The United Methodist Church

Memphis/Tennessee Conferences Course of Study

Theological Heritage 122: Introduction

Instructor: Rev’d Dr Robert Webster

Fridays: 6.30-9.00 p.m.

Saturdays 8.00 a.m.-Noon, 1.15-4.45 p.m.

February 5-6, 2016
March 4-5, 2016

Hiwassee College

Madisonville, Tennessee
Theological Heritage I: Introduction
COS 122

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Objectives

The objectives of this course are as following:

- To provide a general understanding of theology and its importance for an understanding for ministry.
- To show the contributions that the rise and development of the Methodist movement made to Christian history and theology.
- To examine the cultural and social implications of key theological doctrines which have been emphasized in Wesleyan and Methodist history.
- To expose the student to some of the key methods of inquiry and important theological sources for further investigation into Methodist theology and history.

Assigned Readings

The following texts are required for the course and need to be read thoroughly before the meeting of the classes.


**Requirements**

Attendance is mandatory for all sessions and can only be excused by an emergency. Written Work (75%) and Class Participation (25%) shall be evaluated for student’s final grade. All papers are expected to be written in good English grammar and turned in on time. Written comments and grades on papers will be evaluated for style and content. **Note:** All written work should be placed in an envelope with your name and address, and telephone clearly printed on the outside and handed to the instructor at the beginning of the class. **Note:** Student’s address should be printed on envelope so as to make mailing back to student easily and clearly!

**Pre-Class Assignments (Due at First Session in February 5, 2015)**

- A written evaluation of the Methodists doctrinal heritage as included in pp. 45-89 of *The Book of Discipline* (2012). What is, in your evaluation,, Methodism’s strengths and weaknesses for the modern world? **One copy should be presented to instructor at class time.**

- An Aldersgate Sunday Sermon that celebrates the history and heritage of some aspect of John Wesley’s life and ministry or some other aspect and/or character of early Methodism’s history and heritage suitable for proclamation in the local church. This sermon manuscript should be instructional and inspirational. It should also be written in a concise grammatical style and no longer than 6-7 pages in length (1500-1750 words). **One copy should be presented to instructor at class time.**
• Write a comparative book review of Collins’s *Theology of John Wesley* and Wilson’s *Methodist Theology* 8-10 pages (2,000-2,500 words). How do Collins and Wilson see the rise of Methodism in the larger social and historical development of religion and culture? What is the major contribution of Methodism according to the authors? What do you see the strengths and weaknesses of Collins and Wilson’s books? **Bring one copy for instructor at class.**

**Pre-Class Assignment (Due at Second Session in March 4, 2016)**

• Write a position paper (3-5 pages=750-1250 words) on the Wesleyan quadrilateral using Gunter’s book, *Wesley and the Quadrilateral: Renewing the Conversation*. You will need to select a “hypothetical” problem in the local church, i.e., ethical, social, or theological, and then show how embracing the idea of the quadrilateral could aid in resolving this problem. **Bring one copy for instructor at class.**

• Work through Strong’s *Reclaiming the Wesleyan Heritage* that deals with Wesley’s sermons and Mahaffey’s *Preaching Politics*. Write a short analysis of these materials. What is the function of a “Sermon” in the eyes of the early Methodists? What was a sermon supposed to do? Are political sermons allowed in the Methodist tradition? We will use these books in small group discussion. Your essays will be evaluated by the Professor and also used in the group discussions. **Bring one copy for instructor at class.**

• Write a book review (4-5 pages=1,250-1,500 words) on Webster’s book, *Methodism and the Miraculous*, taking into account his idea of the power of belief in the supernatural by Methodists in the eighteenth century. What parts do you think are still relevant in contemporary Methodism if any? **Bring one copy for instructor at class.**

• Write a narrative paper (2 pages, 500 words) outlining the major items you have gained from the course. What new things did you learn from this course about Methodist theology? What opinions did you change your mind about or are currently struggling and thinking about in regard to Methodist theology. **Bring one copy for instructor at class.**

**Course Outline**

Session One: Friday, February 5, 2016  
6.30-9.30 p.m.  
Introductory Overview of the Course

Presentation: “*The Theological Importance of the Past for the Future*”.

**Conferencing around the Table:** A Discussion of Major themes of the Evangelical Movement and how Methodism in the eighteenth century contribute to this theological movement and (Book of Discipline).
Session Two: Saturday, February 6, 2016
8.00 am-12.00 noon

Presentation: “The Theological Implications of John Wesley’s Mission and Ministry.”

Conferencing around the Table: What ideas of historical Methodism were fundamental in creating and sustaining a theological self-identification of Methodism in the eighteenth century (Collins and Watson).

Session Three: Saturday, February 6, 2016
1.15-4.45pm

Presentation: Sine qua Non: The Wesleyan Idea of Grace

Conferencing Around the Table: A Discussion of the Idea of Grace and Accountability in the Methodist Tradition with discussion centering on Gunter’s book.

Session Four: Friday, March 4, 2014
6.30-9.30pm


Round Table Conferencing: Discuss some of Wesley’s Sermons (Strong) relating not only their content but in what ways you think they served to formulate a Methodist Identity of Conversion. (Strong). Also be able to look at the social dimensions of conversion and in what manner society may be transformed by preaching, utilizing Maharrey’s Preaching Politics.

Session Five: Saturday, March 5, 2014
8.00-12.00 noon

Presentation: “The Healing Nature of the Eucharist in Wesleyan Theology.”

Round Table Discussion: Through a Discussion of Webster’s Methodism and the Miraculous discuss at what level of understanding does Methodism entertain the importance and function of supernatural experiences in the formation of a religious self-identification.

Session Six: Saturday, March 5, 2014
1.00-3.00pm

Presentation: “Happiness and Holiness: The Theological Relevance of Methodism in the Modern World”.
Round Table Discussion: Discuss how you think Methodism is theological relevant and irrelevant in the modern world using (Richey) as a source.

Session Seven: Saturday May 19, 2012
3.15-4.00 pm
Final Slide Presentation of Historical and Theological Importance of Methodism.

A Word About Grading

Evaluation will be given a numerical grading on written projects and tests. The following grading will be used.

A = 93-100
B = 80-92
C = 75-80
D = 70-75
F = Below 70