Description

This course introduces the student to theological reflection in the Wesleyan tradition. Basic terms, tasks, and methods of Christian theology will be introduced. Representative classical themes will be defined and illustrated. The course provides a foundation for further historical and theological study.

Course Goals

Students will be able to:

1. Examine their understanding of faith, sin, salvation, grace, and the place of doctrine in the life of the Church.
2. Understand and use classical theological terms and themes.
3. Critically consider the sources of theological reflection, including scripture, tradition, experience and reason.
4. Reflect theologically as a resource for pastoral ministry.

A. Books

Required texts:

Reference texts:

Supplementary texts:
By Water and The Spirit. Available for download from the General Board of Discipleship at http://www.gbod.org/resources/by-water-and-the-spirit-full-text


*This Holy Mystery: A United Methodist Understanding of Holy Communion*. Available for download from the General Board of Discipleship at [http://www.gbod.org/resources/this-holy-mystery-a-united-methodist-understanding-of-holy-communion](http://www.gbod.org/resources/this-holy-mystery-a-united-methodist-understanding-of-holy-communion)


**Useful websites:**


Wesley Center Online. [http://wesley.nnu.edu/john-wesley/](http://wesley.nnu.edu/john-wesley/)

Wesley Heritage Foundation. [http://www.wesleyheritagefoundation.org/download.html](http://www.wesleyheritagefoundation.org/download.html)


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**B. Instructions: How to Format Your Homework**

1. Read the pages, take notes, and answer the questions *entirely in your own words*, using complete sentences (unless otherwise noted). Do not quote extensively from the texts you read. Digest the ideas and information, and then put them in your own words.

2. Follow approximate length given for each item of written work.

3. Format your paper as an MS Word© document (.doc or .docx), double-spaced, using 1” inch margins all around and 12 pt. Arial font. Papers must be submitted electronically as email attachments; no hard copy printed papers will be accepted. Do not use script, condensed or all caps prints. One page equals approximately 250 words.

4. Use the following convention to name your document file:

   last_name_first_name_course_number_year. For example: chamberlain_marigene_ecos122_2015.

5. Create a title page for the course that includes the name of the course, your name and the date of the first day of the residential session.

6. Create a header for your paper that includes your name, the class number and the page number. Begin each numbered item on a new sheet of paper, writing that number at the beginning of your answer. Do not include the question before your answer; rather, just type the number of the question and begin your answer.

7. If you quote from a printed text, you must use quotation marks and note the source (including page numbers) in parentheses at the end of each usage. Quotations should never be more than a sentence or two long. Ideas and information should be stated in your own words, not in the words of the authors you have read. For assigned texts, you may abbreviate the titles by using the first letter of each word in the title. For example, if the source is *Harper’s Bible Dictionary*, then use (*HBD*, p. 34-35). If you refer to books that are not listed on the class reading list, then you must give full bibliographic information (author, full title, publishing place and publishing house, date of publication, pages consulted).

8. Written homework is due June 20, 2016. Assignments turned in after June 20 will receive a 1/3 grade deduction per week (for example, if your work is A level but submitted after June 20, you will receive an A-, and if it is submitted after June 27, you will receive a B+, etc.). Late work is only accepted with prior approval of the Director of the Course of Study School. Late work will receive a lower grade.

9. Print a copy of your written work for your own use during the residential session.
NOTE: Using other people’s materials without documentation, whether from a book, journal, teacher, another student, sermon, service, or lectionary aid, is unacceptable behavior. Such activity, otherwise known as plagiarism, usually means failure for the class with notification sent to the Conference Course of Study Registrar and the Division of Ordained Ministry. Instructors will report all instances of plagiarism to the Director of the Course of Study. The Director will arrange for a meeting with the instructor and the student, and the student will be given opportunity to explain the situation. The Director, in consultation with the instructor, will make a decision about what action is appropriate for a first instance of plagiarism. Such action will be documented by the Director and placed in the student’s file in the Course of Study Office and kept there until the student completes the Course of Study Curriculum. If a second instance of plagiarism is documented, the student will fail the Course of Study and the Director will determine what other consequences may apply.

C. Assignments

I. Reading:
Read the required texts by González & Maldonado-Pérez, González, Campbell, and The Book of Discipline 2012 ¶¶102-105 thoroughly and carefully before you begin your writing assignments. You will find that the González text A Concise History of Christian Doctrine complements and enriches the González & Maldonado-Pérez text An Introduction to Christian Theology. You should use the reference texts to broaden and deepen your responses in the written assignments.

II. Writing:
Please format your papers as indicated in the previous section and adhere as closely as possible to the suggested page count. You will need to be precise and concise in your writing.

A. Summary of and reflection on An Introduction to Christian Theology and A Concise History of Christian Doctrine (13½ pages total). The purpose of this assignment is to show that you understand classical theological terms and themes as set forth in these texts and can use them as a resource for your pastoral ministry.

Read both books and summarize the key points related to the following topics. (1 page each topic)
Following each summary, write a reflection on the question: “How do I apply these insights to my ministry as pastor-theologian?”(1/2 page each topic)

a) Sources of authority  f) The Church
b) God  g) The Sacraments
c) Creation h) Salvation
d) Humankind i) Christian Hope
e) Jesus Christ

You need to prepare a separate summary and reflection for each of the nine topics. Each response should be 1½ pages in length (1 page for summary of key points and ½ page for the reflection on the application question). The assignment as a whole should come to 13½ - 14 pages.

B. Summary of and reflection on Methodist essentials and the Wesleyan way of salvation (6 pages total) The purposes of this assignment are to show that you understand Wesleyan theological terms and themes as set forth in these texts and can use them as a resource for your pastoral ministry; and that you can critically consider the sources of theological reflection, including scripture, tradition, experience and reason.

Read Campbell and ¶¶102-105 of the Book of Discipline 2012 carefully and thoroughly. Summarize the key points on the following topics. (2½ pages each topic) Following each summary, write a
reflection on the question: “How do I apply these insights to my ministry as pastor-theologian?” (1/2 page each topic)

a) The Wesleyan way of salvation (2½ pages)
b) The nature of “our theological task” (Book of Discipline 2012 pp. 78ff) and the “method” for theological reflection (2½ pages)

You need to prepare a separate summary and reflection for each of the topics. Each response should be 3 pages in length (2½ pages for summary of key points and ½ page for the reflection on the application question). The assignment as a whole should come to 6 pages.

D. Grading System

Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary uses a grading system of A, B, C, D, F or no credit.

Grading Standards:

A = exceeds expectation for Course of Study
B = expected quality for Course of Study
C = passing work but not of expected quality
D = unacceptable quality (no credit)
F = fail

Grading criteria for homework papers

1. You accomplish what the assignment asks of you. 
2. Your response papers are formatted as indicated. 
3. Your response papers offer a clear opening or thesis statement, follow a logical organization (as indicated by the assignment), are well developed, and are free of grammatical and spelling errors. 
4. You enter into intelligent, critical conversation with the course texts. 
5. You demonstrate a depth of insight in your theological claims.

In this class, the final grade is calculated as follows

Pre-class written homework assignments 40%
Online class participation including assignments and activities 15%
Face-to-face class participation including assignments and activities 40%
Summative assignment 5%

E. Homework due date

June 20, 2016

Please submit your homework by email to coshomework@garrett.edu before or on the due date.

Note: Be sure that you are using the 2015 syllabus. Homework written under syllabi from previous years will not be accepted.
F. Online class sessions and residential face-to-face class sessions

Five (5) hours of class sessions will be completed using an online format prior to the residential session and fifteen (15) hours will be completed in face-to-face sessions during the residential session.

As soon as you register for the class, you will be invited to enroll in the class through an online course hub getscos.com. To complete the five online hours, you will need a Google account.

Online class sessions (total 5 hours of online sessions) (subject to change)
Welcome and introductions
Syllabus and homework

BE SURE TO COMPLETE YOUR WRITTEN HOMEWORK BEFORE PARTICIPATING IN THE FOLLOWING ACTIVITIES
- Levels, limits and functions of theology and our theological task
- Doing theology in the Wesleyan spirit
- Practice the art of theologically reading life texts (1 assignment in 2 parts)
- Instructions for summative assignment

Note about contacting instructor: During the online portion, please allow the instructor 10 days to respond to individual e-mails or questions posted on the discussion boards.

Face-to-face class sessions (total of 15 hours—3 hours per day for 5 days) – subject to change
Day 1: Review theological themes and terms, particularly a Wesleyan understanding of the way of salvation; review the sources of theological reflection; methods of theological reflection; key theologians
  Purpose: to understand and use classical and Wesleyan theological themes and terms; to consider critically the sources of theological reflection
Day 2: Analyzing historical and contemporary theological texts
  Purpose: to practice thinking theologically
Day 3: Thinking theologically about congregational ministries Part I
  Purpose: to use theology as a resource for pastoral ministry
Day 4: Thinking theologically about congregational ministries Part II
  Purpose: to use theology as a resource for pastoral ministry
Day 5: Leading a theological reflection with a small group
  Purpose: to use theology as a resource for pastoral ministry
  Class evaluations (school, instructor and class, student self-evaluation)
  Final day to submit summative assignment

Pedagogical Process
This class will take the form of a seminar held in both online and face-to-face sessions. The online portion is a virtual, asynchronous seminar; the face-to-face portion is a live, synchronous seminar. Dialogue and active participation should characterize the sessions, in which conceptual and practical articulations are made. There will also be some lectures to advance and organize the dialogue. The pedagogy of collective learning requires that each participant come to class fully prepared to participate in creative and productive dialogue, which at times may involve the confrontation of ideas. This pedagogy also requires the capacity to listen to the other persons with openness and respect and to speak with maturity and originality. Participation should be spontaneous, dynamic and well-founded so the class is not impeded by “opinionism” or unfocused discussions.

Grading for class participation

1. You attend every class session and are on time, meeting indicated deadlines.
2. You demonstrate familiarity with the assigned readings.
3. You listen carefully to the instructor and to your classmates or read carefully what your instructor and classmates write on the discussion forum or shared documents in the online portion of the class.

4. You are an active participant in the class discussions, whether in online or face-to-face sessions.

5. You complete class room assignments on time and accomplish what the assignments ask of you.

6. You enter into intelligent, critical conversation with the course texts and lectures and your classmates' contributions.

7. You demonstrate a depth of insight in your theological claims.