

Course of Study School of Ohio

www.cosohio.org

Term	Class Dates	Registration Deadline	Dorm Availability
2023 Spring	April 14-15 & May 5-6	2/14/23	Online
2023 Summer	June 16-17 & July 7-8	4/18/23	Available
2023 Summer 2-Week	July 31-August 11	6/1/23	Available
2023 Fall	Sept. 15-16 & Oct. 13-14	7/18/23	Available
	2024 schedule TBA soon		

FROM THE DIRECTOR

Let me welcome all of you, including three new students and one graduate, to the 2023 Winter Term of the Course of Study School of Ohio (COSSO)!

The center of gravity of Christianity has shifted to the global South, and Christianity is no longer a Western religion. It is then imperative for churches in the West to reexamine critically their own missionary motives and practices as well as to search prayerfully for new paradigms of mission in light of the challenges and opportunities facing the church today. A paradigm of mission that merits continued attention in this post-colonial era is “mission in partnership.” As Sherron Kay George, a long-time PCUSA missionary to Brazil, writes, churches are called to participate in God’s mission through “partnerships of equality, mutuality, reciprocity, and solidarity” (*Called as Partners in Christ’s Service* [2004], 20).

Forming partnership in mission requires patient listening to and serious learning about each other. Each partner in mission is asked to withhold judgment, to make efforts to see things from the other’s viewpoint, and to be open and receptive to new perspectives. Western missionaries, in particular, are to seek to understand fully the complexities of each culture and missional context rather than offer quick solutions or fixes. They are to step back from the position of power and dominance and to pursue instead a relationship of equal partners.

More recently, in his *Freeing Congregational Mission* (2022), Hunter Farrell points to the need for the Western Church to free its mission from the colonial assumptions of White supremacy and patterns of paternalism. He instead argues for “a theology of companionship,” which requires “cultural humility” and which would result in mutual empowerment and co-development. In authentic mission, “we will break bread as companions . . . and our eyes will be opened to see Jesus among us—and in each one” (19).

I hope that the courses we offer at COSSO would help you come to an acute realization that churches of the global South and the West need one another’s presence and perspective for the sake of mutual encouragement, correction, and transformation and of integral mission.

All of us on the COSSO staff are excited to journey with you this term, and pray for God’s continued guidance and blessings on your studies and ministry.

Peace,

Joon-Sik Park

Dr. Joon-Sik Park

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



2023 FALL GRADUATES—CONGRATULATIONS!



Mike Desotell (MI), Charlene Mitchell (West OH), Mark Harriman (MI)



L-R: Donna Fitchette (Upper NY), Bob Green (Western PA), Scott Herald (MI), Mary Johnston (Upper NY), Jeff Foor (Western PA), Zachary Manton (IN), Earl LaLone (Upper NY), Ken Smailes (East OH), Mike Ward (East OH), and Jim Szakacs (East OH)



Rob Snodgrass (MI), Tom Waller (MI)

MEET YOUR INSTRUCTORS



Rev. Dr. Tom and Rev. Jonathan Hanover
COS 124: Transformative Leadership

Rev. Dr. Tom Hanover earned both his M.Div.. and D.Min. from United Theological Seminary. A retired UM elder, he served the West Ohio Conference as a District Superintendent from 2001 to 2008.



Rev. Jonathan Hanover received his M.Div. and D.Min. from United Theological Seminary. A UM elder, he serves Kenton First UMC in the West Ohio Conference.

Rev. Dr. Robin Knowles Wallace
COS 223: Worship and 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 University. She is Emerita Professor of Worship and Music at MTSO.



Rev. Dr. Mark Powell
COS 521: Bible V: Acts, Epistles, and Revelation

Dr. Mark Allan Powell received his M.Div. from Trinity Lutheran Seminary and his Ph.D. from Union Theological Seminary in Virginia. He is retired Professor of New Testament at Trinity Lutheran Seminary.



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.



Dr. Darrell Whiteman
COS 523: Evangelism

Dr. Darrell Whiteman received his Ph.D. from Southern Illinois University. He is in semi-retirement after teaching at Asbury Seminary for 21 years and serving as Vice President at The Mission Society. At Asbury, he was Professor of Cultural Anthropology and later Dean.



SPIRITUAL FORMATION

THE PROPHET “SETS IT OFF,” SO LET’S “HIT IT!”

In her article, “Jesus Came to Set It Off,” Erica Williams uses the modern phrase “set it off” (or start a fight, get into it) to refer to how Jesus disrupts the status quo in his gospel messages. If I were writing about this, I might use the phrase “Hit it” that Captain Pike uses in the new Star Trek series, “Strange New Worlds” (although, I do like “Engage” which Captains Picard and Janeway use in earlier series). When the crew is ready to set off on a new voyage (“to go where no one has gone before”), Captain Pike tells the pilot to “Hit it,” get the ship on its way so they can begin their mission.

In Luke 4:18–21, Jesus says he is ready to engage in his mission (to set it off or hit it), to do what others would not do (proclaim good news to the poor, set prisoners free...). He reflects on his relationship to past freedom fighters when he declares he has been sent to do what Isaiah (61:1-3) prophesied (proclaim good news to the poor, release prisoners...) that a Messiah would come to restore the people from captivity. Jesus wants people to know that he has been sent to do just that, to bring liberation, to free them from oppression. This was a challenging message and he was starting a new movement, with words that could have sounded like “hit it” or “set it off” to our modern adventure-seeking ears.

Jesus grew up in a poor and marginalized town, where the gap between rural peasants and urban elites was clearly marked, like they are in many of our cities. Yet, Jesus confronts this injustice and demonstrates in word and deed what God’s love looks like, which many of us are hesitant to do. He knew he couldn’t be a pastor to everyone, but he knew he was anointed by God (the Spirit of the Lord is on me) to be a prophet of God, to go where others would not go – to engage in the work of love and justice.

We see Jesus “hit it” right from the beginning, he sets it off in a nonviolent way with his ministry: he gives sight to the blind [Mark 10:46–52], and he stops a woman from being stoned to death for adultery by telling her accusers that anyone without sin should be the first to throw a stone [John 8:7]. In Jesus’s final week before being crucified, he goes into the temple during Passover and sets it off by flipping the tables of the money changers and declaring that God’s house is a place of prayer, not a den of thieves [Mark 11:15–17].

A man considered a nobody said “hit it” by showing radical love and speaking the truth to the powers that be. Jesus turned the world around. The empire thought it had shut Jesus down by killing him, but all it did was plant a seed. That seed has produced a great harvest of freedom fighters throughout history, such as Harriet Tubman, Frederick Douglass, Fannie Lou Hamer, Malala Yousafzai, Joan Chittister, Greta Thunberg, John Lewis, Isabelle Wilkerson, Kent Beittel, Angie Cox... Who can you add to the list of ordinary people who have done extraordinary things? Each of us is being called to set it off. Each of us is being called to “hit it” or engage in a ministry that others do not want to do, like pastor a church or work at a homeless shelter or challenge injustice of any form. And it does not matter our age or background or what our status is in society: God is always calling us to stand up or stand out or stand down for truth and justice wherever we are. So come on, shipmates, we’re on this mission together, so let’s “hit it!”

Erica N. Williams, “Jesus Came to Set It Off,” in *We Cry Justice: Reading the Bible with the Poor People’s Campaign*, ed. Liz Theoharis (Minneapolis, MN: Broadleaf Books, 2021), 49–50.



Rev. Dr. Rebeka Maples
Spiritual Formation Director

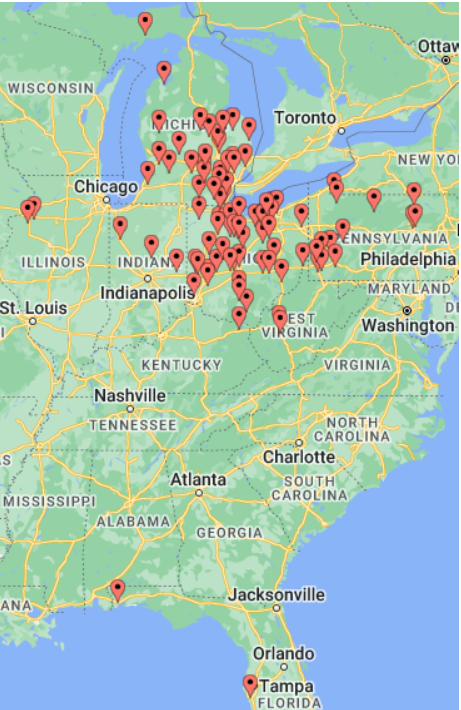
FROM THE COORDINATOR

Here’s a quick review of the past year:

	2022
Students who took classes at COSSO:	209
Classes completed:	320
New students:	53
Graduates:	28

2022 COSSO student Annual Conferences: Alabama-West Florida, East Ohio, Florida, Great Plains, Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, North Alabama, North Carolina, Northern Illinois, South Carolina, Susquehanna, Texas, Upper New York, West Ohio, West Virginia, Western Pennsylvania, Wisconsin

Students from 11 Annual Conferences are taking classes in 2023 Winter:



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 do so in person.



Lori Douglas Weaver, MMed
Choir Director