review Webster’s book and respond to how he views Methodism against the social background of its day. Is its strength merely as a historical movement or does it have something more to offer?

Session Six: Saturday, May 18, 2013
1.00-3.00pm

Presentation: *“Happiness and Holiness: The Theological Relevance of Methodism in the Modern World”*.

Round Table Discussion: Discuss how you think Methodism is theological relevant and irrelevant in the modern world using (Richey) as a source.

Session Seven: Saturday May 18, 2013
3.30-4.45pm

Pictorial Directory of Methodist History and Final Dialogues on the Meaning of Methodist Theology.

A Word About Grading

Evaluation will be given a numerical grading on written projects and tests. The following grading will be used.

A= 93-100

B = 80-92

C= 75-80

D= 70-75

F= Below 70

A Word about Honor

All local pastors taking classes through the Memphis/Tennessee/Holston Course of Study Extension Schools, at all locations, are expected to carefully read and adhere to the "Memphis/Tennessee/Holston Academic Honor Code" which is posted at the COS website: <http://www.martinmethodist.edu/ccl/education/courses/2010info>. All course assignments, including pre-work, must be submitted with a signed copy of the Academic Honor Code Cover Sheet. Assignments without a signed cover sheet will not be accepted. The Academic Honor Code, forms, and process are intended to support local pastors with course assignments and to provide a means of grace when dealing with issues and understandings about matters of academic integrity.

Please read the above statement very carefully. You should click the link provided and read the entire document with utmost seriousness. Any infraction will be dealt with in full measure. Each assignment turned in must have a signed sheet attached to it in order to receive credit in the course.