

WESLEYAN THEOLOGY

SYLLABUS

FALL 2024



“May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful and he will do it”
(1 Thessalonians 5:23-24, NIV).

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Keystone Conference

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An Approved Course in Wesleyan Theology

This course in Wesleyan Theology has been approved by the Board of Bishops of the Free Methodist Church for the preparation of ministerial candidates and lay ministers, and incoming ordained pastoral transfers, for ministry in the Free Methodist Church.

Course Description

The course will explore the life and legacy of John Wesley and investigate the implications of Wesleyan theology on the nature of God, human nature, salvation, sanctification, spiritual growth, church life, worship, and social witness. Participants will explore major tenets of Wesleyan theology, compare and contrast Wesleyan theology with other Christian doctrine, learn and sing Wesley hymns, and consider ways in which a Wesleyan worldview shapes both life and ministry.

Course Objectives

Upon completion of this course the student will be able to:

1. Discuss the social, historical, and religious context of John Wesley's life and ministry.
2. Explain the major themes and tenets of Wesleyan theology.
3. Compare and contrast Wesleyan theology with other Christian doctrine.
4. Commit to doing pastoral ministry from a Wesleyan perspective.

Course Expectations

1. Class Attendance Policy: your presence and active involvement in the class are critical for both you and the other class members to benefit fully from the learning experience.
2. Assigned Readings: class participants are required to complete all assigned reading prior to the course.
3. Class participation: students will fully engage in class activities and interaction in keeping with appropriate adult learning models.
4. Written work: written assignments will be submitted in keeping with accepted academic writing standards.

Required Textbooks

Olson, Roger. Arminianism, Myths and Realities

Outler, Albert and Richard Heitzenrater, editors. John Wesley's Sermons: An Anthology.

Wesley, John. A Plain Account of Christian Perfection

Wynkoop, Mildred Bangs. Foundations of Wesleyan Arminian Theology

Pre-Course Assignments

The following sermons by Wesley are required reading. During the SECOND weekend each lesson will begin with a student led discussion on one of the sermons listed below. (It will be very important for our class time that you have read these sermons using the Outler and Heitzenrater text, not a downloaded version.)

- The Almost Christian
- The Witness of the Spirit: I
- The Witness of the Spirit II
- The Image of God
- One Thing Needful
- On Sin in the Believer
- Marks of the New Birth
- The Circumcision Of The Heart
- Christian Perfection
- The Scripture Way of Salvation
- The Means of Grace

The class will also be more helpful if students will have familiarized themselves with the Wynkoop text prior to the start.

Students will select two of the required sermons and write a 1-2 page reflection on the selected sermons by answering the following questions:

1. What is the primary scripture text of the sermon and what is the main point based on the text?
2. What are the key sub points of the sermon; how are they supported by Scripture?
3. How does Wesley apply the truth of this message to his audience?
4. How does the truth of this message apply to our audience today?

Sermon reflection papers will be assigned during the first weekend and presented during class of the second weekend.

Post-Course Assignments

Tracing the Doctrine of Sanctification in Free Methodism

Instructions and resources will be given in class.

Spiritual Journey Reflection

The student will write a 3-4 page paper reflecting on your own spiritual pilgrimage and integrating what you have learned by tracing and comparing your own experience with Wesley's description of the order of Salvation – i.e. prevenient grace, spiritual awakening, new birth, wilderness state, perfection. This is a critical part of your own faith story.

- How is Wesley descriptive of your own experience?
- Where are you now in Wesley's order of salvation?
- What is your next step in your spiritual pilgrimage?
- What is helpful in his description?
- What did you find not helpful or confusing?
- Be sure to cite all Wesley references and source as well as any scripture passages.

Theological Vocabulary

Words/terms are an important for any study so a vocabulary of theological terms is attached to this syllabus. It is crucial for you to be familiar with these terms and what they mean in order to understand the required readings, class presentations and discussions.

Final Project

Pick from one of the following choices:

- An 8-10 page research project focusing on some area of Wesleyan Theology. The paper must show evidence the subject is clearly understood and carefully presented, utilizing standard research guidelines. More details will be coming on this.
- A critical book reflection from a bibliography that will be distributed in class. (See instructions below)
- A contemporizing of a Wesley sermon. Instructions for this will be shared in class.

Grading Scale

Students must receive a grade of "C" or above to qualify for ordination. Final grade will be determined according to the following scale.

- A 90-100 points
- B 90-80 points
- C 70-79 points
- F 69 or below

Summary of assignments and grade value

Class attendance and participation	20%
Trace the Doctrine of Sanctification in Free Methodism	20%
2 Wesley sermon reflection papers	10%
Spiritual Journey Integrative Reflection	10%
Theological vocabulary	10%
Final project	30%

Rules of the Game

- Please be on time for all class sessions and return to class at the agreed upon time following breaks.
- Honest and active engagement is expected throughout the course. Class sessions will be a safe place to ask questions, explore ideas, raise concerns and both agree and/or disagree with each other, with the instructor, and with Wesley.
- Class members will actively listen to each other with respect, even when they don't understand or accept another class member's perspective.
- All questions are welcome and encouraged at any point in class. Email is also welcome and is checked regularly.
- If you bring a cell phone to class, *make sure* that you turn it off before entering the classroom and please do not use your cell phone during the class.
- Laptop computers are welcome but please do not use them during the class for non-course related activity.

Writing a Critical Book Reflection

A critical reflection paper is intended to encourage the student to interact with the author of a book, essay, journal, or magazine article. Academic reading is intended to engage the student's mind and to stimulate critical thinking. Writing a critical reflection paper allows students to enter into dialogue with an author. The point of a critical reflection paper is to enable students to express their thoughts about an author's ideas in a concise and cogent manner.

The critical book reflection begins with an objective assessment of what an author is saying but then proceeds to the student's interaction with the author's thoughts and ideas. The student is expected to discuss the areas with which the student agrees, and/or disagrees, with the author. Simply indicating that the student agrees or disagrees with an author's ideas is not enough, the student needs to express why they agree or disagree and provide supporting material to justify their point of view.

Next, the student will identify the impact the author's thoughts and ideas will have on the student's thinking and actions, and what difference it may make in their life. Students will discuss the implications that these ideas may have on how they will engage in ministry.

Finally, the critical reflection paper will conclude with any commitments regarding life and ministry the student has made because of interacting with the author's ideas. The student does not have to agree with everything an author writes in order to gain important insights for life and ministry. However, in order for meaningful learning to take place, a student must be open to engaging ideas from many different points of view and reflect critically upon them.

These are some additional suggestions for the Wesleyan Theology course.

1. What is the primary focus of the book and why is this focus so important?
2. What are the key questions addressed in the book and how does the author answer them?
3. What questions did/do you have about Wesleyan theology and what did you learn from this book?
4. Based on what you learned from this book, what are the implications for your life and ministry?