Theological Heritage I (COS 122)
Winter 2026 Syllabus

Course Information
Instructor Information
Instructor Name: Dr. Douglas D. Tzan
Email: dtzan@wesleyseminary.edu

Course Description
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.

Course Objectives
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 and Course Materials
Required Readings
●   Campbell, Ted. *Methodist Doctrine: The Essentials.* Revised Edition. Nashville: Abingdon, 2011.
●   Gonzales, Justo and Zaida Maldonado Perez, *An Introduction to Christian Theology*. Nashville: Abingdon, 2002.
●   2020/2024 *United Methodist Book of Discipline*
●   *The United Methodist Hymnal*
●   "This Holy Mystery: A United Methodist Understanding of Holy Communion" (available at https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/this-holy-mystery-a-united-methodist-understanding-of-holy-communion)
●   "By Water and the Spirit" (available at https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/by-water-and-the-spirit-full-text)

Student Learning Outcomes

Students will draw on their reading of the assigned texts and material presented online and in-class to articulate clear and concise understandings of theological concepts in ways that are consistent with the Methodist theological tradition. They will use scripture, tradition, reason, and experience as sources of theological reflection to explain Methodist doctrines to others. In dialogue with materials presented in class and other students, students will also refine their theology and consider ways theology impacts their ministries.

Course Schedule

● **Pre-course: November 19, 2025, 10am Eastern. MANDADORY Winter COS Orientation. We will cover introductions and orient you to the mechanics of the course.**
● **Pre-course: BEFORE February 20, 2026—Students will complete online modules at their own schedule. Plan to devote about 10 hours to completing these modules, NOT including the time it will take to read course texts or complete writing assignments.**
● **February 20, 2026, 1pm-9pm Eastern—MANDATORY Synchronous Zoom meeting.**
● **February 21, 2026, 9am-1pm Eastern—MANDATORY Synchronous Zoom meeting.**

Course Requirements

Attendance and participation

Attendance and participation in class sessions is mandatory. Students are required to watch online videos and be present in synchronous Zoom meetings of the class in January and February. **Logging into Zoom while also at another job is not acceptable.** Students are expected to complete their written work on time. Online modules must be completed by February 20.

Graded Activities/Assignments

Theological Essays

Please write 10 short essays (1 page or 200-250 words each, not including footnotes) in response to each of the 10 questions listed below. Read the designated texts and complete the modules on Blackboard for each question first to inform your responses.

The first four theological essays are due December 31. All other essays are due February 19.

Note that the Campbell text suggests additional readings you might also consult. You may find it challenging to answer these questions in the word limits given. This practice is to intentionally force upon you the discipline of carefully choosing and phrasing your answers to these questions.

While most of your essay should be your own words, you are expected to support your answer by **quoting one scripture passage and one other theological source (tradition, reason, or experience).** "Proof-texting" is not acceptable. When you quote a Bible passage, you must also explain what that passage means to you and why you quoted it. A "traditional" source might be a quote from one of the assigned readings from the *Book of Discipline*, Hymnal, one of Wesley's sermons, or a hymn of the church. You might also quote a theologian or briefly describe something in your own experience.

Authority **(Due December 31)**
● Read Campbell (chapter 1), Gonzalez (chapter 1), *Book of Discipline* ("Our Doctrinal History" ¶103, "Our Theological Task" ¶105, Articles of Religion nos. 5, 6 Confession no. 4)
● Watch video lecture on "Authority."
● **Question: The United Methodist Church holds that the living core of the Christian faith was revealed in Scripture, illumined by tradition, vivified in personal experience, and confirmed by reason. What is your understanding of this theological position of the Church? (see ¶324.7.h)**

Trinity and Christology **(Due December 31)**
● Read Campbell (chapter 2), Gonzalez (chapter 2), UMC Hymnal (Apostles Creed, Nicene Creed), *Book of Discipline* (Articles of Religion nos. 1, 2, 4, Confession nos. 1, 2, 3)
● Watch video lecture on "Trinity and Christology."
● **Question: Describe your personal experience of God. How do you interpret the statement Jesus Christ is Lord? What is your conception of the activity of the Holy Spirit? (see ¶324.7.a, d, and e)**

Human Nature **(Due December 31)**
● Read Campbell (chapter 3), Gonzalez (chapter3), *Book of Discipline* (Articles of Religion nos. 7, 8, Confession no. 7)
● Watch video lecture on "Human Nature."
● **Question: What is your understanding of humanity? (see ¶324.7.c)**

Wesleyan Way of Salvation **(Due December 31)**
● Read Campbell (chapter 4), Gonzalez (chapter 4), *Book of Discipline* (Articles of Religion nos. 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 20, "Of Sanctification," Confession nos. 8, 9, 10, 11, and "Our Doctrinal Heritage" ¶102)
● **Question: What is your understanding of the human need for divine grace? (see ¶324.7.c)**

Church **(Due February 19)**
● Read Campbell (chapter 5), Gonzalez (chapter 5), *Book of Discipline* (Articles of Religion nos. 13, 15, 22, Confession nos. 5, 13)
● **Question: Describe the nature and mission of the Church. What are its primary tasks today? (see ¶324.7.i)**

Ministry **(Due February 19)**
● Read "The Ministry of All Christians," *Book of Discipline* ¶120-143, *Book of Discipline* (Articles of Religion no.21).
● **Question: Describe your understanding of *diakonia*, the servant ministry of the church. (see ¶324.7.l)**

Sacraments **(Due February 19)**
● Read "This Holy Mystery" and "By Water and the Spirit," *Book of Discipline* (Articles of Religion nos. 16, 17, 18, 19, Confession no. 6)

● **Question: Explain the role and significance of the sacraments in the ministry to which you have been called. (¶324.7.p)**

Eschatology **(Due February 19)**
● Read Campbell (chapter 6), Gonzalez (chapter 7), *Book of Discipline* (Articles of Religion nos. 3, 14, Confession no. 12)
● **Question: What is your understanding of the kingdom of God; the Resurrection; eternal life? (see ¶324.7.f)**

Ethics/Ethos **(Due February 19)**
● Read Campbell (chapter 7), Book of Discipline ("General Rules," Articles of Religion nos. 23, 24, 25, "On the Duty of Christians to the Civil Authority," Confession no. 13, 14, 15, 16)
● **Question: Why is it important for you make a complete dedication of yourself to the highest ideals of the Christian life? (see ¶324.7.o)**

Call **(Due February 19)**
● **Question: Why are you devoting your life to the ministry in the United Methodist Church?**

Sermons

Sermon on Grace (Due February 19)
Preach and upload a video of you preaching a sermon that describes the Wesleyan way of salvation. The sermon must discuss and describe prevenient grace, justifying grace, and sanctifying grace.

Sacramental Sermon (Due February 19)
Preach and upload a video of you preaching a sermon that explores one of the following questions:
Why do United Methodists practice infant baptism?
OR
Why do United Methodists have an "open table" for communion?
Note that your sermon must present an argument in favor of the practice. It is not enough to just say we practice infant baptism or an open table because the Book of Discipline says we do. You must make an argument for the practice. Why is infant baptism or an open table the right thing for United Methodists to do?

Students are encouraged to preach these sermons to their congregations. Each sermon must be at least 15 minutes long (not including scripture reading). Both sermons (grace and sacramental) must be uploaded to Blackboard by February 19. Your sermon text must also be submitted as an assignment.

Instructions for how to upload your videos will be found on the Blackboard site.

Class Participation

Class participation will be calculated based on full completion of pre-course modules and participation in the synchronous Zoom sessions.

Assignment Weighting

Theological Essays	50%
Sermon on Wesleyan way of salvation	15%
Sermon on Sacraments	15%
Class Participation	20%

Please submit all papers in Times New Roman, 12-point font, with 1 inch margins. Papers that do not meet or exceed the page/word guidelines will be marked down. Papers must include complete footnotes for all references and a bibliography. Please use the Turabian footnote-bibliography style. Several universities have published helpful guides to Turabian online, and the many libraries have printed copies of the Turabian style guide. Proper citation of all sources is expected, so any quotation of three words in length or greater must be footnoted.

Grade schema
93 – 100 = A (Excellent/Outstanding)
90 – 92 = A- (Outstanding)
88 – 89 = B+ (Very Good)
83 – 87 = B (Good)
80 – 82 = B- (Adequate)
78 – 79 = C+ (Adequate)
73 – 77 = C (Adequate)
70 – 72 = C- (Substandard)

Late work Policy
No extensions will be granted for late work, except in cases of extreme necessity.

Course Policies
General Expectations
- students are expected to learn how to navigate Blackboard Learn, Kaltura, and Zoom
- students are expected to address technical problems immediately
- students are expected to keep abreast of course announcements
- students are required to use their Wesley Seminary email as opposed to a personal email address
- students are expected to keep the instructor informed of class-related problems, or problems that may prevent the student from full participation
- students are expected to observe course etiquette at all times

Inclusive Language Policy
Bearing in mind that language reflects, reinforces, and creates social reality, the Seminary expects class conversation and written work to employ language that respects the equal dignity and worth of all human beings. In particular, linguistic sexism and racism are to be avoided. (from student handbook)

Accommodations/Disability Support

Once admitted to Wesley, students needing accommodations must communicate with the Associate Dean for Community Life. Students will submit relevant, current documentation from a qualified professional to the Office of Community Life, which will be evaluated by a consultant with a degree in special education. All accommodations for classes are made by the Office of Community Life on behalf of the student. Please see our [page on Disability Accommodations for more information](#).

Artificial Intelligence

Part of the goal of graduate school, and especially seminary, is to help you strengthen your own voice in your speaking and writing. None of us is a writer on an island; we all stand on the shoulders of those who come before us. This means that writing without citations, using (stealing) the ideas of others without crediting them, is plagiarism.

Generative Artificial Intelligence or "AI" (such as ChatGPT, Bard, Claude, Wordtune, and more) is a resource that is subject to and contributes to the unjust structures of the world, advancing the technological prowess of billionaires by depending upon exploitative labor models in the global south, stealing creative workers' intellectual property, and exacerbating the ecological crisis with its energy needs, in order to summarize and compile information. It does not vet that information. It is not an expert. It compiles inaccurate information as well as factual information. It does not value and cannot replicate knowledge gained in embodiment in the world. But most importantly for your class experience, it shortcuts your learning and thinking process, which is about knowledge and wisdom, not information.

Your goal, as a seminary student, is knowledge and wisdom. God has called you, not a computer. Generative AI will often get in your way.

AI Policy

If a professor suspects that an assignment is AI-generated:

1.   The student will receive a preliminary failing grade for the assignment.
2.   The professor will invite the student for an opportunity to provide evidence that clearly demonstrates that the student did, in fact, produce the content using the student's own abilities and scholarly research.
3.   If the student is unable to provide a satisfactory explanation for the creative process, and/or does not demonstrate fluency and sophistication with the material that evidences the student's grasp of the text in question, the failing grade for the assignment will be final. Furthermore, the incident will be flagged as an instance of academic dishonesty and reported to the Dean's Office.
4.   If multiple offenses are reported, whether by the same professor or a different professor, the student will be invited to a conference with the Dean's Office and may be at risk of expulsion.

Permissible Uses of AI Tools

Students may use AI tools in limited ways, such as:

- **Preliminary Research**: AI may be used as a supplementary tool to gather ideas, identify initial sources, and explore introductory concepts on a topic.
- **Writing Support**: Students may use AI to check grammar, paraphrase single sentences for clarity, and suggest synonyms to improve language accuracy.

- **Outlining and Brainstorming**: AI tools may assist in generating basic outlines or brainstorming ideas for non-graded, preparatory work.

These uses are intended to support, not replace, the student's engagement with the material. When AI is used within these permitted contexts, the submission must explicitly acknowledge it.

Prohibited Uses of AI Tools
The following uses of AI are prohibited in all deliverables and submissions:
- **Content Generation**: Students may not use AI to generate substantive content for essays, research papers, assignments, reflections, or any form of graded and non-graded writing or deliverables.
- **AI-Authored Work**: Submitting work that has been partially or fully written by an AI tool is considered plagiarism, as it undermines the student's own critical thinking and theological analysis.
- **Unattributed Paraphrasing or Summarizing**: Any ideas, arguments, or text generated by AI must be fully attributed. Presenting AI-generated content as one's original thought is a violation of this policy.
- **Automated Responses to Exam or Quiz Questions**: Students may not use AI tools to formulate answers to exam questions, quizzes, or other assessments designed to evaluate individual comprehension and synthesis of material.

Academic Honesty & Integrity
Wesley Theological Seminary considers plagiarism a serious offense that will result in substantial penalties, including the possibility of academic dismissal. Students are expected to comply with all standards for academic honesty and integrity, both in the seminary and in the classes in which students are enrolled. The seminary regards the following as forms of plagiarism or academic dishonesty:
- Copying from another student's work.
- giving or receiving unauthorized assistance to or from another student during an examination.
- using unauthorized material during an examination.
- presenting as one's own (i.e., without proper attribution) the composition or ideas of another.
- copying material from any sources, whether print or online.

All work submitted must be the work of the student submitting. Work from other sources must be thoroughly paraphrased or indicated as a direct quotation. In either case, the source of the material must be cited. Students are referred to the most current edition of Kate Turabian's *Manual for Writers of Research Papers* for instructions on source citations.

Furthermore, the mutilation, defacement, or stealing of library materials are also considered forms of academic dishonesty and a violation of the seminary's *Covenant of Professional Ethics and Behavior* (see "Use of Property") and are also subject to disciplinary action.

Regarding academic dishonesty, the professor will report the circumstances of the case to the Dean. In the first instances of proven plagiarism or dishonesty, the student will receive a "Fail" grade for

the course. Second instances will result in automatic separation from the Seminary. Please see the Wesley Theological Seminary Catalog for further details.

SafeAssign
You may be asked to submit one or more of your writing assignments to Blackboard's SafeAssign plagiarism prevention service. Assignment content will be checked against Internet sources, academic journal articles, and the papers of other Wesley Theological Seminary students for common or borrowed content. SafeAssign generates a report that highlights any potentially unoriginal text in the submitted paper. The report may be submitted directly to the instructor, or the instructor may elect to have students submit initial drafts through SafeAssign so that you will receive the report allowing the opportunity to adjust and ensure that all source material has been properly cited.

Blackboard and Kaltura Administration
Blackboard Learn and Kaltura automatically record all student and faculty activities, including the first and last access to the course, the pages accessed, the number of discussion messages read and sent, chat room discussion text, posted discussion topics, as well as videos watched by whom and for how long. This data can be accessed by the instructor to evaluate class participation and to identify participants having difficulty or to verify academic honesty.

Courses will be unavailable to students two months after the course has ended. Please be sure to save any course material, content, or readings prior to the course completion. If you need the course after it has become unavailable, you must contact the instructor.

Technical Support
Students must attempt to solve technical problems and contact their instructor when technical problems arise.
If you experience technical problems, please exercise one or all of the following options:

- [Blackboard Training Materials](#)
- Call Blackboard Support at (202) 885-6091
- Email Blackboard Support at edtech@wesleyseminary.edu

If you have lost your password, or have a problem that is not specifically Blackboard related, please contact Wingswept at studenthelp@wingswept.com

Other Resources
- Library hours can be found here https://www.wesleyseminary.edu/library/hours/
- Information on accessing the library databases from off-campus can be found here https://www.wesleyseminary.edu/library/
- Wesley Complaint Procedures can be found here https://www.wesleyseminary.edu/blackboardsupport/complaint-procedures/