

Wesley Theological Seminary  
Course of Study School  
July 2018 Term 1 | July 9-19, 2018

COS 122 – Theological Heritage I: Introduction

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**Course Objectives:**

This course introduces the student 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.

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 classical theological terms and themes.
3. Critically consider the sources of theological reflection, including scripture, tradition, experience and reason.
4. Reflect theologically as a resource for pastoral ministry.

**Text Books:**

Ted Campbell, *Methodist Doctrine: The Essentials*  
Justo Gonzales & Zaida Perez, *An Introduction to Christian Theology*  
Ted Runyon, *The New Creation: John Wesley's Theology Today*

**Pre-Course Assignments**

**Background**

This course introduces the student 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.

One of the key elements of the course will be in examining the role of Christian doctrine in the life of the church, the relationship between doctrine and theology, and the role of a pastor as a practical theologian who knows how to engage in theological reflection with reference to the church's doctrinal heritage.

With this in mind, the pre-course assignments will be focused on taking some beginning steps in

doctrinal understanding and theological reflection.

### **Assignment 1: Instructions**

The following assignment should be completed in 7-8 pages. **Each question should be answered in 3-4 well-formed paragraphs, no more than one page each.** Students are welcome to cite biblical passages in their responses, but no citation of other outside sources is necessary. Additionally, if biblical passages are cited, they should be used judiciously and by way of example; that is, these questions are meant to be answered through reasoned responses by the student rather than by copious quotation.

Each of the questions below is intended to provoke you to think critically and reflectively about God, your experience of God, and your practice of the Christian faith. You can feel free to number the responses in your paper – 1), 2), 3), etc. – to make it clear when you move from one question to the next. No introductory or concluding paragraph is required.

Here are the questions:

- 1) Who are you? Why are you devoting your life to ministry in the church of Jesus Christ? What is the driving direction of your ministry?
- 2) Who is God? How do we know anything definitively about God? Have you had a significant personal experience of God?
- 3) Who is Jesus Christ? Why do we say that Jesus is “truly God and truly (hu)man” in our confession? How do you understand the Kingdom of God he came to install?
- 4) Who is the Holy Spirit? How do you understand the Trinity, or a “tri-une God”? In what places do you see evidence of a Holy Spirit?
- 5) What do you think is God’s end purpose for God’s creation? What is this faith pointing to?
- 6) What role do the Sacraments play in your life? What do you value about the United Methodist perspective on the Sacraments?
- 7) How do you seek to grow in your faith? What ways of being a disciple – for example, prayer, study, worship, service, mission, teaching, etc. – most help you grow closer to God?

### **Guidelines**

The paper should be written using a 12-pt font with 1-inch standard margins. The total paper should not exceed 7-8 pages. Include your name in the upper-right hand corner of the paper.

The pre-course assignment should be completed using Microsoft Word and submitted to

Blackboard **by June 1st, at 5:00 p.m.** Since the assignment is being made well in advance of its due date, no extensions will be granted for late work. Students should make arrangements for completing the assignment in the allotted amount of time, and any student that does not submit the assignment on time will receive a failing grade. There are no exceptions to this policy.

Make sure you can access your paper in our class sessions.

### **Assignment 2: Instructions**

**By the first day of class**, students should submit a manuscript of a sermon that focuses on either the nature and purposes of God or the nature and purposes of Jesus Christ. The sermon should be 6-7 pages in length and follow same guidelines as the first paper.

Each sermon paper should include:

1. The Bible passage clearly indicated at the beginning of the sermon.
2. A response of no more than 12 words answering the question – *What are you intending to communicate about God or Jesus or the Holy Spirit?* This should be placed at the end of the paper.
3. A response of no more than 12 words answering the question – *How will this sermon help parishioners grow as disciples?* This should be placed at the end of the paper.
4. A response of no more than 12 words answering the question – *What do you want your parishioners to do as a result of hearing your sermon?* This should be placed at the end of the paper.

### **Guidelines**

The paper should be written using a 12-pt font with 1-inch standard margins. The total paper should not exceed 8 pages. Students should include their name in the upper-right hand corner of the paper.

This assignment should be completed using Microsoft Word and submitted to Blackboard **by the first day of class at 12:00 noon**. Make sure you can access your paper in our class sessions.

### **Standards of Evaluation**

These papers are not based on particular assignments from the textbooks. However, the quality of your work and your class participation will be noticeably improved by being familiar

with the material covered in the readings. The Gonzalez & Perez book, *An Introduction to Christian Theology*, will be especially helpful.

Your work will not be graded by some predetermined level of expertise. Instead, simply write carefully and reflectively. Grammar and syntax will be taken into account in grading, so you are strongly urged to **have your work proof-read by at least two people whose writing abilities you respect**. Ask these readers to review the instructions as well as your responses, to help ensure you have followed instructions correctly.

The Wesley Seminary grading scale is as follows:

A	Outstanding
A-	Excellent
B+	Very Good
B	Good
B-	Above Average
C+	Slightly Above Average
C	Average
C-	Slightly Below Average
F	Failing

Any questions should be directed to the course instructor at the contact information listed at the head of this assignment.