

**WESLEY THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
COURSE OF STUDY PROGRAM**

**CS-522 CONTEMPORARY THEOLOGY
JULY 5-9, 2021**

Instructor: The Rev. Donald W. Dotterer, PhD. 1240 Catalina Drive, Monroeville, PA 15146
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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course covers significant individuals, movements, events, and theological developments from the nineteenth century to the present. GBHEM goals:

1. Understand the origins and theological tenets of liberalism from the early 19th century to the present, including its influence on ecumenism and process theology.
2. Understand and distinguish reactions to liberalism, including Fundamentalism, Neo-Orthodoxy, and Evangelicalism.
3. Understand the historical development and theology of the Holiness Movement, Pentecostalism, and the Charismatic Movement.
4. Understand the origins and tenets of Liberation and Contextual Theologies

TEXTS

Print copies are preferable to electronic versions because it is easier to locate selected readings in the texts.

Daniel Migliore, *Faith Seeking Understanding*.

John Caputo, *What Would Jesus Deconstruct?*

Ed. L. Miller and Stanley Grenz, *Introduction to Contemporary Theologies*.

Fleming Rutledge, *The Crucifixion*.

SYNCHRONOUS SESSIONS

Synchronous sessions are class meetings on the Zoom online platform. Our five synchronous sessions are scheduled for five Saturdays, eastern time:

July 5: 10:00 am–noon

July 6: 10:00 am–noon

July 7: 10:00 am–noon

July 8: 10:00 am–noon

July 9: 10:00 am–noon

READING ASSIGNMENTS

Faith Seeking Understanding, chapters 1-14.

Introduction to Contemporary Theologies

What Would Jesus Deconstruct?

At your leisure: *The Crucifixion*

WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

- Utilize the assigned books as sources for your papers.
- Papers are due by class times (synchronous sessions). Have a hard copy at hand for discussion.
- Papers must be submitted in Microsoft Word on Blackboard. Be sure to save a copy.
- The Course of Study program's expectation is that there be a total of twenty pages of writing for every class. Your writing needs to meet that expectation.

Pre-course assignment: due July 5, 10:00 am: Write a brief synopsis and critique of five of the main topics of chapters 1-14 in *Faith Seeking Understanding*. Your paper should be ten pages long, with at least two pages on each topic.

Due July 7: 10:00 am: Choose two or three of the thirteen theologies discussed in *Introduction to Contemporary Theologies*. Write five pages on how these theologies are relevant to today's culture and how they can guide the mission of the church.

Due July 9: 10:00 am: Write a critical review of *What Would Jesus Deconstruct?* Your paper should be five pages long.

DISCUSSION BOARD

There is a discussion board for our class on Blackboard. The purpose of the discussion board is to promote conversation among students about the assigned material. This work is necessary to meet GBHEM's requirement for asynchronous time for online COS courses. Students are required to post two responses: one, a response to the prompt, and two, a response to a fellow student's post, every day, July 5–9. A question/prompt of the day will be posed by the instructor. The questions/prompts will be based on assigned readings and YouTube videos. **Each student should post a 4–5 sentence paragraph response to the question/prompt plus a 2–3 sentence response to a fellow student's post. Posts are due each day at 7:00 pm; responses to fellow student posts are due at midnight. The first postings are due July 5.**

GRADES

The ten-page pre-course assignment is 40%; each of the five-page papers is worth 20%; discussion board posts and class participation, 20%.

Criteria for grading papers:

1. How well the subject matter is understood.
2. How well the ideas in the paper are expressed. Clarity counts.
3. How well sources are used and how well the paper is documented.

Syllabus requirements are subject to change.

Criteria for Evaluating Course Work:

Regardless of whether you write a paper, answer an essay question, voice an oral presentation, or create any original project, the academic context requires that certain minimal requirements characterize your work. While there are subjective components in the grading process, most professors are concerned that you become well educated in four basic qualities of excellent academic work.

1. Demonstration of an empathetic understanding of the content of texts and resources. Your topic should not only be well researched in the library, through interviews and observations, and/or from assigned readings and class discussions, but you should be able to provide a fair description and a clear understanding of texts and resources. This is apparent in the ability to describe and discuss precisely and accurately what an author has written or a speaker has said. Evaluation, response, and critique follow accurate representation of another's ideas—earn the privilege of criticizing a viewpoint by showing that you really understand it.
2. Clear critical thinking that provides appropriate specific evidence for conclusions. Use the most precise historical, empirical, or contemporary data or information to support the claims of your thesis and paragraphs. Conclusions follow from and are supported by evidence. Be sure that your evidence is relevant, accurate, and detailed. Adherence to clear critical thinking, relevant and accurate evidence, and logical organization constitute sound arguments. Even creative writing requires logical relationships among ideas to assist your readers in following the plot or main point.
3. Creativity that moves beyond reporting someone else's ideas. Your creative addition to academic discourse might include questioning, evaluating, applying, criticizing (positively or negatively), developing, or responding. You might see a connection between two or more ideas. You might see information from a unique perspective. The minimal requirement of academic work is correctly repeating what is read or discussed. Excellent work moves beyond repetition to unique insights, organization, correlations, and theses. Work to find your own scholarly and professional voice.
4. Grammar, spelling, and form. Excellent written work is conscious of proofreading and good communication. Oral presentations are equally accountable for careful expression. A brilliant thesis can be lost in a paper or project that obscures its ideas with careless communication. Your readers and listeners should not have to guess what you mean—help them by speaking and writing well.

Grading:

The instructor assumes that everyone in the class is capable of the work required to receive a “B” grade for each assignment. The following interpretations of the meaning of each grade have been developed to help class members review their work to identify strengths and problems.

- A “B” means that the basic elements of the assignment have been faithfully included, the argument is internally coherent, and clearly articulated.

- A “B+” means the assignment is also well crafted.
- An “A-“ means that the assignment is not only well crafted, but it also probes the issues with considerable insight.
- An “A” means the assignment is well crafted, reveals considerable insight, and moves beyond the range of the student’s prior knowledge to begin to construct new perspectives and meanings for the subject. In other words, it shows the student’s imagination at work; it has a creative edge.
- A “C+” means that the assignment lacks clarity or focus, tends to reveal more the writer’s opinions than the results of the writer’s analysis, and lacks reflective insight into the issues being discussed.
- A “C” means that the assignment does not move beyond the reporting of information from readings and/or class discussions to engaging them with issues being discussed; it may indicate inappropriate or misuse of data and readings.
- A “C-“ means that despite some moments of focused discussion and insight, major gaps exist in the development of the argument or discussion.
- An “F” means the individual needs to see me immediately.
- Grades will be reduced a step (e.g. from B to a B-) for assignments handed in after the start of class, and a full letter grade for any assignments 24 hours past due. Assignments over 48 hours past due will be lowered two letter grades. We need to talk if an assignment is over 72 hours past due. Please note only two unexcused absences are allowed before grade is lowered one step. Final course grades are mailed to the student, GBHEM in Nashville and the student’s conference representative by September 30. Grades are not posted on-line.

Inclusive Language:

In both oral and written contributions to the course, students are expected to be conscious of the power of language in theology. Inclusive language respects both gender and racial diversity, and students should demonstrate awareness that language about persons and God expresses values and impacts theological ideas in the details of race and gender connotations. Both gender and race are socially-constructed categories, and changing language is part of bringing justice to theological discourse.

Academic Policies:

- **Attendance:** Students are expected to attend all classes in their entirety. Faculty members have the authority to set attendance policies for particular courses and those policies will be included in the course syllabus. Deviation from the attendance policy may result in reduction of grade or loss of credit for the course.
- **Plagiarism:** Plagiarism is regarded as a serious offense and will result in substantial penalties, including the possibility of academic dismissal. The faculty regards the following as form of plagiarism or dishonesty:
 - Copying from another student’s paper
 - Giving or receiving unauthorized assistance to or from another student during an examination
 - Using unauthorized material during an examination
 - Borrowing or presenting as one’s own (i.e. without proper attribution) the composition or ideas of another.

Please refer to your Wesley Student Handbook (on-line) for more information about Wesley's academic policies or contact the Course of Study office 202-885-8688.