

Wesley Theological Seminary  
Course of Study - Spring Weekend  
11-12 October & 8-9 November 2019

COS 122: Theological Heritage I: Introduction  
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**Purpose of Course**

This course introduces the student to theological reflection in the Wesleyan tradition. Basic terms, tasks, and methods of Christian theology are introduced, defined, illustrated. This course provides foundational understanding for further historical and theological study.

**Course Goals**

Students will be able to:

- Examine their understanding of key concepts such as God, faith, salvation, sin, grace, and church
- Understand the distinction between dogma, doctrine, theology, and discipline, and appreciate the place of these in the life of the Church
- Understand and use the theological terms and themes of classic consensus Christianity
- Critically consider the sources of theological reflection, including the touchstones of authority: Scripture, Tradition, reason, and experience
- Reflect theologically as a resource for pastoral ministry

**Required Texts**

*Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church 2016.\**

Campbell, Ted A. *Methodist Doctrine: The Essentials*. Revised edition. Nashville: Abingdon, 1999.  
ISBN-13: 978-1426727016 ‡

González, Justo L. And Zaida Maldonado Pérez. *An Introduction to Christian Theology*. Nashville: Abingdon, 2002. ‡

*United Methodist Hymnal.\**

- \* Books marked with an asterisk will be used again in future courses.
- ‡ Books marked with the double dagger are also available on Kindle (though the instructor advises buying hard- or softcover editions).

**Assignments**

Assignment 1: Due 4 October on Blackboard

1. Prior to the beginning of class, record a sermon in which you explain what is the core message of the Christian faith. Upload both the sermon manuscript and the recorded (video) sermon to Blackboard. (Note: it is not necessary for the recorded presentation to match the manuscript verbatim; the idea is to have the main points written down, rather than having an exact transcript of what is said. It is also not required that the sermon actually be preached in church, though this is preferable.)
2. Read both the Campbell and González texts.

### Assignment 2: Due by midnight 1 November on Blackboard

Prior to the second meeting of the class in May, write five papers of 2-3 pages each (10- or 11-point, double-spaced, 1" margins), setting out your basic understanding on each of the following, based on the first class session and your reading of the texts:

- A) Doctrine of God: Who is God, what is God's nature and how do we know these things? What does it mean to speak of God as Trinity?
- B) Christology: Who is Jesus Christ, what is his significance and work in the world, and the Christian's relationship to Christ now and in the future?
- C) Pneumatology: What is the nature, role, and action of the Holy Spirit – in the life of the believer and of the Christian community?
- D) Anthropology: Describe the nature of humanity, the problem of sin and the human condition, the remedy of grace, and the destiny of humankind.
- E) Church and Sacraments: Outline the nature and work of the Church, what makes a sacrament and how they are to be used as means of grace.

### Topics to Be Covered in the Course

- What is your story? How does it intersect with God's story?
- What is theology? Where does it come from and why do we do it? How does theology relate to other areas of knowledge / disciplines of study?
- Influence of culture on theology
- Authority (revelation) and its touchstones
- Exegesis and hermeneutics, the role of Scripture
- Theology proper (doctrine of God)
- The nature of Christ (Christology) and the work of Christ (soteriology)
- Anthropology: the problem of sin (harmatology / theodicy) and the economy of salvation
- Human response to grace (repentance, holiness, Christian perfection / theosis)
- The Christian community and witness (sacraments, common life / koinonia, mission)
- Methodism in relation to other theologies in the Christian tradition: strengths and liabilities

### Assessment

Students' final grades will be based on:

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| • Pre-course Assignment 1 (sermon) uploaded on time: | 30% |
| • Assignment 2 papers @ 10% per paper:               | 50% |
| • Class Participation:                               | 10% |
| • Final check-out test:                              | 10% |

### Notes on Grading and Miscellaneous Policies

Pre-course assignments handed in late, up to the first afternoon of class, will be reduced one step in grade value (e.g., B+ to B). Papers turned in after the first day of class will be reduced one grade letter for each day late (e.g., A to B). A basically sound and thorough response to the assignment, meeting the criteria, merits a "B" grade.

Students are expected to attend all class sessions. If an emergency arises requiring the student to miss part or all of a session, this should be cleared with the instructor, preferably in advance.

In keeping with Wesley Seminary policy, it is expected that inclusive language be used on all assignments.

Academic dishonesty is a serious matter, and includes (but is not limited to): copying another student's work for credit, using or copying source material without attribution, and receiving unauthorized help (e.g., another student, notes) during an examination. Students having trouble and seeking help from the instructor can expect to receive appropriate support; persons who resort to

dishonest methods can expect the matter to be pursued rigorously, and to incur substantial penalties.

More information on policies can be found in the Wesley Student Handbook (available online) or from the Course of Study office at 202-885-8688.

**Final Note to Students Enrolled in the Class**

Welcome to the Course of Study, and to Theological Heritage !! You are at the outset of a great journey filled with discovery, surprises, challenges, and unanticipated rewards and signs of grace. I look forward to working with you!