

Course of Study School of Ohio

<https://cosohio.org/> and
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Term	Class Dates	Registration Deadline	Dorm Availability
2020 Fall	Sept. 25-26 & Oct. 23-24	7/27/2020	FULL
2021 Winter	Feb. 12-13 & Mar 12-13	12/14/2020	OPEN
2021 Spring	Apr. 16-17 & May 14-15	2/15/2021	8 rooms OPEN
2021 Summer	Jun. 25-26 & Jul. 16-17	4/26/2021	OPEN

FROM THE DIRECTOR

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

I have recently revisited one of the sermons by Dr. Martin Luther King, titled "A Knock at Midnight." According to King, "It is . . . midnight in the world today. The darkness is so deep that we hardly see which way to turn." It is midnight in people's inner lives as well as in the moral and social order. And, in the midst of despair over injustices, violence, and moral breakdown, people knock on the door of the church looking for the bread—the bread of faith, hope, and love, and the bread of peace and justice.

Sadly, however, people have been "left disappointed at midnight" many times, as they were "ignored altogether, or told to wait until later." The church is so occupied with its own affairs that it often fails to have concern for those in need. Yet, despite their disappointment, many keep knocking on the door of the church, believing "deep down within that the bread of life is [still] within the church."

This sermon, "A Knock at Midnight," was preached in the early 1960's, more than a half century ago. Yet things do not seem to have changed much. We are at midnight and the darkness is so deep around us as recently demonstrated by the systemic racism still prevailing in this country. The question we have to grapple with is about the role of the church: What is the church and what is the church for? Are we to remain "an irrelevant social club with no moral or spiritual authority" or to become an instrument of change believing that God is still at work within this world to transform it? Dr. King says, "midnight is a confusing hour, and one in which it is difficult to be faithful; but the relevancy and power of the church will be measured by its capacity to meet the needs of those who come at midnight," looking for bread and light.

Let me take this opportunity to express my appreciation to the COSSO faculty for their willingness to adapt their class to an online format and to the staff for their commitment to provide needed support. I hope that all of us—students, faculty, and staff—would be patient and generous to each other while adjusting to new ways of teaching and learning.

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

Peace,

Dr. Joon-Sik Park

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



FROM THE WRITING LAB

Metaphorical language is a powerful tool to aid communication, to beautify a boring text, or to make an abstract idea tangible. We use metaphorical language every day, and we encounter it in a plethora of texts. When used effectively, they can express sentiments and concepts that would otherwise be impossible to communicate. The Bible relies heavily on metaphorical language to express the ineffable, the unspeakable, and the ways higher than our own. "As the deer panteth for the water, so my soul longeth after thee," the psalmist writes. It is, perhaps, no coincidence that every major religion's sacred scripture is replete with metaphorical language. In academic writing, we also make use of metaphorical language to simplify complex concepts and connections. One important thing to remember in academic writing is that our first priority is clarity of communication. For this reason, we often think of academic writing as poetry's opposite, because while a poet may relish the multiple interpretations a reader may extract from the poem, the academic wishes to be understood exactly in the way they mean. That does not mean we cannot use poetic forms or metaphors in our academic writing. It just means that we need to explain what we mean literally if our choice of metaphor leaves any room to doubt. Imagine how effective the metaphor used in Psalm 42 would be had the psalmist not included the phrase, "So my soul longeth after thee." The reader may not even recognize it as a metaphor or may interpret it in drastically different ways. We should be eager to use metaphors to aid us in our writing, but we should be even more eager to explain what we mean by them.



Dr. Trad Noguiera-Godsey
Writing Instructor

2020 SPRING GRADUATE— CONGRATULATIONS!



Bill Locke

MEET YOUR PROFESSORS



Rev. Dr. Wray Bryant
COS 121: Bible I: Introduction

Dr. E. Wray Bryant received his M.Div. from Trinity Lutheran Seminary and his Ph.D. in Hebrew Bible from the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville. He is Assistant Professor of Religion at Capital University

Rev. Tom Snyder
COS 224: Administration & Polity

Rev. Tom Snyder received his Th.M. from Boston University School of Theology. A retired Elder in the East Ohio Conference, he served United Methodist congregations for 36 years.



Rev. Cara Stultz-Costello
COS 224: Administration & Polity

Rev. Stultz-Costello received her M.Div. from Wesley Theological Seminary. An Elder in the East Ohio Conference, she will begin to serve as DS of the Tuscarawas district in July 2020.

Dr. Glen Messer

COS 422: Theological Heritage IV: Wesleyan Movement

Dr. Glen Messer received his M.Div. and Th.D. from Boston University. From 2012-2016 he served as associate ecumenical staff officer for theology and dialogue with the UMC Council of Bishops Office of Christian Unity and Interreligious Relationships.



Rev. Dr. Jason Vickers
COS 524: Theological Reflection: Practice of Ministry

Dr. Jason Vickers received his M.Div. from Nazarene Theological Seminary and his Ph.D. from Southern Methodist University. He is Professor of Theology at Asbury Theological Seminary.



SPIRITUAL FORMATION

WE ARE IN THIS TOGETHER

In a real sense, all life is interrelated. All [men] are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly affects all indirectly. I can never be what I ought to be until you are what you ought to be, and you can never be what you ought to be until I am what I ought to be. This is the interrelated structure of reality. (Martin Luther King, Jr., 1963, from Strength to Love)

We are caught in the middle of strange times. Strange times for us as citizens in a troubled nation and strange times for us as pastors in a conflicted church. And all this during a world-wide pandemic that has forced us to stay away from each other and wear a mask. It seems just as we take great strides forward, we also slip backward, letting go of the lessons we learned along the way (in our health and our democracy).

These past few weeks we watched with sad hearts the death of George Floyd by a rogue policeman in Minneapolis. We watched protests begin and spread across the country reminding us of his dying words, "I can't breathe" and then calling for his "mama." As people of God and servants of the church, as citizens of this country and the larger world, what do we say but "Lord, have mercy."

I have watched as you have, and I have cried through my shock and feelings of helplessness as we all have. And I ask, how did we get here? How could this be happening, again? And the words from Isaiah pop in my head: "Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God" (Isaiah 40:28). Surely God is with us. If God was there when we were "knitted together" (Psalm 139), then surely God is with us now and will be with us to the end. He was with all who died from the corona virus and he was with George Floyd the minute he died, and he is with the policeman who killed him. And yes, Black Lives Matter as much as all life matters, but this moment is about respecting the dignity of people who are pushed to the margins as others move forward. And no, we haven't all moved forward but we do face different obstacles. It's hard for us and many in our churches to understand all this, and it's a slow move to understanding to realize that "none of us are free until all of us are free" (MLK, 1963). If one child goes without a meal, how can I enjoy my dinner? If one black youth is eyed as a criminal while a white youth robs the store, how can I say we are all equal? Yes, we are equal in the eyes of God, but it is a slow move to understanding.

I do not have the answers but I do know that God, "the everlasting God," is with us and together we will find answers. Because through it all hope rises and God leads each of us to a new understanding if we are open. So, my friends, as we go through these troubling times, take heart, God is with us. Keep praying, keep washing your hands (and your churches), and keep working for what is good. It may be a slow move to understanding, but always remember God is working in and through each of us:

TRUST IN THE SLOW WORK OF GOD

Above all, trust in the slow work of God
We are quite naturally impatient in everything
to reach the end without delay
We should like to skip the intermediate stages.
We are impatient of being on the way to something
unknown, something new. And yet it is the law of all progress
that it is made by passing through some stages of instability-
and that it may take a very long time.
And so I think it is with you.
Your ideas mature gradually – let them grow,
let them shape themselves, without undue haste.
Don't try to force them on, as though you could be today what time
(that is to say, grace and circumstances
acting on your own good will)
will make of you tomorrow.
Only God could say what this new spirit gradually forming within you will be.
Give Our Lord the benefit of believing that his hand is leading you,
and accept the anxiety of feeling yourself
in suspense and incomplete.

- Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, S.J. (1881-1955)



Rev. Dr. Rebeka Maples
Director of Spiritual Formation

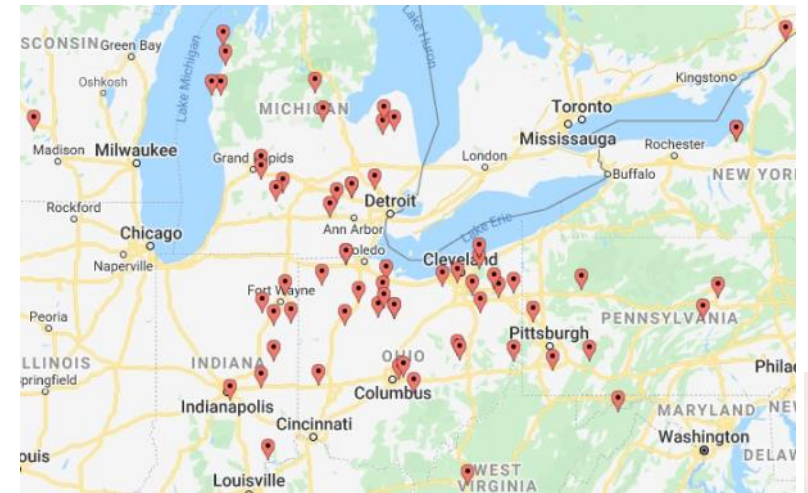
FROM THE COORDINATOR

Thank you all for your adaptability and graciousness in these difficult times! As your classes start online, please 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 is redirecting to me at home so you can still call. I'll also be available whenever your online class meetings begin to meet, so if you have tech issues then, please get in touch!

COURSE PLANNING NOTES:

- **2020 Fall COS 223, 321, 324, and 421 are full.** COS 223 is next offered in the 2021 Summer and 2021 Summer 2-week (afternoon) terms, COS 321 in the 2021 Fall term, COS 324 in the 2021 Winter term, and COS 421 in the 2021 Summer term.

Students from 9 Annual Conferences are attending COS here 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, MMed
Choir Director