

Syllabus for DS 365 United Methodist Doctrine

Fall 2007

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**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** This course will cover the essential elements of Wesley's theology as found in select sermons and the doctrinal standards as they are identified in the UM Book of Discipline. Attention will be given to the development of doctrine in the United Methodist Church and to central theological questions that arise about the use of doctrinal standards.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES:**

- 1) To become acquainted with the existence and use of doctrinal standards in the United Methodist Church.
- 2) To understand the process of establishing doctrinal standards in the United Methodist Church.
- 3) To become familiar with Wesley's understanding of the order of salvation.
- 4) To explore some ethical implications of Wesley's theology.
- 5) To continue to develop critical thinking skills
- 6) To continue to develop writing skills

**TEXTS:**

*Required:*

The United Methodist Church. *The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church, 2004*. Edited by Harriett Jane Olson, et al. Nashville: The United Methodist Publishing House, 2004.

Langford, Thomas A., editor. *Doctrine and Theology in the United Methodist Church*. Nashville: Kingswood Books, 1991.

Wesley, John. *Explanatory Notes Upon the New Testament*. (on reserve, and link provided to web resource)

\_\_\_\_\_. *John Wesley's Sermons: An Anthology*. Edited by Albert C. Outler and Richard Heitzenrater. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1991.

Lovin, Robin W. "When the Church Is a Church: Doctrinal Standards in Denominational Contexts," in *The Drew Gateway* 57:1 (on reserve)

*Sacramental Faithfulness: Guidelines for Receiving People From The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons)*. Document produced by The General Board of Discipleship. (on reserve, and link provided to web resource)

<http://www.gbod.org/worship/articles/sacramental/default.html>

Some handouts will be given out in class.

*Recommended:*

Campbell, Ted. A. *Methodist Doctrine: The Essentials*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1999.

Outler, Albert C. *John Wesley's Sermons: An Introduction*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1991.

**ASSIGNMENTS:**

Read in advance of each session the material assigned for each session, and come prepared to discuss the material.

Write one two- to three-page paper (due October 4). (Instructions will be given on the first day of class.)

Write one four- to five-page paper on one set of Wesley's sermons (due the day of discussion on those sermons).

Write one final paper (due December 13).

Bring a written answer to the questions on Wesley's sermons.

Attend class regularly.

**GRADING:**

First paper: 20%

Second paper: 25%

Final paper: 45%

Class participation: 10%

Unless an extension has been arranged in advance, late papers will not be accepted.

**SCHEDULE:****August 30:**

Introduction and organization.

Selections from *The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church, 2004*:

pp. 21-39 (selected readings from the Constitution), the Preamble; Division One; Division Two, section III (Restrictive Rules); Division Five, Article I (Amendments).

pp. 41-59, Part II, "Doctrinal Standards and Our Theological Task"  
(paragraphs 101 and 102)

pp. 216-217 (paragraph 324.9, regarding requirements for probationary membership and commissioning)

pp. 222-225 (paragraph 330, regarding ordination of deacons and admission into full connection)

pp. 232-236 (paragraphs 335-336, regarding admission of elders into full connection and ordination)

pp. 251-252 (paragraph 347.3, regarding transfer of ministerial membership from other denominations)

pp. 719-720 (paragraph 2702.1 and 2702.3, regarding chargeable offenses)

**September 6:**

Development, establishment, and use of doctrinal standards in the United Methodist Church.

Reading:

Selections from *The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church, 2004*:  
pp. 9-20, the Historical Statement  
Langford, pp. 93-108 (ch. 7, Heitzenrater), pp. 109-124 (ch. 8, Heitzenrater), 125-  
142 (ch. 9, Oden)

Recommended:

Outler, pp. 39-63 (ch. 3 of *John Wesley's Sermons: An Introduction*), Campbell,  
pp. 9-33, 116-122.

**September 13: No class**

**September 20: No class**

**September 27:**

Disciplinary documents: The Articles of Religion, Confession of Faith, General  
Rules.

Reading:

Selections from *The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church, 2004*:  
pp. 59-74, Part II, Section 3 of "Doctrinal Standards and Our Theological  
Task" (paragraph 103)

Lovin, "When the church Is a Church: Doctrinal Standards in Denominational  
Contexts" (on reserve)

Selected handouts

**October 4: First paper due.**

True religion.

Question: What is the genuine religion of Jesus Christ, according to John Wesley?

Reading:

Sermon 43• (1765), "The Scripture Way of Salvation," pp. 371-380 in *John  
Wesley's Sermons: An Anthology* [Note: page numbers will always refer to  
the *Anthology*. Sermons may also be found according to number in the critical  
edition, *John Wesley's Works*, vols. 1-4: Sermons I-IV, edited by Albert C.  
Outler (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1984-87). An asterisk beside the sermon  
number indicates that this sermon is one of the forty-four standard sermons.  
A bullet indicates that the sermon is one of those added to make fifty-three  
standard sermons.]

Sermon 2\* (1741), "The Almost Christian," 61-68

Sermon 77 (1780), "Spiritual Worship," 431-440

Sermon 120 (1789), "The Unity of the Divine Being," 531-539

Recommended:

Outler, pp. 64-74 (ch. 4 of *John Wesley's Sermons: An Introduction*)

**October 11: Reading Week**

**October 18:**

The human condition and God's response.

Question: How was the image of God in human beings affected by the fall and how is it restored?

Reading:

- Sermon 141 (1730), "The Image of God," pp. 13-21
- Sermon 9\* (1746), "The Spirit of Bondage and Adoption," pp. 133-144
- Sermon 44\* (1759), "Original Sin," pp. 325-334
- Sermon 62 (1781), "The End of Christ's Coming," pp. 441-450

### **October 25:**

Justification.

Question: What is the nature of the faith which justifies sinful human beings?

Reading:

- Sermon 1\* (1738), "Salvation by Faith," pp. 39-48
- Sermon 5\* (1746), "Justification by Faith," pp. 111-122
- Sermon 7\* (1746), "The Way to the Kingdom," pp. 123-132
- Sermon 10\* (1746), "The Witness of the Spirit, I," pp. 145-156
- Sermon 20• (1765), "The Lord Our Righteousness," pp. 381-391

### **November 1:**

Grace and Human Responsibility

Question: What is the relationship of faith and works in the process of salvation?

Reading:

- Sermon 110 (1739), "Free Grace," pp. 49-60
- Sermon 35\* (1750), "The Law Established Through Faith, Discourse I," pp. 267-276
- Sermon 36\* (1750), "The Law Established Through Faith, Discourse II," pp. 277-285
- Sermon 85 (1785), "On Working Out Our Own Salvation," pp. 485-492
- Sermon 118 (1788), "On the Omnipresence of God," pp. 523-529

### **November 8:**

Sanctification.

Question: What does Wesley mean by "holiness" or "perfection, and how does one become "holy" or "perfect"?"

Reading:

- Sermon 40\* (1741), "Christian Perfection," pp. 69-84
- Sermon 19\* (1748), "The Great Privilege of Those that are Born of God," pp. 183-192
- Sermon 45\* (1760), "The New Birth," pp. 335-345
- Sermon 13• (1763), "On Sin in Believers," pp. 359-370
- Sermon 14• (1767), "The Repentance of Believers," pp. 405-418

### **November 15:**

The Christian life.

An orientation to Wesley's *Notes*.

Proper commitment to doctrine.

Question: What should the life of the “real Christian” be like? (*Use first five sermons only to answer this question.*)

Reading:

Sermon 16\* (1746), “The Means of Grace,” pp. 157-172

Sermon 24\* (1748), “Upon our Lord’s Sermon on the Mount, IV,” pp. 193-206

Sermon 28\* (1748), “Upon our Lord’s Sermon on the Mount, VIII,” pp. 239-254

Sermon 50\* (1760), “The Use of Money,” pp. 347-358

Sermon 87 (1781), “The Danger of Riches,” pp. 451-464

Selections in *Explanatory Notes Upon the New Testament*:

The preface.

The preface to Matthew.

The Beatitudes (Mt. 5: 1-12)

Matthew 27: 25, 28: 19

Luke 15: 11-32

Romans chapters 3 and 8

I Timothy 2: 1-15

Revelation 1: 1-3 (his first note)

Sermon 38\* (1750), “A Caution Against Bigotry,” pp. 287-298

Sermon 39\* (1750), “Catholic Spirit,” pp. 299-310

## **November 22: Thanksgiving Break**

### **November 29:**

Doctrine and theology.

Reading:

Langford, pp. 20-25 (ch. 1, Outler), pp. 39-51 (ch. 3, Ogden), pp. 75-88 (ch. 6, Outler), reread pp. 93-108 (ch. 7, Heitzenrater), pp. 162-167 (Ch. 12, Cobb), pp. 168-175 (ch. 13, Ogletree), pp. 203-207 (ch. 16, Langford)

*The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church, 2004*, pp. 74-86, Part II, Section 4 of “Doctrinal Standards and Our Theological Task” (paragraph 104)

Recommended:

*The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church, 1972*, pp. 39-82, Part II, section 4, “Our Theological Task” (on reserve)

### **December 6:**

Doctrine in the life of the church.

Reading:

*Sacramental Faithfulness: Guidelines for Receiving People From The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons)* (on reserve) [Note: You may also find this text through my website (address at top of syllabus).]

## **Final paper due December 13.**

## **INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE:**

I expect language regarding human beings to be inclusive of women and men. If, for instance, you intend to refer to human beings as such, I expect to read “humankind” instead of “mankind.” I encourage language about God to be inclusive.