Essential Information

Please refer to the following resources for information essential for the successful completion of courses and degree programs at Nazarene Theological Seminary. Links to these resources are available in the Essential Information section at http://support.nts.edu.

- NTS Mission Statement & Purpose Degree Objectives
- Tips for online learning success
- NTS library services
- NTS textbook information
- Online technical requirements and Moodle support information
- NTS Student Handbook including statements on quality of work, plagiarism, and academic probation
- Handbook for Inclusive Language

Instructor Information

Professor: K. Steve McCormick, Ph.D. Email: smccormick@nts.edu
Office: (816) 268-5486
Office Hours: By appointment

Catalog Description

A study of John Wesley’s theology as it was influenced by forces before and during the 18th century; as its foundation was laid in his own personal spiritual history, particularly from 1725 to 1738; as its development is revealed in his sermons and writings; and as it has been understood by his major interpreters. Special attention will be given to his doctrine of Christian perfection.

Course Narrative & Rationale

John Wesley was a "classical" Anglican priest overtly committed to the aim (teleiosis) and attainment (teleos) of holiness. He was consigned to bring new life and meaning to the old soteriological structures that had become strictures within the Church of England. Wesley was working from within to bring renewal. Theologically, this was accomplished by making explicit what was implicit within the Church of England. Pragmatically, the bands, societies, class meetings, etc accomplished this.
As a result of this commitment to holiness his assessment of the Christian life became what George Croft Cell has aptly stated; "an original and unique synthesis of the Protestant ethic of grace and Catholic ethic of holiness." (347) Albert Outler seems to share Cell’s judgment of Wesley’s distinctive doctrinal perspective and better qualifies Cell’s thesis by labeling it an “evangelical catholicism.” (viii) Outler finds Wesley to be a major contributor in the flow of historic Christianity because he had:

... glimpsed the underlying unity of Christian truth in both the Catholic and Protestant traditions... In the name of Christianity both Biblical and patristic, he managed to transcend the stark doctrinal disjunctions, which had spilled so much ink and blood since Augsburg and Trent. In their stead, he proceeded to develop a theological fusion of faith and good works, Scripture and tradition, revelation and reason, God’s sovereignty and human freedom, universal redemption and conditional election, Christian liberty and an ordered polity, the assurance of pardon and the risks of "falling from grace," original sin and Christian perfection. (Viii)

The task, therefore, of this course is to examine the historical setting just prior to and during Wesley’s time; in order to unravel the complex tapestry of sources and events that shaped the thought and practice of this man Wesley. The result will then hopefully illuminate our understanding of Wesley’s theology; as well as place him in historic Christianity, proper. Thus, the intended scope of the course will be both historical and theological; while always focusing upon Wesley’s assessment of the Christian life.

Today we find ourselves living in the timeless irony of Bob Dylan’s infamous song, “The Times They Are a-Changin.” Today our lives are being shaped by the warped speed of change and the paralyzing fear of an uncertain future. Stepping into the fray, the Internet and social media offer up a myriad of tempting forms and competing narratives to calm our anxieties and doubts. Out of the whirlwind they come to us saying, “my name is legion, for I am many,”... I am Twitter, Facebook, Tumblr, Path, Google+, LinkedIn, Pinterest, Flickr, YouTube, and thousands more of unnamed ways to help you blog your way through these ‘a-Changin’ times.

Granted, the medium of the Internet and social media are not the Church’s demons, but we must ask ourselves if these competing narratives are rapidly rewriting the Church’s identity and mission. Nowadays, some of the Church’s visionaries believe that the Church is living in the midst of a major paradigm change that happens about every 500 years. According to the latest Barna Survey, the 18–29 year old has given up on the Church because “Christians demonize everything outside the church.” And the most recent Pew Study claims that 1/5th of the U.S. public, and a 3rd of adults under 30 are religiously unaffiliated. Are these signs of a new Reformation in the making? O these "Times They Are a-Changin."

Who can speak to this age? Down through the ages, God gives us mentors that embody God’s Word to help us to understand and find our place and story in God’s Story. I would like to
tell you about my long time mentor—John Wesley. Why John Wesley? What is the appeal of this 18th century Anglican priest, missionary, field preacher, social reformer and founder of Methodism? Why does Wesley belong to the long list of names like Irenaeus, Augustine, Chrysostom, the Cappadocians, Luther, Calvin, Barth, Brunner, Bach, Mozart, and Bob Dylan? How does someone who has been dead for over 300 years speak to these rapidly changing times? What did Wesley see and do and say in his day that enables him to speak to our day? O these “Times They Are a-Changin.”

Those are a few of the questions I intend to explore in the Life & Thought of John Wesley module this coming January, 2013. Now for those who need a bit more of a sneak preview, here is a quick synopsis of the Wesley to be explored as we ponder the questions above.

John Wesley like the saints before him fixed his hope on God and God's promise of glory for all creation, when God is "all in all" in the fulfillment of New Creation. With a gaze fixed upon God and God's will for all the whole world, what would emerge for this young visionary was a "trinitarian" vision of God, and a vision of the Church catholic, that is gathered and connected into the fellowship of Triune love, and then sent out into the world to connect with all creation to be a sacrament of new and unending life for the world.

Straight from the Scriptures, Wesley rediscovered the Story of God that would become fleshed out in his signature doctrine known as the "Scripture Way of Salvation." Repeatedly, Wesley would insist that the "Scripture Way of Salvation" is the 'Way' of Triune Love that determines the very identity and mission of the whole Church. After all, our ecclesial identity as "transcripts of the Trinity," means that we have been scripted into the Triune narrative to give witness to God in all the world. As "the whole Trinity descends into our faithful hearts," we are gathered into the Body of Christ and the vestiges of the Trinity are written upon our hearts. We are trans-scripted into the fellowship of God's reconciling mission to renew all creation back into the glory of God.

"Lost in wonder, love and praise" Wesley's vision and message was doxology! His was the constant song of the Sanctus where all of heaven and earth are filled with the glory of God. God has given to us the "means of grace" to share and participate in the koinonia of Triune Love, in the "hope of glory." This is how John Wesley served his present age. And this is why he continues to speak to our day! Like so many of the saints before him, Wesley had found a way of seeing in the dark. He saw the hope of glory shining in the dark so that: "when we rise in love renew'd, Our souls resemble Thee, An image of the Triune God To all eternity."

I look forward to sharing and exploring with you my life long mentor next Epiphany! Who knows, maybe together, we can punch holes of glory into the dark. . . .

This course will use lectures, readings, papers, and group work to fulfill its objectives.
Degree Objectives

M.Div.

1. The articulation of the knowledge of this God through prayerful, scholarly study and a deepening understanding of the Christian Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments.

2. The development of wisdom and discernment through engagement with the intellectual challenge of the literature of the Christian faith, by the critical, scholarly study of the history and theology of Christianity, and of the literature and practices of Christian spirituality, ethics and ministry.

3. The growth of mature self-awareness and self-understanding as flawed human beings, reconciled to God and to each other within the Christian community, who are being transformed into the perfect likeness of Christ, filled with his Spirit, and gifted for the service of humanity.

4. The investigation of human society, thought and culture in order to articulate clear and coherent views of the context of the mission of the Church, and to develop an understanding of the Church as the community of faith with a passion for the gospel engaging in mission to different cultures.

Course Outcomes

Upon successful completion of the course you will have (R = Course requirement directed toward achieving objective):

- Demonstrated acquaintance with the life and thought of John Wesley. (R3, Course Outline Lectures, R2, R1)

- Demonstrated understanding of the salient “distinctives” of Wesleyan theology and tradition. (R1, R2, R3)

- Demonstrated understanding of the “place” and “legacy” of Wesley within the catholic Church. (R1, R2, R3)

Required Texts & Course Materials (1,419 pages)


2) Richard P. Heitzenrater, Wesley and the People Called Methodists. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995). (350 pages)

**Recommended Texts & Course Materials**

Most of the primary sources need for this Course (especially the 'Theological Commentaries') can be found at: http://wesley.nnu.edu

**Course Outline**

I. **Wesley’s Theological Biography**
   
   a) A Brief Historical Survey
   b) The First Rise of Methodism 1725-1735
      1) Childhood and Youth
      2) The Oxford Years
   c) The Second Rise of Methodism 1735-1738
      1) The Georgia Interlude
   d) The Third Rise of Methodism 1738-1740
      1) London: Field Preaching

II. **Wesley As An Eclectic Folk-Theologian**
   
   a) A Theological Historiography
   b) Theological Method
   c) Polemics and Irenics
   d) The "Third Alternative"
   e) Fundamental Doctrines
   f) The Ordo Salutis

III. **Salient Doctrines of the Christian Life**
   
   a) The Doctrine of God
      1) Creation
      2) Providence
      3) Trinity
      4) Predestination
      5) Prevenient Grace
   
   b) The Doctrine of Humankind
      1) Natural Person
      2) Image of God
3) The Fall and its Results  
4) Original Sin and Actual Sin  
5) Guilt and Depravity of Original Sin  
6) Freedom and Bondage of the Will

c) The Ordo Salutis  
1) Prevenient Grace/Original Sin  
2) Repentance/Faith  
3) Justification/Sanctification  
4) Entire Sanctification/Glorification

d) The Atonement  
1) The Person and Work of Christ  
2) The Redemptive Work of the Holy Spirit  
3) Assurance (Witness of the Spirit)

e) Christian Perfection  
1) Entire Sanctification  
2) Sin in Believers and Repentance of Believers  
3) Baptism with the Holy Spirit

f) Ecclesiology  
1) Nature of the Church  
2) Ministry  
3) Means of Grace (Sacraments)  
4) Moral Concerns and Development

Course Assignments & Requirements

1. A Critical Book Digest Paper: (Outcomes 1-3)

Each student will write a critically reflective précis of the three assigned theology texts (Collins, Maddox and Runyon). This paper is to be approximately 15 pages, double-spaced and in twelve point font. This assignment along with your class presentation and the defense of your paper will comprise 1/4\textsuperscript{th} of your final grade. \textbf{This paper is due: Monday, October 7, 2013.} \textbf{The book presentations will be on Tuesday, October 8, 2103.}

Here are a few questions and issues to consider in your reading and in the careful writing of your Critical Book Digest:

1) What is the thesis of the author?  
2) What underlying assumptions guide each author in the defense of his thesis and accompanying arguments?
3) What significant contributions are made in the thesis and its defense?
4) Where are the specific places of 'disconnect' in the critical arguments made to support the thesis?
5) Where are the places of 'convergence' with one author to the other? Be clear and concise and explain why you think there is overlap and how and why this is important.
6) Where are the places of 'divergence' with one author to the other? Be clear and concise as you explain why you think there is strong disagreement and disconnect between them. How and why is this significant?
7) Where did you find yourself resonating with each author and why? What crucial difference will each make in the way you understand God, grace, salvation, etc?
8) Where are the provocative places in each author and why do you find yourself resisting such argumentation in each?

2. **Final Reflection & Synthesis Exam:**

There will be one major Critical Thinking Exam given at the end of the semester covering the textbooks, class lectures and class discussion from each section of the Course Outline. The nature of this exam will be entirely essay covering the reading (texts) and lecture material. The exam will be posted in Moodle one week prior to the due date. Essentially, this is a ‘take home exam’ where you can use all your resources to respond to the questions. No less than 5 pages, and no more than 10 pages of double-spaced typewritten text are expected. This exam will constitute 1/4th of your final grade. The date for this exam is **Monday, December 2.**

3. **Theological Commentaries:**

Each student is to write 3 theological commentaries. Each theological commentary is to be written on one chosen doctrine (i.e. 3 different doctrines for each theological commentary) that is listed under the Salient Doctrines of the Christian Life. (Cf. Course Outline, section III.) For example, the doctrine of God, the doctrine of humankind, the via-salutis, the atonement, Christian perfection, and ecclesiology will comprise the doctrinal theme for each of the theological commentaries. A more detailed explanation of the content and format of these commentaries will be given on the first day of class. Each commentary is to be approximately 10 typewritten pages. All 3 theological commentaries will constitute 2/4th of your final grade. Theological commentaries of your choosing are due on these three dates: **September 23, October 21, and November 18.**

3 **Theological Commentaries:**

1. The Doctrine of God
2. The Doctrine of Humankind
3. The Via-Salutis
4. The Atonement
5. Christian Perfection
6. Ecclesiology
Distribution of Student Learning Hours

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<td>Online Participation in forums, groups, etc.</td>
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<td>Reading</td>
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<tr>
<td>Theological Commentaries (10 hours per commentary)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book Digest Paper (15 hours per paper)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Critical Reflection &amp; Synthesis Exam (Final Exam Week)</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td>TOTAL</td>
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</tbody>
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Method for Submitting Assignments

All assignments will be uploaded for this course in Moodle:
https://moodle.nts.edu/login/index.php

Form and Style Expectations

Turabian style and format is not expected for these ‘Theological Commentaries.’ Simply insert in parenthesis the name of Wesley’s sermon, letter, journal entry and/or the secondary author and title of book or article along with the page number(s) inside or at the end the paragraph(s) of your paper. Attach a bibliography of sources at the end of each Theological Commentary.

Inclusive Language

NTS is committed to the equality of women and men. Recognizing that people have often used the English language in ways that imply the exclusion or inferiority of women, NTS urges students, faculty, and staff to avoid sexist language in public discourse, in classroom discussions, and in their writings. All written work presented to meet course requirements must use gender inclusive language.

Policy Regarding Late Work & Missed Exams

In the spirit of ‘fairness’ and ‘class integrity,’ all late work that is submitted before the last day of class sessions (Late Work will not be accepted during final exams week) will be graciously accepted, but with a letter grade reduction. This means that if a late paper is turned in on the last day of class, the best your potentially perfect paper (A) can expect to receive is a B for that late submission.

Class Attendance
Attendance at classes is essential for realizing the maximum benefit of your education. Since the professor in each course is best acquainted with the importance of consistent attendance, he or she will determine the rules for attendance.

If you must be absent because of extenuating circumstances, contact the professor as soon as possible to discuss the situation. If a student is absent for four or more weeks of the pre/post module, the professor may automatically fail the student.

Daily attendance records must be reported for those obtaining V.A. and Department of Education benefits. Students must make the professor aware if their attendance must be recorded.

**Audio and Video Recordings**

In order to foster a safe learning environment in which various viewpoints are respected, audio or video recordings or transcripts thereof by students is prohibited without the permission of the faculty member in charge of the course. If permission is granted, redistribution of these recordings or transcripts thereof outside the scope of the course is prohibited.

Students enrolling in videoconferencing courses or participating in certain synchronous Moodle activities should be aware that their images and voices will be transmitted digitally through the videoconferencing equipment and may be recorded. Continued enrollment in these courses constitutes willingness to participate in the class with these conditions. If you have privacy concerns, please discuss your enrollment with the Registrar.

**Policy on Incompletes**

Only under the rarest of circumstances will the professor approve an incomplete. Only 'Death in the family' or the 'prolonged illness' of the student will be considered as a justifiable cause for petition. For the most part, all other requests will not be considered. And yet, if the rarest of unforeseeable circumstances do arise, and those circumstances are not the abovementioned ('death in the family' and 'prolonged illness'), then, and only then, may an incomplete be granted by the professor. And, if the incomplete is to be granted for reasons other than 'death in the family' and 'prolonged illness', it will be given with a letter grade penalty. For example, if the final grade earned in the class results in an A, and an incomplete was granted for other reasons besides 'death and prolonged illness', then the final grade to be submitted to the registrar will be a B.

**Additional Costs**
No additional costs are anticipated for this course.

Course Grading

Evaluation Criteria: (The 'Book Digest,' 'Theological Commentaries' & 'Final Reflection & Synthesis Exam')

These 'Theological Commentaries' as well as your 'Final Reflection and Synthesis Exam' require good writing skills. To do well certain things should be accomplished or avoided:

a. Do not simply give me back my notes in a summarization.

b. Make an argument in every paper. To do this you should avoid merely repeating a laundry list of disconnected ideas.

c. Integrate class lectures, discussion and readings of sermons, letters, treatises, journals, etc., into your theological commentary.

d. Make an intelligible argument in every paper. This requires that you get the basic information correct, that your argument makes sense given the basic information, and that your essay is submitted in a presentable form. To accomplish this, you should:
   1. Avoid misspelled words, run-on sentences, and incomplete sentences.
   2. Avoid "there is" as a subject if possible, and the use of the pronoun "it" without an antecedent.
   3. Avoid complicated subject formations. This can usually be done if you check to see if you have piled up prepositions. For instance, a subject such as "The form of the way of life in Miller’s novel about Leibowitz" is too complex and doesn’t say anything. Sentences like this is like "language on a holiday."
   4. Avoid complicated verbal formations that hide rather than convey significance. For example, "It is to be understood by anyone who thinks about it that . . ." Use the passive voice as little as possible.
   5. Check to see if your sentences flow upon each other, avoid non sequiturs -- that is, when one sentence does not follow upon a previous one but introduces an unexpected interruption of thought which cannot be accounted for in the context.

My Evaluation of your written work will use the following criteria:

1. Presentation 1 2 3 4 5
   (This criterion evaluates writing style, clarity of prose, basic grammatical and spelling competence, sentence and paragraph flow.)

2. Description of Sources (Primary & Secondary) 1 2 3 4 5
   (This criterion evaluates the student's ability to describe in her or his own language the position of the theologians cited.)

3. Comprehensiveness of Sources 1 2 3 4 5
   (This criterion evaluates the student's breadth of sources (letters, journals, sermons, treatises, and the best of secondary texts) used in composing essays.)

4. Critical Engagement with Sources 1 2 3 4 5
(This criterion examines whether a student's work has taken the step beyond mere description and critically engaged with the sources she or he has drawn upon by subjecting them to a critical theological analysis.)

5. Development of Position and a Coherent Theme

(This criterion determines not only if a student has critically assessed the sources and arguments present in an essay, but also if he or she has done this through the development of her or his own coherent position.)

**Summary of Grading for Assignments:**

Theological Commentaries will constitute 2/4th of the final grade.

Final Reflection & Synthesis Exam will constitute 1/4th of the final grade.

Book Digest Paper & Presentation will constitute 1/4th of the final grade.

**Grade Scale:**

A 100-90
B 89-80
C 79-70
D 69-60
F 59-0

In accordance with the provisions of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, NTS is committed to providing students with disabilities the opportunity to participate and benefit from its programs and activities. Accordingly NTS will make reasonable modifications to its programs and activities to accommodate otherwise qualified students with disabilities, unless such modifications would impose an undue burden on the operation of the particular program or activity or would fundamentally alter the nature or purpose of the program or activity. Students needing accommodations should contact the Office of the Registrar. They also should contact the instructor no later than the end of the first class session to discuss learning needs and adaptive strategies, which have been beneficial for the student in the past.

**Course Assignment Calendar**

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
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<td>1. The Doctrine of God</td>
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<td>2. The Doctrine of Humankind</td>
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<td>3. The Via-Salutis</td>
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<td>5. Christian Perfection</td>
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<td>6. Ecclesiology</td>
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<td>Oct. 7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Book Digest Paper &amp; Presentation: Collins &amp; Maddox, Runyon.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dec. 2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Final Reflection &amp; Synthesis Exam</td>
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</tbody>
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**Bibliography**

THE 680 Wesley’s Life & Thought, Fall Semester, 2013 — Page 11
An extensive Wesley bibliography by Ken Collins will be placed in the section 'Course Resources' of Moodle. Cf. http://www.asburyseminary.edu