

CH 750: Wesley and Society
Fall 2015
Wednesdays 6:30-9:20 PM
Professor Diane Lobody
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This course explores the writings of John Wesley and the history of the early Methodist movement in relation to selected social problems in eighteenth-century England. The questions addressed by Wesley continue to challenge Christians today. Students will examine Wesley's teachings about such persistent issues as the economy, education, the environment, family, gender, healthcare, political conflict, race, religious differences, science, slavery, and war.

TEXTS

- Vicki Tolar Burton. *Spiritual Literacy in John Wesley's Methodism: Reading, Writing, and Speaking to Believe*. Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2008.
- Richard Heitzenrater, ed. *The Poor and the People Called Methodists*. Nashville: Kingswood Books, 2002.
- Deborah Madden, ed. *Inward and Outward Health: John Wesley's Holistic Concept of Medical Science, the Environment, and Holy Living*. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2012.
- Albert C. Outler, ed. *The Works of John Wesley. Volume 3. Sermons III (71-114)*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1986.
- Roy Porter. *English Society in the Eighteenth Century*. Second Edition. London: Penguin Press, 1990.
- Ronald H. Stone. *John Wesley's Life and Ethics*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2001.
- John Wesley, other texts as assigned (online)
- Jerry White. *A Great and Monstrous Thing: London in the Eighteenth Century*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Read, Think, Talk: This course is a seminar, and therefore its most important quality is informed, dynamic, and lively conversation. We will plunge into eighteenth-century England, looking especially at the social issues that dominated this time and place in history. We will read and analyze a selection of Wesley's writings, with particular attention to works that explicitly addressed some of the most vexing cultural questions of his day. We will consider some of the practices and ministries in early Methodism in relation to changing social, economic, and political conditions of the early modern England. And we will continually probe the connections between Wesley's world and our own. So all semester long, your

primary tasks are to explore widely, read deeply, think creatively, and talk energetically. The Lessons tab on Populi will lead you to information and resources to help you prepare for the class sessions.

This component of the course contributes 50% to your final grade.

Research and share: On the first day of class, we will sketch out some of the social questions that we might consider examining during the course. In consultation with the instructor, each of you will identify one issue addressed by Wesley and commit to reading Wesley's relevant writings on that topic and the pertinent scholarship that can inform your interpretation of the Wesley texts you have selected. During the second half of the semester, each of you will share your research findings with the class in a 60-minute presentation. This component of the course contributes 25% to your final grade.

A usable history: This assignment builds on the research you have done for your presentation. In consultation with the instructor, you will design a formal final project in which you communicate the results of your research to a wider public. Your project must focus on Wesley's approach to the issue, and must include specific treatment of Wesley's writings and references to scholarly works you have consulted. In addition, your project must make thoughtful connections with issues of concern to people today. How is Wesley a resource for us as we tackle this issue in our own world? You have complete freedom in selecting an appropriate format. Some possibilities (absolutely not limited to these) include:

- A position paper related to a petition coming before General Conference.
- A blog.
- A website to be used to support an adult study.
- An article for a United Methodist publication.
- A series of podcasts on the topic.
- A video to be used for a confirmation class.
- A media resource for clergy in your Annual Conference.

The final project is due no later than midnight on December 11. This component of the course contributes 25% to your final grade.

COURSE POLICIES

Please see Student Handbook for sections providing policy details on the following:

ADA—MTSO seeks to remove barriers to inclusion in its learning communities. Students who feel they may need an accommodation based on the impact of a documented disability should contact the instructor privately to discuss their specific needs at the beginning of the semester. Please contact the Director of

Student Services to coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities. Any accommodation must be agreed upon prior to the due date of the affected course requirement.

Class attendance—Regular attendance is expected in all classes. During unavoidable absences, students are responsible for missed work. An excessive number of absences may result in grade reduction or course failure, despite successful completion of all assigned work. In most cases, a student will not be allowed credit for a course if he or she is absent for 25% of the class sessions. As it relates to blended courses, students may not be allowed credit if they are absent for 25% of class meetings or if 25% of online course work is not completed. Use of Skype or similar technology is not a substitute for attendance in class.

Electronic Devices—Turn mobile devices off or “vibrate only” during class. Browsing the Internet or engaging in email or social network conversations during class is discouraged. Instructors have the right to impose grading penalties for disruptions due to electronic devices.

Human Subjects Research—Research by MTSO faculty, students, or affiliated personnel that collects non-public information from and/or about living individuals or contemporary organizations/groups for purposes of publication or public presentation (including class assignments) must be approved by the Human Subjects Research Committee. MTSO faculty, students, or affiliated personnel should err on the side of caution and apply for committee approval of any activity that may fit this description.

Inclusive Language—In accordance with MTSO’s policy on inclusive language, all students are expected to use gender inclusive or gender neutral language in their writing and in the classroom discussions when referring to human beings.

Incompletes—To receive a course grade of Incomplete, students must submit the petition form from the Registrar with all signatures to the Dean’s Office before the last day of regularly scheduled classes. See Student Handbook for intensive term deadlines. Any petition submitted without a due date for outstanding work will be denied. If work is not complete by the due date the Registrar will record the grade of F for the course.

Pass/Fail—The decision to exercise this option must be made before the end of the second week of the course by completing the appropriate form available through the Registrar. To receive a grade of “pass” the student must do at least the equivalent of C minus work in the course.

Plagiarism—Plagiarism is a serious matter of academic, professional, and personal integrity. All students at the masters level are expected to understand the requirement to provide attribution when the work of others is used. Students are also expected to be familiar with and understand the school’s policy on Academic Misconduct found in the Student Handbook. If students have questions about attribution, citation, and how to avoid plagiarism they should consult the course instructor, the school’s writing instructor, or library staff. When in doubt it is better

to provide attribution even if one is uncertain about the proper citation form. Plagiarism is a form of academic misconduct that results in disciplinary actions per the Student Handbook that may range from failing an assignment or course to expulsion.

CLASS SCHEDULE

August 26: Introduction to the class and to one another

September 2: London life

Assignment: Everyone will read chapters 1-4 chapter in White, *A Great and Monstrous Thing*. In addition, each person in the class will read one other assigned chapter in that book. As you are reading your assigned chapter, locate historical images online that will help us to visually reconstruct the London described in your assigned chapter. See the “London” lesson for details.

September 9: A quick run through Wesley and early Methodism

Assignment: Read Stone, *John Wesley’s Life and Ethics* and Wesley, “On God’s Vineyard.” See the “Wesley and Early Methodism” Lesson for a Prezi that unpacks this sermon.

September 16: Wesley and money

Assignment: Read Heitzenrater, *The Poor and the People Called Methodists*, chapters 1, 3, 6, and 9, and Wesley, “The Danger of Riches” and “On Riches.” See the “Money” Lesson for a Prezi that walks us through one of Wesley’s earlier sermons on this topic, “The Use of Money.”

September 23: Wesley and Slavery

Assignment: Read Wesley, “Thoughts Upon Slavery” and Michael Jaggessar, “Critical Reflections on John Wesley’s ‘Thoughts Upon Slavery.’” See the “Slavery” Lesson for links and further information.

September 30: Wesley and Health

Assignment: Read Madden, *Inward and Outward Health*, chapters 1, 3, 4, 5, and 6, and Wesley, “On Redeeming the Time” and “On Visiting the Sick.” See the “Health” Lesson for further information and to view a Prezi that explores “On Visiting the Sick.”

October 7: Wesley and Popular Culture

Assignment: Read Porter, *English Society in the Eighteenth Century* and Wesley, “On Dress.” See the “Popular Culture” Lesson to view a Prezi that examines “On Dress.”

October 14--- Mid-semester break--- no class session

October 21: Wesley and Literacy

Assignment: Read Burton, *Spiritual Literacy in John Wesley's Methodism and Wesley, "On Family Religion" and "On the Education of Children."* See the "Literacy" Lesson for further information.

October 28: Wesley and Religions

Assignment: Read Philip R. Meadows. "'Candidates for Heaven': Wesleyan Resources for a Theology of Religions,"; Rebeka Miles, "John Wesley as Interreligious Resource: Would You Take This Man to an Interfaith Dialogue?"; Philip Wingeier-Rayo, "A Wesleyan Theology of Missions: A Re-Reading of John Wesley Through His Encounters with People of Non-Christian Faiths"; and Wesley, "On Zeal." See the "Religions" Lesson for further information and to view a Prezi that looks at "On Zeal."

November 4: Wesley and Politics

Assignment: Read Glen O'Brien. "John Wesley's Rebuke to the Rebels of British America: Revisiting the 'Calm Address'" and Wesley, "National Sins and Miseries" and "The Late Work of God in North America." See the "Politics" Lesson for further information and to view a Prezi that investigates "National Sins and Miseries."

November 11: Wesley and the Environment

Assignment: Read Madden, *Inward and Outward Health*, chapter 2; Randy Maddox, "John Wesley's Precedent for Theological Engagement with the Natural Sciences," Wesley, "What Is Man?" and "The General Deliverance" (online). See the "Environment" Lesson for further information and to view a Prezi about "The General Deliverance."

November 18: Class Presentations

November 25---- Thanksgiving break---- no class session

December 2: Class Presentations**December 9: Wesley in Our World**

December 11: Last day of the semester---- final projects are due no later than midnight today.