



Course of Study School of Ohio

www.cosohio.org

Term	Class Dates	Registration Deadline	Dorm Availability
2021 Winter	Feb. 12-13 & Mar 12-13	12/14/2020	FULL, please
2021 Spring	Apr. 16-17 & May 14-15	2/15/2021	email Grace
2021 Summer	Jun. 25-26 & Jul. 16-17	4/26/2021	to join waitlist
2021 Summer 2-week	Aug 2-6 and 9-12	6/3/2021	AVAILABLE

FROM THE DIRECTOR

Let me welcome all of you, including eight new and six graduating students, to the 2020 Fall Term of the Course of Study School of Ohio (COSSO)!

For all Christians, in particular those in leadership, it is an acute challenge to interpret a tragic event. The current Covid pandemic, which has claimed more than 950,000 lives globally and nearly 200,000 lives in the US, poses such a challenge.

During World War II, H. Richard Niebuhr wrote a series of articles in which he grappled with understanding God's relationship to the tragic events of war. For Niebuhr the most pressing question was "What is God doing?" To discern and attend to God's presence and action in such an unprecedented world crisis, he believed, was to be the first step toward constructing an appropriate and faithful human response.

The greatest difficulty in understanding the tragedy of a war, for Niebuhr, came from the fact that its greater burdens always fell upon the relatively innocent and weak. Using the analogy of crucifixion, Niebuhr thus sought to see the war from the standpoint of "vicarious suffering" of the innocent for the sake of all, both the just and unjust.

In such a time as this, we could learn some lessons from Niebuhr's insights into the interpretation of tragic events. First of all, since God is indeed working in the world, it is a crucial task of the church to discern God's presence and action in human history, and it requires serious theological reflection and spiritual alertness. Second, since the greater burdens of tragedy often fall on the weak and needy, the church should seek to recommit itself to alleviating human suffering, especially the suffering of "widows" and "orphans" and "strangers" in the world, both locally and globally.

Let me take this opportunity to express again my deep appreciation to the COSSO faculty for their willingness to convert their classes into a fully online format and to the staff for their commitment to provide needed support in a timely manner. I hope that all of us—students, faculty, and staff—would be patient and generous with each other while adjusting to a new mode of learning.

May God's grace, guidance, and strength be with you and your congregations in these challenging times.

Peace,

Joon-Sik Park

Dr. Joon-Sik Park

Director of the Course of Study School of Ohio
E. Stanley Jones Professor of World Evangelism



FROM THE WRITING LAB

Have you ever read a book or story you just couldn't put down? There are times when a text just pulls us into it—as if we *must* keep reading. When writing that good, we often call it "compelling" because we feel compelled to keep going. How do writers pull it off? How do they manage to create something that captivates a reader's interest? As can be expected, there is no quick and simple formula for composing writing that compels a reader, but there are some tips that can move us closer to that direction. An important one is to write with "inviting" language instead of what I call "ultimatums." An "ultimatum" is forcing the reader to make a choice to agree with your perspective before you have offered them a chance to see why they should agree with you. Imagine a reflection that begins with several declarative statements in a row: "I believe all religions are sacred. I believe God imparted Her spirit in all religions of the world. I believe unless we recognize this, religion will always be a source of conflict, animosity and war in the World." Those are strong statements. Beginning an essay like this is like I am telling the reader, "you have to agree with me to have a chance at understanding what I am about to say." Or the metaphorical equivalent of hurling a baseball at the reader and yelling, "Catch it or get out the way!" A much better strategy to create reader-friendly essays is to first begin with inviting language. Ultimatums just ensure that your audience will not be changed by your words, because you have already scared off anyone that does not already have your conclusions.



Dr. Trad Noguiera-Godsey
Writing Instructor

2020 SUMMER AND SUMMER 2-WEEK GRADUATES—CONGRATULATIONS!



Brian Carroll, Carmen Cook, & Dan Eggan
graduated in 2020 Summer

Karen Jensen-Kinney
graduated in the 2020 Summer 2-Week

MEET YOUR PROFESSORS



Rev. Dr. Sarah Lancaster

COS 122: Theological Heritage I: Introduction

Rev. Dr. Sarah Lancaster received her M.Div. from Perkins School of Theology and her Ph.D. from Southern Methodist University. An elder in the North Texas Annual Conference, she is Professor of Theology at MTSO.

Rev. Dr. Robin Knowles Wallace

COS 223: Worship & Sacraments

Rev. Dr. Robin Knowles Wallace received her M.T.S. from Candler School of Theology and her Ph.D. from Garrett Evangelical Theological Seminary/Northwestern. A UCC pastor, she is Professor of Worship and Music at MTSO.



Rev. Dr. Walter Taylor

COS 321 Bible III: Gospels

Rev. Dr. Taylor received his M.Div. from Lutheran Theological Seminary and his Ph.D. from Claremont University. A Lutheran pastor, he is emeritus professor of New Testament at Trinity Lutheran Seminary.

Rev. Dr. Tom Rand

COS 324: Preaching

Rev. Dr. Thomas Rand received his M.Div. from Garrett-Evangelical Seminary and his Ph.D. from GETS/Northwestern University. He currently serves as Pastor of First UMC of Sylvania in West Ohio.



Rev. Dr. Paul Kim

COS 421: Bible IV: Prophets, Psalms, & Wisdom Literature

Rev. Dr. Paul Kim received his M.Div. and Th.M. from Princeton Theological Seminary, and his Ph.D. from the Claremont School of Theology. A Presbyterian elder, he is Professor of Hebrew Bible at MTSO.

Rev. Dr. Joon-Sik Park

COS 523: Evangelism

Dr. Joon-Sik Park received his M.Div. from Asbury Theological Seminary and his Ph.D. in Christian Ethics from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville. A United Methodist elder, he is E. Stanley Jones Professor of World Evangelism at MTSO.



SPIRITUAL FORMATION

ON THE WAY TO THE POLLS: A RITUAL FOR VOTING?

I have been thinking about voting, after all I have a Ph.D. in political science and I have done a lot of voting analyses and studies on voting behavior. I believe that politics and spirituality are intertwined, so when I perused the internet on voting, I was drawn to something I had never thought of before - "[a ritual for voting.](#)" This made me think more about voting and how much it is taken for granted, as though it's no big deal. Then I searched scripture (Romans 12:2) about being in this world but not of it: "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds." That made me think about what we take for granted as citizens and what transforms us as Christians (for this world and the next).

Voting is the core of a democracy but it does not always figure into many of our popular discussions about "freedom." We hear more about wearing/not wearing masks, opening/closing schools and churches, and numerous rights of citizens. All of these are important discussions, but voting? Voting is key. Many people have died seeking the right to vote (men and women, black and white, and all nationalities).

In my mind, voting is a sacred act, something that requires intentional prayer and preparation. And so, "a ritual for voting" might make voting a transformative act that helps in the process of renewing our minds. Here are a few steps I am considering on the way to the polls:

1. Pray about the right to vote and what it means to you. Sit quietly and think about it.
2. Plan ahead, how will you vote – in person or by mail? Are you registered? Check out your polling place or request an absentee ballot. Encourage others to do the same.
3. Pray for a peaceful voting process throughout the country; give thanks for all who paved the way for us to vote.
4. Continue to pray in the days before the election – for all voters, those campaigning and working at the polls, mail carriers and USPS, etc.
5. If voting by mail, open the ballot when it arrives, sit quietly and pray about your choices. Cast your vote and set the ballot aside, pray and read through your selections. Carry the envelope to the post office and prayerfully mail it (with your mask on, of course).
6. Go to the polling place on election day (or early voting time), wearing your mask. While waiting in line, pray for others who are voting and working there, prayerfully read the ballot and cast your vote. Thank the poll workers as you leave and lift them in gratitude.
7. Return home and give thanks for the right to vote. Wear your "I Voted" sticker with pride, as you remember all those who made this possible.
8. Spend time reflecting, praying and giving thanks for being part of the ongoing process of maintaining our democracy.

Well, no matter who we vote for, nothing can be taken for granted, not even democracy. Our citizenship is in this world, and even though we are not conformed to it, we are affected by it. Thus, as Methodists we are drawn to renewing our minds by all the means we can, in all the ways we can, in all the places we can, at all the times we can, with all the people we can, as long as ever we can. And so, I submit - "a ritual for voting."



Rev. Dr. Rebeka Maples
Spiritual Formation Director

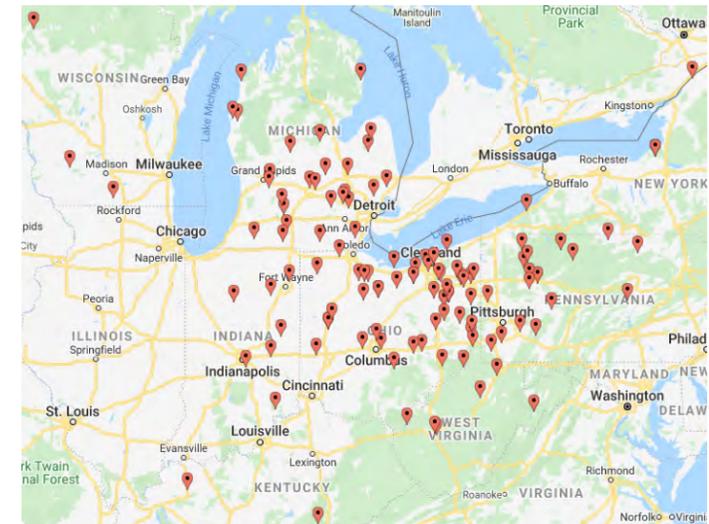
FROM THE COORDINATOR

Thank you all for your adaptability and graciousness in these difficult times! As classes meet online, note that I have posted directions for Populi and Zoom our website at <https://cosohio.org/populi>. If anything isn't covered there, please ask me! My office phone redirects to me as I work at home so you can still call. I'll also be available during your class Zoom meetings, so if you have tech issues then, please get in touch!

COURSE PLANNING NOTES:

- We've marked the dorm as full for most 2021 terms because, if we can meet in person, we may not be able to use the dorm at its full capacity due to social distancing. If you'd like to stay in the dorm, please email me and I will add you to the waitlist.
- **2021 Winter COS 324 is full**
- **2021 Spring COS 323 is full**

Students from 11 Annual Conferences are attending COSSO this term:



Grace Wallace
Coordinator

FROM THE CHOIR ROOM

As the old saying goes, "*the one who sings prays twice.*" We look forward to singing together again when we can safely meet in person.



Lori Douglas Weaver, MEd
Choir Director