

CS 422 – Theological Heritage IV: Wesleyan Movement
Winter 2026

Hybrid

Synchronous Sessions: Feb 20, 2026 (1:00pm – 9:00pm); Feb 21, 2026 (9:00am – 1:00pm)

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Course Overview

This course will have three sections:

(1) Asynchronous history modules (**pay critical attention to due dates for assignments within this period**). This section of the course will have three papers which will evaluate your comprehension of the history and theological development of John Wesley and early Methodism.

(2) Asynchronous discussion posts on Wesley's sermons & doctrine to be completed between Jan 19 – Feb 19. These posts are formative assignments designed to facilitate your engagement with Wesley's sermons, guided by Randy Maddox's book on Wesleyan doctrine (*Responsible Grace*). In each of these reflections, following the prompts on page 3 of this syllabus, try to re-state Wesley's beliefs in your own words, and then include block quotations from Wesley's sermons (and where you found them) which express these beliefs. You may also include content and quotes from the sermons read as part of the history modules. The purpose of these reflections to help organize your thoughts and relevant quotations in preparation for your final paper (Doctrinal Sermon). They will be graded based on completeness. Be sure to cite all quotations.

(3) Synchronous zoom theology & doctrine classes February 20th & 21st. In order to receive full credit for this course you must be on Zoom during synchronous sessions with your camera on during class discussions. You are encouraged to draft your final doctrinal sermon paper in advance of our time together and make use of the zoom sessions to edit, correct, and/or clarify your written work.

This will be a reading intensive course. Please begin your asynchronous coursework as soon as possible. Give yourself ample time to digest & process each reading over the course of our time together.

Course Description & Learning Goals

This course covers the significant individuals, decisive events, and theology of the Methodist movement. Utilizing categories of grace, faith, and holiness, the student will appropriate the Wesleyan heritage.

Students will be able to:

1. Understand and reflect on the movements, major figures, and events that led to the eighteenth century revivals, especially the lives and ministries of John and Charles Wesley.
2. Understand and articulate the vision of holiness and the theology of grace as it shaped the Wesleys, and the structures of the Methodist movement.
3. Identify and discuss significant theological and historical developments in American Methodism, including ordination and episcopacy.
4. Reflect theologically on their Wesleyan heritage and identity.

Required Materials

- Randy Maddox, *Responsible Grace: John Wesley's Practical Theology*, Nashville: Kingswood Books, 1994.
- Richard Heitzenrater, *Wesley and the People Called Methodists*, Second Edition. Nashville: Abingdon, 2013.
- Russell E. Richey, Kenneth E. Rowe, & Jean Miller Schmidt, *American Methodism: A Compact History*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2012. [Note: Free to access here: <https://archive.org/details/americanmethodis0000rich/mode/2up>]
- Albert Outler and Richard Heitzenrater, eds., *John Wesley's Sermons: An Anthology*, Nashville: Abingdon, 1991. [Note: The sermons assigned can also be found free online here: <https://wesley.nnu.edu/john-wesley/the-sermons-of-john-wesley-1872-edition/the-sermons-of-john-wesley-thomas-jacksons-numbering/> . However, I highly encourage purchasing this text as it will be an incredibly useful tool in your pastoral career.]

Section 1 – Methodist History in Britain & America (Asynchronous Modules)

Module 1: Historical Background, The Wesley Family, and the First & Second Rise of Methodism

Reading: Heitzenrater 1-80; *Sermons* #17 & #146 (pp.23-38)

Video: Susanna Wesley (<https://www.umc.org/en/content/susanna-wesley-mother-of-methodism>)

Lecture Video: Wesleyan Beginnings ([Part 1](#); [Part 2](#))

Module 2: Early Methodism in Britain

Reading: Heitzenrater 81-290; *Sermons* #1, #110, #40, #3, (pp39-60, 69-95)

Lecture: Developments & Controversies in Early Methodism ([Part 1](#); [Part 2](#))

Module 3: Late Wesley Era & Early American Methodism

Reading: Heitzenrater 291-361, Richey 1-45

Video: Robert Strawbridge (<https://www.umc.org/en/content/farmers-who-sowed-methodism-in-america>)

Video: Francis Asbury (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7-ag7WwJZYQ>)

Video: Thomas Coke (<https://www.umc.org/en/content/thomas-coke-a-father-of-methodism>)

Lecture Video: [Late Wesley & Early American Methodism](#)

Module 4: Methodism in the 19th Century – Schism, War, and Corporatization

Reading: Richey 46-126

Lecture Video: [19th Century Methodism](#)

Section 2 – Wesleyan Theology & Doctrine (Asynchronous) *For all of these Discussion Post Reflections, be sure to include both your summary of Wesley's beliefs *and* quoted passages where these beliefs are stated (with citations).*

Reading Assignment 1: Maddox 15-64; *Sermons* #26 (pp223-238), #120 (pp531-539)

- **Discussion Reflection: For Wesley, who is God? What is God's fundamental nature (attributes of God) and what is God's character?**

Reading Assignment 2 : Maddox 65-118; *Sermons* #141 (pp13-21), #44 (pp325-334), #85 (pp485-492), #36 (pp277-285), #77 (431-440), #62 (441-450)

- **Discussion Reflection: What was the condition of humanity before the Fall of Man? What is the condition after the Fall of Man?**
- **Discussion Reflection: Who is Jesus? What roles does Jesus play in the universe?**

Reading Assignment 3: Maddox 119-156; *Sermons* #10 (pp145-155)

- **Discussion Reflection: Describe the role of the Holy Spirit in the experience of assurance? What are the outward, observable marks that someone really has been born again?**

Reading Assignment 4: Maddox 157-229; *Sermons* #7 (pp123-132), #16 (157-171), #45 (335-346), #43 (pp371-380), #92 (pp475-484)

- **Discussion Reflection: For Wesley, what are Justification & Sanctification? How are they distinct? What role do Sacraments & other Means of Grace play in Justification & Sanctification?**

Reading Assignment 5: Maddox 230-256, *Sermons* #60 (<https://wesley.nnu.edu/john-wesley/the-sermons-of-john-wesley-1872-edition/sermon-60-the-general-deliverance/>)

- **Journal Reflection: How does Wesley think that animals will be different in the New Creation?**

Section 3 – Synchronous Doctrine Zoom Sessions

Session 1: Friday, February 20th, 1:00pm – 9:00pm

Session 2: Saturday, February 21st, 9:00am – 1:00pm

Assignments

Papers & Doctrinal Annotated Sermon should be double spaced, 12pt, Times New Roman, 1in margins. Citations should be footnoted in the [Chicago](#)/Turabian style. Bibliography not necessary.

1. Paper 1 (700-800 words) – **Due January 5th, 11:59pm**
 - Using Chapters 1-2 of Heitzenrater, write a personal reflection on what aspects of Wesley's early Methodism(s) remain in United Methodist practice today in your experience? What aspects have been modified or abandoned? Evaluate these continuities and changes: What do you appreciate that has remained? Why? What would you like to see revived? Why? What remains that you think is unhelpful? Why?
2. Paper 2 (700-800 words) – **Due January 12th, 11:59pm**
 - What is Christian Perfection? What does Wesley teach that it includes, and what does Wesley explicitly teach it does not include? What is the scriptural basis for believing it is possible?
3. Paper 3 (700-800 words) – **Due January 19th, 11:59pm**
 - Why did John Wesley ultimately allow Methodists in America to form their own Church? What actions did he take to facilitate the start of this new ecclesiastical body and how did he theologically justify taking these steps? How was the nascent Methodist Episcopal Church structured and led?
4. Discussion Post Reflections – **Due February 19th, 11:59pm**
 - See reflection prompts above.
5. Doctrinal Annotated Sermon (2500 – 2750 words) – **Due February 22nd, 11:59pm**
 - Write a sermon in which you preach on the Wesleyan understanding of how we are saved (prevenient grace, repentance & faith, justifying grace, the means of grace, sanctification & holiness, and Christian perfection). Name any three scripture passages as the proclaimed scriptures in the service of worship in which this hypothetical sermon would be preached. On a cover page, identify the scriptures and give a brief description of the makeup of the congregation you imagine yourself preaching to.
 - For some of you, this will seem familiar to an assignment you may have completed in CS-122 Theological Heritage 1. This assignment will be looking for deeper engagement with Wesleyan theology & source texts. The focus of the should be on the internal process of transformation, our cooperation with God through God's ordained means to produce this transformation, and what it looks like in the life of the believer at the culmination of this saving process.
 - o In this sermon, while your body text should be the sermon as you imagine yourself preaching it, use footnotes to explain the Wesleyan theology behind your statements and the way Wesley thinks about these concepts. These footnotes **are** included in the wordcount of the paper. Footnotes should reference the texts used in this class. Footnotes should include more than just

Wesley quotes; I want to see your engagement and understanding of Wesley's thinking. Do not use secondary websites or articles to form your explanation of Wesley's theology. This should be your own work based on your comprehension of this class's readings.

- I have provided an example of this kind of annotated sermon in the appendix to this syllabus.

Grading

Paper 1 – 10%

Paper 2 – 10%

Paper 3 – 10%

Discussion Reflections – 10%

Doctrinal Sermon – 40%

Class Participation – 20%

All work must be submitted on Blackboard. Late papers submitted within one week of the due date will be penalized 1/3 of a letter grade. Late papers submitted after one week of the due date will be penalized a whole letter grade. Journal Reflections & Doctrinal Sermon may not be turned in late. No work may be submitted after February 22nd.

Grading Scale

94 – 100 = A

90 – 93 = A-

87 – 89 = B+

83 – 86 = B

80 – 82 = B-

77 – 79 = C+

73 – 76 = C

70 – 72 = C-

69 or less = F

Accommodations / Disability Support

All requests are to be made through the Office of Community Life:

<https://www.wesleyseminary.edu/community-life/academic-and-access-support/disability-accommodations/>

Plagiarism

As pastors in training, you are held not just to high academic standards but in all your conduct you will be required to give an account before the dread judgment seat of Christ. Plagiarism is theft and a grave sin against God's commandments and your neighbor. Pastors who plagiarize are unfit for the office of ministry.

Do not use ChatGPT or other AI programs for your reflections. Do not copy from any source without citing. All submitted work must be your own original compositions with quotes properly cited. Any student caught plagiarizing will immediately fail this course.

APPENDIX I: Annotated Sermon Example

This sermon was one of my assignments in seminary and I found the exercise to be one of the most helpful in preparing for ministry.

DUKE UNIVERSITY DIVINITY SCHOOL

PRACTICE OF THEOLOGY IN MINISTRY ANNOTATED SERMON 2: BAPTISM AND THE HOLY SPIRIT

A PAPER SUBMITTED TO DR. J. WARREN SMITH

BY
IAN COLLIER

MARCH 2018

This paper presents a sermon incorporating the Pneumatology Gregory of Nazianzus and Basil the Great for a Baptism sermon. The hypothetical audience of this sermon is the congregation I served this past summer in Surf City, N.C. This congregation was a mid-size church made up of various education levels. Small groups met that were interested in deeper theology, but many in the congregation were converts from evangelical denominations who saw no value of non-explicitly scriptural statements. The context for this sermon is the adult baptism of a hypothetical person, John. The imagined scripture is Titus 3:3-8.

Friends, today we have the joy and privilege of welcoming John into the Church through the sacrament of Baptism. John has been working diligently for the last few months to prepare for today, studying Christian history and beliefs, preparing to begin a new life in Christ. So today, I think it would be fitting to talk more about baptism, which Paul calls “the water of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit,” so that we can have a fuller understanding of this gracious gift of God.

The first thing to know is that John is going to die today – his life is coming to an end.¹ Now before someone calls the police, know that I’m not going to physically kill him. No, rather, when we are put under the water in baptism, we believe that the Holy Spirit² works through the water to put an end to our old life in the world. Paul names the things of the old life: foolishness, disobedience, being a slave to passions and pleasures, and hating one another. These things which arise within us, these ugly attributes which hold us captive, away from God, are washed away by the Holy Spirit in the water of baptism - just like Pharaoh’s army was drowned in the waters of the Red Sea in Exodus.³ We are freed from the tyranny of these vices like the Israelites were freed from the tyranny of the Egyptian army. The water itself is the symbolic⁴ side of baptism – God’s gift to those of us like myself who need a tangible, physical thing to be able to point to say “here, this was the change. This is where those things that lead to death were themselves put to death.”

¹ Basil writes, “How, then, are we made in the likeness of death? We were buried with him through baptism...the following of the former life must be broken.” (On the Holy Spirit 15.35).

² The Holy Spirit is identified by Gregory of Nazianzus as the “subject...of hallowing” and the agent who “created and creates anew through baptism” (Or.31, 29). He continues that “All that God actively performs, [the Holy Spirit] performs.” Thus, in the baptismal hallowing of the human person, we confess that the Holy Spirit is at work enacting the holiness within the baptized Christian.

³ Basil sees the Exodus story as a pre-figuring of Baptism. In this conception, just as the waters of the sea created separation from Pharaoh and his army, the water of baptism creates separation between us and the power of the devil. Basil writes, “The sea killed the enemy in itself; thus also our enmity with God dies (On the Holy Spirit, 14.31).

⁴ Basil writes that, “Baptism symbolically indicates the setting aside of the works of the flesh” (On the Holy Spirit, 15.35).

We can point to this moment of washing as the turning point in our lives, like the silence between verses of a song, or the brief pause when a runner changes direction,⁵ when the movement of this life comes to an end and our new life with God begins. But within the water, the Holy Spirit personally works,⁶ works to make us Holy. That is, God's own holiness⁷ – the person who most reveals for us the Holiness of our God – works in us to make us holy like God. In the waters of baptism we are reborn into a new life in the Church, and our own spirits experience renewal. God lives in us, cleansing us from sin, and making us Holy.

But Baptism does not stop there. Paul continues, “This Spirit he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.” Here, we see that baptism is not only the first moment in a new life here on earth, but in baptism we become the heirs of God and begin our eternal life. Today,

⁵ This image is taken directly from *On the Holy Spirit* 15.35. Basil writes, “So, to begin the second life, the preceding one must be ended. It is just as with those running up one side of the track and down the other: a stop and pause comes between the opposite movements. So it is also with the change of lives: it seemed that death must come between the two lives.”

⁶ It is important to use language of the Holy Spirit being the subject of actions in order to underscore his hypostatic personality. In the Pneumatomachian controversy, the Macedonians argued that the Holy Spirit was not a person, but rather an “inherent property of something else [i.e. The Father]” (Nazianzen, Or. 31, 6). Against this position, Gregory of Nazianzus argues that only substances (not accidents) possess the ability to carry out actions and the scriptural language describing the Holy Spirit as acting necessitates that He is a substance, not an accident. Therefore, as a substance, the Holy Spirit must be either divine substance (God) or a creature – leading to the conclusion that the Holy Spirit must be God (Or. 31, 6). Elsewhere, Nazianzen continues that the Holy Spirit is, “the subject, not the object, of hallowing” – once again highlighting the substantial, agential role of the Holy Spirit.

⁷ In defending the Holy Spirit's divinity, Nazianzen argues for the Holy Spirit's co-eternality with the Father by positing that the Holy Spirit is the very Holiness of God the same way the Logos is the very wisdom of God (Or. 31, 4). This logical form was previously used during the Arian controversy to argue for the co-eternality of the Son by arguing that if one claimed that there was a time when the Son was not, then there must have been a time when God was without his wisdom. Similarly here, Nazianzen argues against the Pneumatomachians (who accept this logic in regards to the Son) that if the Holy Spirit were a creature, then there must have been a time when God was not holy – which is clearly absurd. This leads to the necessary conclusion that the Holy Spirit, as God's Holiness, is co-eternal with our holy God.

John not only ends his old life, but becomes a child of God. In baptism, as the Spirit of God – which anointed Christ at his baptism – enters into our hearts, it allows us, too, to call God our Father.⁸ And just as a child inherits all that is their parents', so too do we inherit all that is God's – His holiness, His eternal life, and His grace. When the Holy Spirit enters our heart in baptism, God welcomes us into His family and He makes us like Himself; we become little-g gods.⁹ In this life, we get a taste of this in the renewal of our spirits – a pledge of what is to come. This pledge lets us hope for its fulfillment in the world to come – hope for eternal life, hope to live forever with God, and hope to continually grow with God, becoming more and more like him forever.¹⁰ When God lives in your heart through the Holy Spirit, and makes you like Himself, it's truly a package deal – and what a wonderful gift that is.

The little death and rebirth of baptism is one of the most beautiful and sacred rites in Christianity, but it is also a charge, so I will leave you today with the charge of all the baptized.

⁸ Basil writes that in baptism the Holy Spirit returns the human being to “adopted sonship” and the “freedom to call God our Father” (On the Holy Spirit, 15.36).

⁹ This is the doctrine of Deification which featured prominently in the Pneumatomachian controversy. In describing the action of the Holy Spirit, Basil compares the action of the Holy Spirit in the cleansed soul to light falling on a translucent object – “they are themselves filled with light and gleam with a light from themselves” (On the Holy Spirit 9.23). The light in the soul, therefore, is not proper to the soul, but still adheres within it, allowing the soul to become like God through the Holy Spirit the same way a translucent body becomes like the light due to the light within it. Gregory of Nazianzus posits that if the Holy Spirit is a creature – that is, not God – then it would be impossible for him to link the soul of the Christian with God. He writes, “If he has the same rank I have, how can he make me God, how can he link me with deity?” (Or. 31, 4). Therefore, the role of the Holy Spirit in deification necessitates that the Holy Spirit himself is God since only God can possibly unite a creature with divinity; that is, a creature cannot give out what is not theirs to give – i.e. communion with the divine.

¹⁰ Basil has a strong sense of the proleptic nature of Baptism and the work of the Holy Spirit. Already in this life, Basil writes, we experience the restoration of our souls from “the death of sin to their original life” and the freedom to live in accordance with the Gospel (On the Holy Spirit, 15.35). However, Basil sees this as a pledge for future and greater promises: the general resurrection and to participate in God for all eternity. He writes, “We see as in a mirror the grace, as already present, of the goods laid up in store for us in promises...For, if such is the pledge, how great will the fullness be?” (On the Holy Spirit, 15.36).

The scriptures tell us that God is light (1 Jn 1:5), so to be an heir of God means that once we have been cleansed of the darkness in our own hearts, God's light becomes free to pour into us, and through us shine out in the world. In baptism, when the Holy Spirit works within us to cleanse and renew us, the Spirit also dwells there in our heart – God Himself living in you. So with God living in us, we are charged to become the beacon of God's love for the world, a transformed testament to the miraculous work God can do in our hearts. God moves through us like light through a freshly clean window. Through *us*, God's children and heirs, cleansed of our sin and empowered to live as God's family in the world, the world can experience the Grace of God. So go into the world to shine God's light to others,¹¹ be a window to the light of God – washed clean by the waters of baptism – and let others experience the grace of God through you. Amen.

¹¹ Basil uses the image of a translucent body not just to describe the way we are cleansed and deified by the Holy Spirit, but also the way the Holy Spirit passes through us to others. Basil writes that in baptism the soul is “cleansed from the shame which tarnished it” – alluding to the way a reflective or translucent surface is unable to reflect light if it is dirty (On the Holy Spirit, 9.23). In baptism, this tarnish is washed away and the reflective/translucent surface is once again able to receive the light. Basil goes on to note that just as light flows out from a translucent object, the action of the Holy Spirit within one's soul does not affect one's self alone, but shines out to others. He writes, “The Spirit-bearing souls that are illuminated by the Holy Spirit...are themselves made spiritual, and they send forth grace to others” (On the Holy Spirit, 9.23). Thus, the deification of the soul by the Holy Spirit also bequeaths to the individual the ability to become a conduit for the grace of God in the world through participation.