

Wesley Theological Seminary
Course of Study
CS-122 Theological Heritage I: Introduction
January Online and February 26-27, 2016

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Course Description

This course introduces students to theological reflection in the Wesleyan tradition. Basic terms, tasks, and methods of Christian theology will be introduced. Representative classical themes will be defined and illustrated. The course provides a foundation for further historical and theological study.

Goals

Students will be able to:

1. Examine their understanding of faith, sin, salvation, grace, and the place of doctrine in the life of the Church.
2. Use and understand classic theological terms and themes.
3. Consider critically the sources of theological reflection, including Scripture, tradition, reason, and experience.
4. Reflect theologically as a resource for pastoral ministry.

Required Texts

The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church 2012. Note: Cokesbury has a free version online. It is not very user-friendly, but since there will be a new *Book of Discipline* for 2016, I suggest using the online version if you do not already own a copy. I also recommend purchasing the 2016 *Book of Discipline* when it is published (likely late fall).

Campbell, Ted. *Methodist Doctrine: The Essentials* (2nd edition). Abingdon Press, 2011.

Gonzalez, Justo. *An Introduction to Christian Theology*.

Long, D. Stephen. *Keeping Faith: An Ecumenical Commentary on the Articles of Religion and Confession of Faith of The United Methodist Church*. Wipf & Stock, 2012.

Assignments

1. Before January online sessions begin:
 - a. Read Long, *Keeping Faith*,
 - b. Read from *The Book of Discipline 2012*: “Historical Statement” (starting on p.11), “Preamble” (p.23), and ¶1-7 (Constitution), ¶17-22 (Restrictive Rules), ¶102 (Our Doctrinal Heritage), and ¶104 (Our Doctrinal Standards and General Rules)
 - c. Email all written responses to: gorman.mark@gmail.com by 7:00 p.m. on January 3, 2016.

2. During the January online sessions:
 - a. Read Campbell, *Methodist Doctrine*.
 - i. Read chapters 1-2 by January 3
 - ii. Read chapters 3-4 by January 10
 - iii. Read chapters 5-6 by January 17
 - iv. Read chapter 7 by January 24
3. January online sessions: Each week in January you will participate in this course's Blackboard discussion forum. You must make a *minimum* of three posts each week on the forum. All posts are due by Friday night at 7:00 p.m. each week.
 - a. Your first post will be in response to a prompt from me, the professor. Each Sunday night I will submit a question, or a quotation from the readings, and ask you to respond to that prompt. Your answer each week should be about a paragraph long.
 - b. Your second post will come from you directly. This post may be a reflection or a question about something you have read, or, starting in the second week of posts, it may be about something that you have noticed in the conversation from our online discussions. If it is a reflection, it should be at least 3-4 sentences. If it is a question, you should ask the question and then explain, in 2-4 sentences, why you are asking your question.
 - c. Your third post will be a response to a post from one of your other classmates. Your response should be at least 3-4 sentences. You may respond either to something one of your classmates has said in response to my prompt for the week or to a question or reflection that comes directly from your classmates.
 - d. You are encouraged to respond to multiple posts from your classmates or to continue a discussion thread from a response to your own post. Do not feel obligated to respond to every post each week.
 - e. You are expected to read all posts, whether from me or your classmates.
 - f. In all online interactions you are expected to engage topics with the same level of courtesy, seriousness, and respect you would use if we were meeting face-to-face.
4. Before the February weekend meeting in Washington, D.C.:
 - a. Read Gonzalez, *Theology*
 - b. Read from *The Book of Discipline* ¶103 (Our Doctrinal History) and 104 (Our Theological Task)
 - c. Complete the following Preparatory Assignment, to be turned in at the beginning of our Friday, February 26, afternoon meeting:
 - i. Write a one-page summary for each of the following chapters in Gonzalez, *Theology*: Chapter II (Who is God?), Chapter IV (Who is Jesus Christ?), Chapter V (What is the Church?), and Chapter VI (How Does the Church Live?). Your summary should highlight only the most important parts of each of these chapters, but you should conclude each summary with one question that you have about the chapter.
 - ii. Pick 4 authors from the list of "Authors Cited" at the back of Gonzalez, *Theology*. Search online to find out more about those authors. Write down, to turn in, the titles of 2 or 3 books or other works written by each of the authors you have selected. Cite your sources. No Wikipedia.

- iii. Drawing on all the readings, create a 3- to 4-page outline of a Sunday School class on United Methodist Doctrine. Your Sunday School class should be 6 weeks long. For each week, you should tell me what topics you would cover as well as the major points you would want to make for each topic (see a brief example on the last page of this syllabus). Give your Sunday School class a creative name or title. Then, write a 1 or 2 paragraph description of your Sunday School class that you could use in your church newsletter or bulletin as advertisement to draw attendance.
- d. Due March 4 at 5:00 p.m.: Write a 2-page reflection paper on the following questions: What is the most important thing you learned about United Methodist doctrine in this course? What are you still struggling to understand? In addition to further work in the Course of Study, where might you turn to help you with your struggles? How do you think United Methodist doctrine should influence your preaching and teaching as a local pastor?

Your outline should be single-spaced, Times New Roman 12-point font using one of the outline formats in Word or whatever word processor you use. The rest of your Preparatory Assignment and your Reflection Paper should be double-spaced, Time New Roman 12-point font.

Assessment

- Precourse Assignment due January 3: 20%
- January online sessions: 40% (4 weeks, 10% per week)
- Preparatory Assignment: 30%
- Reflection Paper: 5%
- In-class participation: 5%

Late assignments will lose one letter grade in value for each day late.

Sunday School Class Example

This example just has 1 week and is shorter than yours will need to be.

1. Week One: Methodist Heritage
 - a. Topic 1: Who are the Methodists?
 - i. John and Charles Wesley
 - ii. Part of Church of England
 - b. Topic 2: What did Methodists teach?
 - i. Orthodox Christian doctrine
 - ii. Emphasis on grace and salvation
 - c. Topic 3: How did early Methodists teach?
 - i. Sermons
 - ii. Treatises
 - iii. Hymns