



Nazarene Theological Seminary

1700 E Meyer Blvd • Kansas City, MO 64131 • 816/268-5400

THE 680 – Wesley's Life & Thought Fall 2011

Essential Information

Please refer to the following resources for information essential for the successful completion of courses and degree programs at Nazarene Theological Seminary. Links to these resources are available in the Essential Information section at <http://support.nts.edu>.

- NTS Mission Statement & Purpose Degree Objectives
- Tips for online learning success
- NTS library services
- NTS textbook information
- Online technical requirements and Moodle support information
- NTS Student Handbook including statements on quality of work, plagiarism, and academic probation
- Handbook for Inclusive Language

Instructor Information

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Catalog Description

A study of John Wesley's theology as it was influenced by forces before and during the 18th century; as its foundation was laid in his own personal spiritual history, particularly from 1725 to 1738; as its development is revealed in his sermons and writings; and as it has been understood by his major interpreters. Special attention will be given to his doctrine of Christian perfection.

Course Narrative & Rationale

John Wesley was a "classical" Anglican priest overtly committed to the aim (*teleiosis*) and attainment (*teleos*) of holiness. He was consigned to bring new life and meaning to the old soteriological structures that had become strictures within the Church of England. Wesley was working from within to bring renewal. Theologically, this was accomplished by making *explicit* what was *implicit* within the Church of England. Pragmatically, the bands, societies, class meetings, etc accomplished this.

As a result of this commitment to holiness his assessment of the Christian life became what George Croft Cell has aptly stated; "an original and unique synthesis of the Protestant ethic of grace and Catholic ethic of holiness." (347) Albert Outler seems to share Cell's judgment of Wesley's distinctive doctrinal perspective and better qualifies Cell's thesis by labeling it an "evangelical catholicism." (viii) Outler finds Wesley to be a major contributor in the flow of historic Christianity because he had:

. . . glimpsed the underlying unity of Christian truth in both the Catholic and Protestant traditions. . . In the name of Christianity both Biblical and patristic, he managed to transcend the stark doctrinal disjunctions, which had spilled so much ink and blood since Augsburg and Trent. In their stead, he proceeded to develop a theological fusion of faith and good works, Scripture and tradition, revelation and reason, God's sovereignty and human freedom, universal redemption and conditional election, Christian liberty and an ordered polity, the assurance of pardon and the risks of "falling from grace," original sin and Christian perfection. (Viii)

The task, therefore, of this course is to examine the historical setting just prior to and during Wesley's time; in order to unravel the complex tapestry of sources and events that shaped the thought and practice of this man Wesley. The result will then hopefully illuminate our understanding of Wesley's theology; as well as place him in historic Christianity, proper. Thus, the intended scope of the course will be both historical and theological; while always focusing upon Wesley's assessment of the Christian life.

Degree Objectives

M.Div.

1. The articulation of the knowledge of this God through prayerful, scholarly study and a deepening understanding of the Christian Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments.
2. The development of wisdom and discernment through engagement with the intellectual challenge of the literature of the Christian faith, by the critical, scholarly study of the history and theology of Christianity, and of the literature and practices of Christian spirituality, ethics and ministry.
3. The growth of mature self-awareness and self-understanding as flawed human beings, reconciled to God and to each other within the Christian community, who are being transformed into the perfect likeness of Christ, filled with his Spirit, and gifted for the service of humanity.
4. The investigation of human society, thought and culture in order to articulate clear and coherent views of the context of the mission of the Church, and to develop an

understanding of the Church as the community of faith with a passion for the gospel engaging in mission to different cultures.

Course Outcomes

Upon successful completion of the course you will have (R = Course requirement directed toward achieving objective):

- Demonstrated acquaintance with the life and thought of John Wesley. (R3, Course Outline Lectures, R2, R1)
- Demonstrated understanding of the salient "distinctives" of Wesleyan theology and tradition. (R2, R3)
- Demonstrated understanding of the "place" and "legacy" of Wesley within the catholic Church. (R1, R2)

Required Texts & Course Materials

- 1) Kenneth Collins, *The Theology of John Wesley: Holy Love and The Shape of Grace*. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2007). (423 pages)
- 2) Richard P. Heitzenrater, *Wesley and the People Called Methodists*. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995). (350 pages)
- 3) Randy L. Maddox, *Responsible Grace, John Wesley's Practical Theology*. (Nashville: Kingswood Books, 1994). (418)

Recommended Texts & Course Materials

Most of the primary sources need for this Course (especially the '*Theological Commentaries*') can be found at: <http://wesley.nnu.edu>

Course Outline

- I. **Wesley's Theological Biography**
 - a) A Brief Historical Survey
 - b) The First Rise of Methodism 1725-1735
 - 1) Childhood and Youth
 - 2) The Oxford Years
 - c) The Second Rise of Methodism 1735-1738
 - 1) The Georgia Interlude
 - d) The Third Rise of Methodism 1738-1740
 - 1) London: Field Preaching

II. **Wesley As An Eclectic Folk-Theologian**

- a) A Theological Historiography
- b) Theological Method
- c) Polemics and Irenics
- d) The "Third Alternative"
- e) Fundamental Doctrines
- f) The Ordo Salutis

III. **Salient Doctrines of the Christian Life**

- a) The Doctrine of God
 - 1) Creation
 - 2) Providence
 - 3) Trinity
 - 4) Predestination
 - 5) Prevenient Grace
- b) The Doctrine of Humankind
 - 1) Natural Person
 - 2) Image of God
 - 3) The Fall and its Results
 - 4) Original Sin and Actual Sin
 - 5) Guilt and Depravity of Original Sin
 - 6) Freedom and Bondage of the Will
- c) The Ordo Salutis
 - 1) Prevenient Grace/Original Sin
 - 2) Repentance/Faith
 - 3) Justification/Sanctification
 - 4) Entire Sanctification/Glorification
- d) The Atonement
 - 1) The Person and Work of Christ
 - 2) The Redemptive Work of the Holy Spirit
 - 3) Assurance (Witness of the Spirit)
- e) Christian Perfection
 - 1) Entire Sanctification
 - 2) Sin in Believers and Repentance of Believers
 - 3) Baptism with the Holy Spirit
- f) Ecclesiology

- 1) Nature of the Church
- 2) Ministry
- 3) Means of Grace (Sacraments)
- 4) Moral Concerns and Development

Course Assignments & Requirements

1. Final Reflection & Synthesis Exam:

There will be **one** major **Critical Thinking Exam** given at the end of the semester (Final Exam Week) covering the textbooks, class lectures and class discussion from each section of the Course Outline. The nature of this exam will be entirely **essay** covering the reading (texts) and lecture material. This exam will constitute **1/4th** of your final grade. The date for this exam is set according to the Seminary calendar.

2. Theological Commentaries:

Each student is to write and present **3 theological commentaries**. Each theological commentary is to be written on one chosen doctrine (3 different doctrines for each theological commentary) that is listed under the *Salient Doctrines of the Christian Life*. (Cf. Course Outline, section III.) For example, the doctrine of God, the doctrine of humankind, the via-salutis, the atonement, Christian perfection, and ecclesiology will comprise the doctrinal theme for each of the theological commentaries. Each commentary is to be approximately **15 typewritten pages**. The class presentations for each theological commentary will not commence until the second half of the semester, and those presentations will be given only as there is sufficient time. Not every student will be able to present all of their commentaries in class, but every student will be able to present some of their work to the class for discussion and critique. This means that the **sum** of your grade for your theological commentaries will be based **solely** upon the **written work** and **not** on your oral presentation of that work. All **3 theological commentaries** will constitute **2/4th** of your final grade. Theological commentaries of your choosing are due on these three dates: **September 20, October 18, and November 29**. The dates for "**class presentations**" on your chosen theological commentaries are as follows:

<u>Theological Commentaries:</u>	<u>Dates:</u>
1. The Doctrine of God	September 20
2. The Doctrine of Humankind	October 4
3. The Via-Salutis	October 18
4. The Atonement	November 1
5. Christian Perfection	November 15
6. Ecclesiology	November 29

3. Table Forum:

There will be one class period (**November 15, 2011**) set aside to discuss the assigned textbooks. The first round of *Table Talks* will consist of two groups with five to seven students in each group. Each group of five will engage the other group in a lively spirited *Table Talk* (designed after Luther's *Table Talks*) ☺ ☺ on specifically chosen chapters of the assigned texts. The professor will serve as the moderator of the discussions. Assigned chapters of the book to be discussed by each group will not be given until the day of the class seminar. The configuration of the second round of *Table Talks* will be as the first round but will be given a different set of chapters on the assigned readings. Hence, the both rounds of *Table Talks* will be responsible for reading *The Theology of John Wesley, Wesley and the People Called Methodists and Responsible Grace*. This *Table Talk* will constitute 1/4th of your final grade.

Distribution of Student Learning Hours

	Hours
Face-to-face Class Sessions	37
Online Participation in forums, groups, etc.	0
Reading	47.64
Theological Commentaries (15 hours per commentary)	45
Other Assignments and Learning Activities	0
Critical Reflection & Synthesis Exam (Final Exam Week)	5
TOTAL	135

Method for Submitting Assignments

All assignments will be uploaded for this course in Moodle:

<https://moodle.nts.edu/login/index.php>

Form and Style Expectations

Turabian style and format is not expected for these 'Theological Commentaries.' Simply insert in parenthesis the name of Wesley's sermon, letter, journal entry and/or the secondary author and title of book or article along with the page number(s) inside or at the end the paragraph(s) of your paper. Attach a bibliography of sources at the end of each Theological Commentary.

Inclusive Language

NTS is committed to the equality of women and men. Recognizing that people have often used the English language in ways that imply the exclusion or inferiority of women, NTS urges students, faculty, and staff to avoid sexist language in public discourse, in classroom discussions, and in their writings. All written work presented to meet course requirements must use gender inclusive language.

Policy Regarding Late Work & Missed Exams

In the spirit of 'fairness' and 'class integrity,' all late work that is submitted before the last day of class sessions (Late Work will not be accepted during final exams week) will be graciously accepted, but with a letter grade reduction. This means that if a late paper is turned in on the last day of class, the best your potentially perfect paper (A) can expect to receive is a B for that late submission.

Class Attendance

Attendance at classes is essential for realizing the maximum benefit of your education. Since the professor in each course is best acquainted with the importance of consistent attendance, he or she will determine the rules for attendance.

If you must be absent because of extenuating circumstances, contact the professor as soon as possible to discuss the situation. If a student is absent for four or more weeks, the professor may automatically fail the student.

Daily attendance records must be reported for those obtaining V.A. and Department of Education benefits. Students must make the professor aware if their attendance must be recorded.

Policy on Incompletes

Only under the rarest of circumstances will the professor approve an incomplete. Only '*Death in the family*' or the '*prolonged illness*' of the student will be considered as a justifiable cause for petition. For the *most* part, all other requests will not be considered. And yet, if the rarest of unforeseeable circumstances do arise, and those circumstances are not the abovementioned ('*death in the family*' and '*prolonged illness*'), then, and only then, *may* an incomplete be granted by the professor. And, if the incomplete is to be granted for reasons other than '*death in the family*' and '*prolonged illness*,' it will be given with a letter grade penalty. For example, if the final grade earned in the class results in an A, and an incomplete was granted for other reasons besides '*death and prolonged illness*,' then the final grade to be submitted to the registrar will be a B.

Additional Costs

No additional costs are anticipated for this course.

Course Grading

Evaluation Criteria: (The '*Theological Commentaries*' & '*Final Reflection & Synthesis Exam*')

These '*Theological Commentaries*' as well as your '*Final Reflection and Synthesis Exam*' require good writing skills. To do well certain things should be accomplished or avoided:

- a. Do not simply give me back my notes in a summarization.
- b. Make an argument in every paper. To do this you should avoid merely repeating a laundry list of disconnected ideas.
- c. Integrate class lectures, discussion and readings of sermons, letters, treatises, journals, etc., into your theological commentary.
- d. Make an intelligible argument in every paper. This requires that you get the basic information correct, that your argument makes sense given the basic information, and that your essay is submitted in a presentable form. To accomplish this, you should:
 1. Avoid misspelled words, run-on sentences, and incomplete sentences.
 2. Avoid "there is" as a subject if possible, and the use of the pronoun "it" without an antecedent.
 3. Avoid complicated subject formations. This can usually be done if you check to see if you have piled up prepositions. For instance, a subject such as "The form of the way of life in Miller's novel about Leibowitz" is too complex and doesn't say anything. Sentences like this is like "language on a holiday."
 4. Avoid complicated verbal formations that hide rather than convey significance. For example, "It is to be understood by anyone who thinks about it that . . ." Use the passive voice as little as possible.
 5. Check to see if your sentences flow upon each other, avoid *non sequiturs* -- that is, when one sentence does not follow upon a previous one but introduces an unexpected interruption of thought which cannot be accounted for in the context.

My Evaluation of your written work will use the following criteria:

1. Presentation	1	2	3	4	5
(This criterion evaluates writing style, clarity of prose, basic grammatical and spelling competence, sentence and paragraph flow.)					
2. Description of Sources (Primary & Secondary)	1	2	3	4	5
(This criterion evaluates the student's ability to describe in her or his own language the position of the theologians cited.)					
3. Comprehensiveness of Sources	1	2	3	4	5
(This criterion evaluates the student's breadth of sources (letters, journals, sermons, treatises, and the best of secondary texts) used in composing essays.)					
4. Critical Engagement with Sources	1	2	3	4	5
(This criterion examines whether a student's work has taken the step beyond mere description and critically engaged with the sources she or he has drawn upon by subjecting them to a critical theological analysis.)					
5. Development of Position and a Coherent Theme	1	2	3	4	5
(This criterion determines not only if a student has critically assessed the sources and arguments present in an essay, but also if he or she has done this through the development of her or his own coherent position.)					

Summary of Grading for Assignments:

Theological Commentaries will constitute 2/4th of the final grade.

Final Reflection & Synthesis Exam will constitute 1/4th of the final grade.

Table Talks will constitute 1/4th of the final grade.

Grade Scale:

A	100-90
B	89-80
C	79-70
D	69-60
F	59-0

In accordance with the provisions of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, NTS is committed to providing students with disabilities the opportunity to participate and benefit from its programs and activities. Accordingly NTS will make reasonable modifications to its programs and activities to accommodate otherwise qualified students with disabilities, unless such modifications would impose an undue burden on the operation of the particular program or activity or would fundamentally alter the nature or purpose of the program or activity. Students needing accommodations should contact the Office of the Registrar. They also should contact the instructor no later than the end of the first class session to discuss learning needs and adaptive strategies, which have been beneficial for the student in the past.

Course Assignment Calendar

Date	Week	Assignment
		1. The Doctrine of God September 20
		2. The Doctrine of Humankind October 4
		3. The Via-Salutis October 18
		4. The Atonement November 1
		5. Christian Perfection November 15
		6. Ecclesiology November 29
Nov. 18		Table Talk (Maddox & Collins, Heitzenrater)
TBA	Finals Week	Final Reflection & Synthesis Exam

Bibliography

An extensive Wesley bibliography by Ken Collins will be placed in the section 'Course Resources' of Moodle. Cf. <http://www.asburyseminary.edu>