

Syllabus for Theology in the Wesleyan Tradition
CT 336
Spring 2008
Instructor: Sarah Lancaster

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I am available to see students by appointment.

COURSE DESCRIPTION: A study of the distinctively Wesleyan order of salvation and its influence on modern United Methodist theologians. The initial focus will be on the theology in John Wesley's sermons, but attention will then be given to how theologians appropriate Wesley's ideas in light of contemporary concerns.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

- 1) To expand students' knowledge of John Wesley's own theology
- 2) To become acquainted with some of the major interpreters of Wesley.
- 3) To reflect on the relevance of his theology for our time
- 4) To continue to develop critical thinking skills.
- 5) To continue to develop writing skills.

TEXTS:

Albert Outler and Richard P. Heitzenrater, eds., *John Wesley's Sermons: An Anthology*, Randy Maddox, *Responsible Grace: John Wesley's Practical Theology*

_____, ed., *Rethinking Wesley's Theology for Contemporary Methodism*
The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church 2004

W. Stephen Gunter, et al, *Wesley and the Quadrilateral: Renewing the Conversation*

Charles M. Wood, "Wesleyan Constructive Theology?" in *Perkins Journal* Spring 1984
(on reserve)

Thomas A. Langford, *Practical Divinity: Readings in Wesleyan Theology* (volume 2)

Joerg Rieger and John J. Vincent, *Methodist and Radical: Rejuvenating a Tradition*

Marjorie Hewitt Suchocki, *Divinity and Diversity: A Christian Affirmation of Religious Pluralism*

ASSIGNMENTS:

Each student will be required to do the following:

Write two papers four to five pages in length.

Write one paper eight to ten pages in length.

Attend class regularly.

The first short paper should be a careful, close interpretation of one of Wesley's sermons in light of the issues raised in Maddox's relevant chapters, followed by critical reflection about the relevance of the content of this sermon for our time. It is due on the day we discuss the sermon in class.

The second short paper should highlight a significant issue from the reading for one day of class. It should include both an explication of an author's view on that issue and critical reflection on that issue. It is due on the day we discuss the readings in class.

The third longer paper should be critical reflection of Suchocki's *Divinity and Diversity* that asks how Wesleyan themes are or are not incorporated in this treatment of Christianity and pluralism. It is due on May 12 (May 6 for seniors).

GRADING:

First short paper: 25%

Second short paper: 25%

Third longer paper: 35%

Class participation: 15%

Missing more than 25% of the course will result in a failing grade. Unless an extension has been arranged in advance, late papers will not be accepted.

SCHEDULE:

January 28:

Introduction to the course

February 4:

Maddox, *Responsible Grace*, introduction and chapters 1-2

Wesley, Sermon 118 "On the Omnipresence of God"; Sermon 120 "The Unity of the Divine Being"

February 11:

Maddox, *Responsible Grace*, chapters 3-4

Wesley, Sermon 59 "God's Love to Fallen Man"; Sermon 146 "The One Thing Needful"

February 18:

Maddox, *Responsible Grace*, chapters 5-6

Wesley, Sermon 127 "On the Wedding Garment"; Sermon 11 "The Witness of the Spirit, Discourse II"

February 25:

Maddox, *Responsible Grace*, chapter 7

Wesley, Sermon 17 "The Circumcision of the Heart"; Sermon 45 "The New Birth"; Sermon 18 "The Marks of the New Birth" and (Charles Wesley) Sermon 3 "Awake, Thou That Sleepest"

March 3:

Maddox, *Responsible Grace*, chapters 8-9

Wesley, Sermon 89 "The More Excellent Way"; Sermon 64 "The New Creation"

March 10:

Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church, “Our Theological Task”;
Gunter, et. al, *Wesley and the Quadrilateral*; Wood, “Wesleyan Constructive Theology?”
(on reserve)

Mid-Term Recess

March 24:

Langford, *Practical Divinity*, Parts I and II

March 31:

Langford, *Practical Divinity*, Parts III and IV

April 7:

Maddox, *Rethinking Wesley’s Theology*, introduction and chapters 1-7

April 14:

Maddox, *Rethinking Wesley’s Theology*, chapters 8-14

Recess

April 28:

Rieger and Vincent, *Methodist and Radical*, preface, chapters 1-7

May 5:

Rieger and Vincent, *Methodist and Radical*, chapters 8-13, conclusion

May 12: Final paper due.

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.