

Course of Study School of Ohio at MTSO
COS 422
THEOLOGICAL HERITAGE IV: The Wesleyan Movement
Online Summer 2020
26-27 June & 17-18 July
Dr. Glen Alton Messer, II
gamesser2@gmail.com + 1.617.596.3125

About this Course

Course Description (as stated in the COS curriculum):

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:

- *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.*
- *Understand and articulate the vision of holiness and the theology of grace as it shaped the Wesleys, and the structures of the Methodist movement.*
- *Identify and discuss significant theological and historical developments in American Methodism, including ordination and episcopacy.*
- *Reflect theologically on their Wesleyan heritage and identity.*

Course Overview: We will learn together about our United Methodist theological heritage through readings, writing assignments, online course resources, individual and group chats, video class discussions, and message board discussions. In our learning together, we will reflect upon the lives of John and Charles Wesley in Britain and Francis Asbury in America and the contributions these early Methodist founders made to the theological understandings and church life of early Methodism and the development of our present-day United Methodist Church.

There are **three writing assignments** and a **participation grade** (participation will count for 20 percent of the total grade) for this course: the first writing assignment is due on 16 June, the second is due on 7 July, and the third is due on 3 August. **Please submit the first two writing assignments via Populi. Please submit the third writing assignment directly to the instructor via email (please see above). No hardcopy papers will be accepted.**

About the Instructor: Dr. Glen Alton Messer, II is a native of southern West Virginia and currently resides near Ann Arbor, Michigan. He holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts from Eastern Michigan University, a Master of Divinity from Boston University, and a Doctor of Theology degree in the history of Christianity from Boston University. His academic specialty is the history of Trans-Atlantic Methodism and Pietism with a dissertation focusing upon the introduction of Methodism into New England, Holiness, and the Anti-Slavery Struggle (ca. 1789-1845). He has taught Methodist Studies and Modern Church History at Boston University, Methodist Studies at Yale Divinity School, and Wesleyan Theological Heritage at the Course of Study School of Ohio at the Methodist Theological School in Ohio. He was also a member of the denomination's ecumenical and interreligious staff in New York City from 2010-2016.

Required Texts:

- Richard Heitzenrater. *Wesley and the People Called Methodists*. Second Edition. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2013. Please note: **Be sure to get the second edition.**
- Randy Maddox. *Responsible Grace: John Wesley's Practical Theology*. Nashville, TN: Kingswood Books, 1994.
- Wigger, John H. *American Saint: Francis Asbury and the Methodists*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2009.

Class Schedule and Assignments

Online sessions will consist of materials designed to help students and the instructor engage with one another in relation to the topics to be covered for each day of instruction. These will include both content produced by the instructor (video/audio/written materials), topic "quizzes" (more will be said about these below), and discussions. Each day the students and instructor will have two hours for a Zoom class meeting together to talk and learn together.

Please see the course Populi site for the materials for each online session and for instructions regarding "quizzes," discussions, chats, etc.

Student participation online in this class includes: 1) fully reviewing course content for each topic for each day of the course, 2) completing "quizzes," and making substantive contributions to discussions (both for each topic covered and any additional discussions posted by the instructor for the course in general).

Each day of each session is composed of topics covering specific information and key concepts. Each of these will include a "quiz" and a discussion. While "points" will be assigned to "quizzes" these are NOT simply added up to assess your participation grade. They are tools for assessing your understanding and will be used by the instructor to identify where more needs to be done in relationship with the student to facilitate deeper learning. "Quiz" scores help the instructor to know where he needs to do more to help the student. **THIS IS IMPORTANT:** We are working together to learn. Sometimes learning is easier or more difficult. Sometimes both the student and the instructor actually learn best when they discover those places where they need to take a

different approach to articulating ideas and/or developing understanding. I use “quizzes” as a positive tool for developing our understanding together — not as a way of assessing a grade.

Every bit of effort the student puts into learning — even having the courage to risk making mistakes! — counts to the student’s advantage in the assessment of course participation.

Participation is about the student’s faithful engagement of the pursuit of learning AND of encouraging and helping others in that effort as well.

Online Session One: 26-27 June.

We will meet on Zoom from 7-9 pm on June 26 and 1:30-3:30 pm on June 27.

Readings:

- Heitzenrater, *Wesley and the People Called Methodists*
- Maddox, *Responsible Grace*

****Writing Assignment — Due on 16 June at 11.59 pm**

Reflect upon what you have learned about John Wesley and his theological outlook (making reference to Heitzenrater and Maddox). If John Wesley were to visit your congregation on an ordinary Sunday, what do you think he would say about what he observes? If he shared these thoughts with them, how do you think your congregation would react? Please write a 1,000 to 1,200-word paper giving your answer. Please Note: **I count words and not pages. Please make sure your paper is within the prescribed word count.**

This assignment will count for 20 percent of your course grade.

Topics to be covered during Session One:

- Topic 01 — 18th Century English Society and Church
- Topic 02 — The Way of Salvation & Universal Grace
- Topic 03 — Holiness of Hands, Hearts, and Minds
- Topic 04 — Wesleyan Spirituality and the Influences that Shaped it
- Topic 05 — Stewardship and Discipleship

Online Session Two: 17-18 July.

We will meet on Zoom from 7-9 pm on July 17 and 1:30-3:30 pm on July 18.

Reading:

- Wigger, *American Saint*

****Writing Assignment — 7 July at 11.59 pm**

Please choose from **one** of the three options below:

OPTION 1: Prepare the content of a four-week Christian education course on the Way of Salvation. This must have five components: a 200 to 250-word description of the entire course and the topics that will be covered. This description should be appropriate for being posted on a website or bulletin board, and; four weekly lesson plan summaries of the Wesleyan historical and theological materials to be presented and discussed. **Each** weekly summary should be 450-500 words in length.

OPTION 2: Prepare a four-week sermon series on the Way of Salvation. This must have five components: a 200 to 250-word description of the sermon series and the topics that will be covered, and; four detailed summaries of the Wesleyan historical and theological materials to be preached about. These are not to be sermon outlines; but a summary of what you will touch upon in the sermons. **Each** weekly sermon summary must be 450-500 words in length.

OPTION 3: Write a five-part blog series (with the actual text you would post on the blog) on the Way of Salvation. The first post must give an introduction to the series and to the Way of Salvation; mapping out what you will write about in the remaining posts in the series. Then, in the four subsequent posts, give a detailed explanation of the various elements of the Way of Salvation and their application to our lives today. **Each** of the five posts should be 400-500 words in length.

This assignment will count for 30 percent of your course grade.

Topics to be covered during Session Two:

- Topic 06 — The rise of Methodism at the dawning of the American republic
- Topic 07 — From Wesley to Asbury & American Independence
- Topic 08 — A Republic for all & a Universal Call to Salvation
- Topic 09 — The American Episcopacy
- Topic 10 — The Crises over Slavery and Episcopacy in the early 19th century
- Topic 11 — Methodism and the Reform of Society
- Topic 12 — American Methodist Mission Around the World (Theological Impact)
- Topic 13 — Uniting (1939 & 1968) and the Mixtures of Methodist Theologies
- Topic 14 — Challenges of a ‘Global’ United Methodism in the late 20th and early 21st Centuries
- Topic 15 — Is it really the Divided Methodist Church? (theological questions post General Conference 2019)

****Writing Assignment — Due 3 August at 11.59 pm**

As the pastor of a local congregation, you may find that you are one of the only (if not the only) person who knows much about our Wesleyan heritage (historical and theological). Reflect upon what it is in that heritage that inspires you to live an active life of Christian discipleship. What is it that perplexes you or makes you sad? In a 2,000 to 2,200-word paper, write about what you want a congregation to know about our United Methodist heritage and how it is that this will help them to live the Christian life more faithfully.

This assignment will count for 30 percent of your course grade.

Academic Honor

The Course of Study School of Ohio requires that all material submitted by a student in fulfilling his or her academic requirements be the original work of the student.

Violations of academic honor include any action by a student indicating dishonesty or lack of integrity in academic ethics. Violations in this category include, but are not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, or knowingly passing off work of another as one's own.

Cheating includes seeking, acquiring, receiving or passing on information about the content of an examination prior to its authorized release or during its administration. Cheating also includes seeking, using, giving or obtaining unauthorized assistance in any academic assignment or examination.

Plagiarism is the act of presenting as one's own work with the work of another whether published or unpublished (including the work of another student). A writer's work should be regarded as his or her own property. Any person who knowingly uses a writer's distinctive work without proper acknowledgement is guilty of plagiarism.

A student found guilty of a violation of the academic honor code, after a review of the case, may be subject to one or more of the following actions: (1) warning; (2) probation; (3) suspension for the remainder of the course; (4) dismissal from the Course of Study School of Ohio; (5) grade of Fail for the course. Regardless of the outcome, a letter will be sent to the student's District Superintendent and Board of Ordained Ministry representative.