

DS 360: UNITED METHODIST HISTORY
Spring 2008 Wednesdays 9:30-11:20 A.M.
Professor Diane Lobody
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Gault 238: office hours by appointment

DS 360: United Methodist History is designed to meet one of the United Methodist Church's denominational studies requirements for persons preparing for professional ministry as Elders, Deacons, or Deaconesses. The course covers the rise of the Methodist movement in England under the leadership of the Wesleys; the birth and development of the various Methodist denominations, the Evangelical Association, and the United Brethren in the U.S.A.; and the history of The United Methodist Church as a world movement.

TEXTS

Background Reading:

Please read the following books at your own pace during the span of weeks listed:

January 30- March 19:

- Steven Tomkins. *John Wesley: A Biography*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2003
- Richard Heitzenrater. *Wesley and the People Called Methodists*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995

March 26-May14:

- Kenneth Cracknell and Susan J. White. *An Introduction to World Methodism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005
- John McEllhenney. *200 Years of United Methodism: An Illustrated History. Electronic Edition*. Madison, New Jersey: Drew University, 1984, 1997. To access the text, go to:
<http://oldwww.drew.edu/books/200Years/200UM/homepage.htm>

Discussion Reading:

In class sessions on dates specified in the syllabus, we will explore some of the writings of John and Charles Wesley. Unless otherwise noted in the assignment, all of these may be found on the General Board of Global Ministries website:

<http://gbgm-umc.org/Umhistory/Wesley/>

I encourage you to read more than the assigned works of John and Charles Wesley. Browse through these marvelous writings and sit for awhile with the ones that capture your attention or ignite your imagination.

On March 5 our class session will be devoted to conversations and reflections on two of Wesley's sermons and on this book:

- Theodore Jennings. *Good News to the Poor: John Wesley's Evangelical Economics*. Nashville: Abingdon Press. 1990

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

COURTESY AND RESPONSIBILITY: Because so much of our vocational identity comes into play here, United Methodist History can be a very intense course. We will be living with each other through some challenging conversations during the semester. Sojourning together in this community will require strong commitment, unflagging energy, and some basic agreements about behavior. Being Wesleyan, we will think of these agreements as a "method" for growth in holiness. And as our father in Christ, Mr. Wesley, reminds us, every method is made up of rules. Here are the "General Rules" for this class:

- **Be prayerful.** Pray for the class. Pray for your colleagues. Pray for your professor. Pray for our Church. And pray for yourself--- for illumination, endurance, faith, joy, forgiveness, hope, love, holiness.
- **Be gracious toward one another in your conversations and demeanor.** Do your best to curb your more obnoxious social habits, like dominating discussions or playing computer games while you are pretending to take notes on your professor's brilliant lectures.
- **Be punctual.** Actually, that's a direct quote from Wesley himself. Show up on time, every time. Be where you are supposed to be when you are supposed to be there.
- **Be fully present.** Relish the gift of time and leisure to think about our tradition, to sojourn with our mothers and fathers in the faith, and to enjoy the community of this class.
- **Be responsible to and for one another.** Read the assignments so you can talk about them in an informed and intelligent way. Take on your fair share of responsibility for leading and supporting class activities. Seek out your more reserved colleagues and make sure everyone's voice is heard.

CLASS PARTICIPATION: Your active and lively involvement in class discussions and activities is essential. As we make our way (or race our way) through United Methodist History, I want you to keep pondering the following questions:

- What is the strength, beauty, power, or gift of this particular part of our tradition? In what way is this part of our heritage a good model for us today?
- What is the weakness, ugliness, danger, or sin of this specific piece of our tradition? In what way is this part of our heritage a horrible warning to us today?
- What have been the long-term effects of this historical event, practice, or teaching?
- What part of this heritage do we need to reclaim, affirm, teach, and practice in new ways today?

- What part of this heritage do we need to grieve, heal, repent, and change today?
- Do I still believe I belong in this denominational tradition?

PARTICIPATION IN A WESLEYAN “BAND MEETING”: My hope is that you will learn a significant part of the Wesleyan tradition by actually living it in this course. To that end, each person will be assigned to a Wesleyan Band on the first day of class. Band meetings were central to the spiritual growth of early Methodists and crucial to the formation of a vibrant and dynamic Methodist ministry. You are required to meet with your Band for one hour each week, using this “means of grace” for prayer and conversation. The structure of the Band meetings will be based on John Wesley’s “Rules for the Bands,” which will be distributed on the first day of class. **Your Band will meet at a time determined by its members and not during the regular class sessions, thus teaching you the splendid Wesleyan discipline of self-sacrifice.** As was the case in Wesley’s Bands, you are to be accountable to one another in this exercise, listening to one another with generosity of spirit and speaking the truth to one another in love.

LIVING HISTORY EXTRAVAGANZAS: In collaboration with a few of your lunatic colleagues, you will help plan and lead a 40-minute class presentation on one of a list of designated topics. I will point you in the right directions for all the sources you will require. Your task is to do the appropriate research, share the fruits of your study with one another and with your professor, and then create an engaging and lively presentation that plunges the rest of the class into this part of our denomination’s history. I promise you that, unlike the occasionally miserable presentations through which you have suffered in other contexts, these extravaganzas will be spiritually nourishing, intellectually challenging, vocationally provoking, or vastly entertaining. Sometimes, through God’s splendid grace and our delighted cooperation, they prove to be all four.

Your individual work on this assignment will contribute 20% to your final grade.

MIDTERM AND FINAL TAKE-HOME ESSAY EXAMINATIONS: Throughout this course, we will have occasion to ponder and develop our own understanding of what it means to live and serve within the Wesleyan heritage and the United Methodist tradition. You will have the opportunity to reflect formally on the history you have encountered in the reading assignments and class activities in two take-home essay examinations. The midterm essay examination will focus on Wesley and the early Methodist movement in England. This exam is due on Friday, March 28 by 5 P.M. **NO MIDTERM ESSAY EXAMS WILL BE ACCEPTED AFTER THE DEADLINE.** The final essay examination will center on the United Methodist Church and its antecedent denominations in the U.S.A. This exam is due on Wednesday May 14 by 5 P.M. unless you are a graduating senior, in which case it is due on Friday May 9 by 5 P.M. **NO LATE EXAMS WILL BE ACCEPTED.** You may email your essays to me at dlobody@mtso.edu or post them to the “Submit Assignments” page on the DS 360 SharePoint site. The questions for each exam will be posted on SharePoint several weeks before the due date. Each essay examination will constitute 40% of your final grade.

CLASS SCHEDULE

1/30 Introduction to the Course and to One Another

The first meeting of your band will take place during the class session today. This is the only time the bands will meet during class time.

2/6 Background to the Methodist Revival: Portraits of 18th-Century English Society

2/13 Background to the Methodist Revival: Voices of 18th-Century Church Leaders

Reading assignment for today:

- John Wesley, "The Almost Christian" (sermon)
- John Wesley, "Advice to a People Called Methodist"

2/20 The Way of Salvation: Singing Our Way to Perfect Love with Charles Wesley

Reading assignment for today:

- All the hymns and prayers by Charles and John Wesley in *The United Methodist Hymnal*

2/27 An Empowered Laity: Ecclesiology and Ministry

Reading assignment for today:

- John Wesley, "Nature, Design, and General Rules of Our United Societies" (found in *The Book of Discipline*)
- John Wesley, "The Character of a Methodist"

3/5 The Irritating Mr. Wesley: Faith and Social Issues

Reading assignment for today:

- Jennings, *Good News to the Poor*
- John Wesley, "The Use of Money" (sermon)
- John Wesley, "National Sins and Miseries" (sermon)

3/12 Outward Signs: The Means of Grace

Reading assignment for today:

- John Wesley, "The Duty of Constant Communion" (sermon)
- John Wesley, "On How to Read the Scriptures"

3/19 HOLY WEEK---- NO CLASS

- 3/26** *"To Reform the Continent and Spread Scriptural Holiness Throughout These Lands": The Appeal of Methodism in the U.S.*
- 3/28** **MIDTERM ESSAY EXAMINATIONS ARE DUE TODAY (FRIDAY) BY 5:00 P.M. PLEASE EMAIL YOUR ESSAY EXAMINATION TO ME OR POST IT TO THE "SUBMIT ASSIGNMENTS" PAGE ON THE DS 360 SHAREPOINT SITE. NO MIDTERM EXAMS WILL BE ACCEPTED AFTER THIS DEADLINE.**
- 4/2** *Liberty and Authority: Revolts and Schisms*
- 4/9** *Imagining a Methodist America: Reform in a Changing Nation*
Living History Extravaganza: City Ministry at the Morgan Memorial
- 4/16** *Organizing for Social Holiness: Ministry with the least and the lost*
Living History Extravaganza: The Epworth League
- 4/23** **MIDTERM RECESS--- NO CLASS**
- 4/30** *Raising Leadership: The Connection, Working and Dysfunctional*
Living History Extravaganza: The Central Jurisdiction
- 5/7** *Culture Wars: Whose Church Is It Anyway?*
Living History Extravaganza: The 1968 Merger
- 5/9** **IF YOU ARE A GRADUATING SENIOR YOUR FINAL ESSAY EXAM IS DUE TODAY (FRIDAY) BY 5 P.M. PLEASE EMAIL IT TO ME OR POST IT TO THE "SUBMIT ASSIGNMENTS" PAGE ON THE DS 360 SHAREPOINT SITE.**
- 5/14** **FINAL WEEK--- NO CLASS**
IF YOU ARE NOT A GRADUATING SENIOR, YOUR FINAL ESSAY EXAM IS DUE TODAY (WEDNESDAY) BY 5 P.M. PLEASE EMAIL IT TO ME OR POST IT TO THE "SUBMIT ASSIGNMENTS" PAGE ON THE DS 360 SHAREPOINT SITE. NO FINAL EXAMS WILL BE ACCEPTED AFTER THIS DEADLINE.
- 5/16** **LAST DAY OF THE SEMESTER**