

Course of Study School of Ohio

<https://cosohio.org/>

Term	Class Dates	Registration Deadline	Dorm Availability
2024 Fall (COS 223 and 324 are FULL)	Sept. 13-14 & Oct. 11-12	7/15/24	Hybrid term: <u>rooms available</u>
2025 Winter	Feb. 7-8 & March 7-8	12/10/24	Online term
2025 Spring	April 4-5 & May 2-3	2/4/25	Online term
2025 Summer	July 11-12 & Aug. 1-2	5/13/25	Online term

FROM THE DIRECTOR

Let me welcome all of you, including sixteen new students and one graduate, to the 2024 Summer Term of the Course of Study School of Ohio (COSSO)!

Thomas Merton, in his *No Man Is an Island*, writes that it is every person's lifelong vocation to find the true self, to come to the full discovery of who he or she is. For Merton, first, we find our true self in Christ, who is risen from the dead and in whom all beings find their meaning and purpose. And, secondly, we find our true self in and through others. The full discovery of who we really are requires life together.

I am grateful to be a part of the COS community and look forward to our life together growing and deepening in the grace of God. Dietrich Bonhoeffer's *Life Together* is a classic on the life of Christian community based on his own experience of community at an underground seminary during the Nazi regime. In a chapter titled "Service," Bonhoeffer lists a few services that we owe to one another in community. First, *the service of listening*—listening to one another not with half an ear, but with full attention. Second, *the service of active helpfulness*—our willingness to be interrupted by God for the sake of others, like the good Samaritan. Third, *the service of bearing with others*, bearing with even the weaknesses and peculiarities of others. And then finally, *the service of the Word of God*—speaking the Word to others and allowing others to speak the Word to us while clinging to both truth and love. Thus, in a true Christian community, we carry out the services of attentive listening, active helping, patient forbearing, and proclaiming of the Word.

Although our classes meet mostly online, except in the Fall term, I hope that students at COSSO would grasp the significance of life together and continue to seek to develop a deep sense of community among themselves. The kind of community we create among ourselves has direct implications for the integrity and effectiveness of our mission in and for the world.

FROM THE DIRECTOR, cont.

All of us on the COSSO staff look forward to journeying with you this term, and pray for the continued guidance and blessings of the Holy Spirit 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



2024 SPRING COS GRADUATES—CONGRATULATIONS!



Katherine Keller (Desert Southwest), Robert Spaulding (East Ohio), and Cindy Ware (West Ohio)



MEET YOUR INSTRUCTORS



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. Dr. Ellis Conley

COS 224: Administration & Polity

Dr. Ellis Conley received his M.Div. from Candler School of Theology at Emory University and his D.Min. from Drew University. A retired elder in the West Virginia Conference, he has served as a District Superintendent and the Chair of the Board of Ordained Ministry.



Dr. Denise Lewis

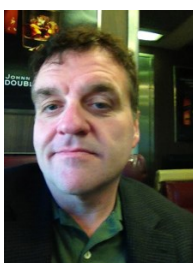
COS 323: Congregational Care

Dr. Denise Y. Lewis received her M.A. in Counseling Ministries from Methodist Theological School in Ohio and her Ph.D. from Ohio University. She is a licensed professional counselor and Associate Professor of Counseling at Grace College & Seminary.

Rev. Dr. Daniel Flores

COS 422: Theological Heritage IV: Wesleyan Movement

Rev. Dr. Daniel Flores received his M.Div. from Princeton Theological Seminary and his Ph.D. from Drew University. An ordained UMC elder, he is the Senior Librarian and Library Director at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary.



Dr. Glen Messer

COS 524: Theological Reflection: Practice of Ministry

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.

SPIRITUAL FORMATION

SILENCE AFTER THE STORM



Silence after the storm
dew after the rain
sweet moisture in the air.

Silence dispels the scattered sounds
fills a desert place
heals an empty space.

Ahh, yes,
the sound of silence,
a force to quiet
the weary soul.

I have been blessed this summer to spend over a month on my daughter's small ranch, in what is called the high desert of southern California. It was cold when I arrived (wished I had brought my down jacket) and sweltering hot (110 degrees) when I left. I was fortunate to have time to myself for reflection, walking, writing, and spending mindful moments just "being" in the silence.

Some of my most inspirational moments come when I am surrounded by nature, walking or simply being outside, in a garden, near the ocean or in the desert, sitting on my urban balcony or on a bench near abbey ruins where sheep wander freely. Nature is powerful and mysterious; it can soothe and comfort as well as destroy and unravel. Sometimes the beauty of nature floods over me, and words flow as though they are writing themselves in rhythm with nature's heartbeat. Other times all the violence and injustice in the world fill me with anger, and the words seem to erupt from nowhere. Thus, writing offers solace in peaceful times, and refuge when things are falling apart. Silence, though, is the essence of all things and intersects with all the experiences we move in and out of in the course of our lives. Chaos and busyness can disrupt the silence we seek, but we need to know silence to know "the peace that the world cannot give" (John 14:27).

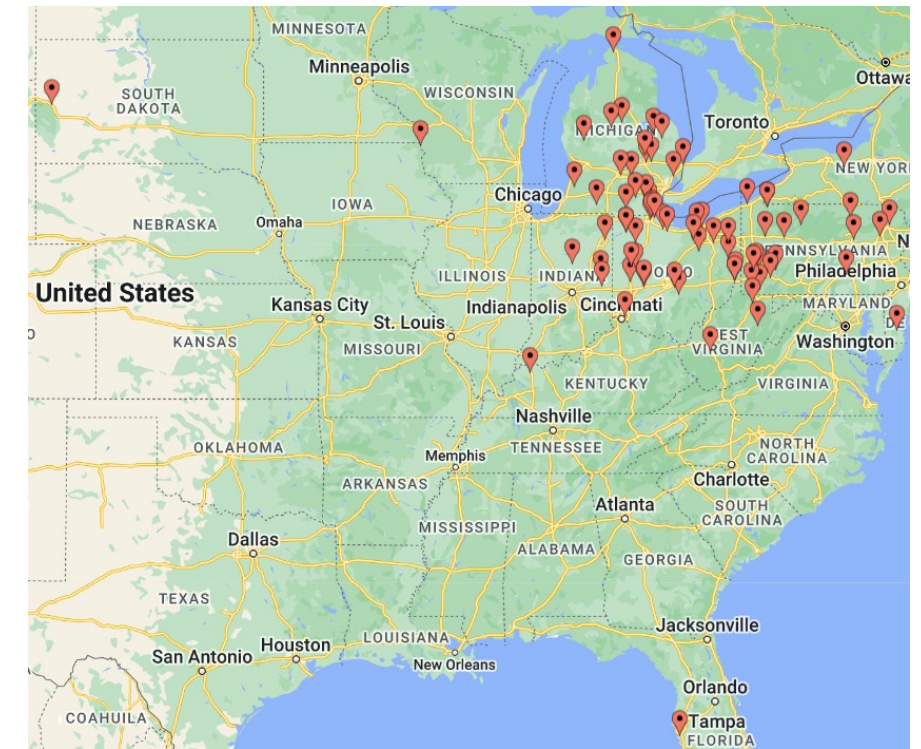
No matter what, without silence we cannot truly know all that we experience in life. So, it makes me a little anxious when I am immersed in peaceful times because part of me knows this will not last, yet that does not change the need for silent moments. It is those moments that deepen and strengthen our spiritual journey. So, when you are in the blessedness of peace and silence or the chaos of doubt and fear, don't worry about what you will do next or how long it will last or where is God, just hold the moments in your heart for God is there where you are. Silence will teach you this.

Rev. Dr. Rebeka Maples
Spiritual Formation Director



FROM THE COORDINATOR

Students from 13 Annual Conferences are taking classes in the 2024 Summer 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 do so in person.



Lori Douglas Weaver, MEd

