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DO 690 John Wesley's Theology Today

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John Wesley's Theology Today
DO 690
(2 hours)
Kenneth J. Collins, Ph.D.

This syllabus may be changed from time to time for academic reasons. It is for the personal use of students enrolled in the internet course DO 690 and is not to be distributed beyond these parameters.

I. Welcome

Welcome to DO 690, John Wesley's Theology Today. The life and thought of John Wesley is fascinating, marked by highs as well as by lows. It is filled with all the drama of peoples, places and movements, large conversations as well as smaller ones. Besides being the founder of Methodism, John Wesley was the most important single figure in eighteenth-century Anglicanism. Our explorations throughout this course will indicate just why this was so.

Beyond my work in the field of Wesley studies, my theological interests include soteriology, anthropology, and Christology, to name but a few.

We are on a journey together and I hope by means of our discoveries that we will have a greater appreciation of the life and thought of John Wesley, of his significance with respect to eighteenth-century Anglicanism and Methodism, and of his relevance for contemporary Christian practice and witness.

II. Office Hours

I will go online on a regular basis to respond to your questions.

If you ever need to contact me, I will be available on Friday afternoons from 1:00 until 4:00 p.m. in my office.

My email address is ken_collins@asburyseminary.edu

My office telephone number is 859-858-2368.

III. Support

There are some other people who can help you during this course. They are available to assist you if you have any questions:

For **general questions regarding the ExL program**, email
ExL_Office@asburyseminary.edu

For **technical support**, email ExL_Office@asburyseminary.edu

For **library research support**, contact Information Commons at
Information_Commons@asburyseminary.edu

For **library loans**, contact Dot James at Dot_James@asburyseminary.edu

IV. Course Description:

The course will explore the theology of John Wesley in terms of his doctrine of salvation. Principal attention will be given to the following elements:

1) the nature of justification, 2) the significance of Wesley's Aldersgate experience, 3) the new birth, 4) assurance 5) the faith of a servant, and 6) Christian perfection.

In terms of methodology, the course will proceed in a Socratic and dialogical manner as it entertains an array of possible meanings of selected texts. This process, intense in many ways, should enhance the ability of students not only to understand the thought of Wesley in greater depth in its eighteenth-century context, but also to think historically and critically. Moreover, the course will be attentive to current scholarly interpretations of Wesley's soteriology and will assess such judgments in light of the primary evidence. All the tasks of the course, then, will concern exploring Wesley's practical divinity in terms of its relevance for twenty-first century theology and ministry.

V. General Goals:

Upon completion of the course successful students will be able to do all of the following:

- 1) Identify the major elements in Wesley's soteriology, especially in terms of the order evidenced in the key sermon, "The Scripture Way of Salvation."
- 2) Evidence an awareness of historiographical concerns in the interpretation of Wesley's soteriology, especially in terms of narrow, limited or unfair (biased) perspectives
- 3) Explore the interplay between religion and culture especially in terms of the intellectual developments (philosophical and theological) of the eighteenth century as reflected in Wesley's writings.
- 4) Display an extensive knowledge of the theological distinctions and nuances employed by Wesley in crafting an articulate and well-developed theology, especially in the areas of justification, the new birth, and entire sanctification.
- 5) Demonstrate an understanding of the continuing significance of Wesleyan theology today especially for the broader ecumenical community.

- 6) Conceive one's calling as a minister of the gospel in light of the Methodist theology and practice.
- 7) Articulate the relevance of Wesleyan theology for effective pastoral ministry today

VI. Texts:

Required:

Outler, Albert C. and Heitzenrater, Richard P. *John Wesley's Sermons: An Anthology* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1991). **All Sermons Must Be Read.**

Collins, Kenneth J. *John Wesley: A Theological Journey*. Nashville, Tennessee: Abingdon Press, 2003.

Collins, Kenneth J. *The Scripture Way of Salvation: The Heart of John Wesley's Theology* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1997).

Collins, Kenneth J. and Tyson, John H.. *Conversion in the Wesleyan Tradition* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2001)

All of these textbooks may be purchased at the Cokesbury bookstore at Asbury Theological Seminary. The internet link is as follows:

<http://www.asburyseminary.edu/bookstore.html>

VII. Outline of Wesley's Life:

6/17/03	Born at Epworth
2/09/09	Saved from Fire
5/12/11	Nominated for Charterhouse
1/28/14	Gown-boy at Charterhouse
6/24/20	Enters Christ Church
9/19/25	Ordained Deacon
3/17/26	Fellow of Lincoln College
1729	Name Methodist given
1735	Whitefield joins Holy Club
4/25/35	Samuel Sr.'s Death

10/21/35	Sails for Georgia
02/05/36	Reaches America
08/11/36	Charles leaves Georgia
12/02/37	John leaves Savannah
02/01/38	John lands at Deal

05/21/38	Charles' Evangelical Conversion
05/24/38	John's Evangelical Conversion
06/13/38	Visits the Moravian Church
05/02/39	Field-Preaching in Bristol
11/11/39	Preaches in the Foundery
07/20/40	Withdraws from Fetter Lane
05/28/42	First visit to Newcastle
06/06/42	Preaches on his father's tomb
07/30/42	Death of Susanna Wesley
05/29/43	Opens West Street Chapel, London
08/26/42	Sets out for Cornwall
10/20/42	Riot at Wednesbury
06/25/44	First Conference
08/24/44	Last University sermon
08/09/47	First visit to Ireland
04/08/49	Marriage of Charles
10/03/49	Grace Murray marries John Bennet
02/18/51	Wesley marries Mrs. Vazeille
April/51	First visit to Scotland
06/01/51	Resigns Fellowship
11/26/53	Writes his Epitaph at Lewisham
Jan/55	Notes Upon the NT published
05/06/55	Issue of Separation Discussed
1757	Charles' itinerancy limited
03/13/57	Ordination of John Fletcher
02/16/59	Public Fast; fear of French invasion
02/21/60	French Landing at Carrickfergus
10/25/60	Death of George II
11/26/62	Answer to Bishop Warburton
01/07/63	Wesley meets George Bell
Mar/ 63	Earthquake panic in London
04/28/63	Thomas Maxfield leaves Wesley
04/18/64	Letter to Evangelical Clergy
May/ 64	Hervey Letters published
Jan/ 65	Conference on Ordinations
01/31/66	Closer union with Whitefield
1766	<i>Plain Account</i> Published
03/30/67	Wesley visits Ireland
08/18/67	Francis Asbury received on trial

Jan/ 68 Appointed chaplain to the Countess Dowager
 08/24/68 Trevecca College opened
 Aug/1770 Doctrinal Minutes of the Bristol Conference
 09/30/70 Death of George Whitefield
 11/18/70 Wesley preaches at Whitefield's funeral
 01/17/71 Benson dismissed from Trevecca
 01/23/71 Mrs. Wesley leaves him
 09/04/71 Francis Asbury sails for America

 09/04/71 Fletcher's 1 and 2 Checks published
 08/14/72 Meets Howell Harris at Trevecca
 08/14/72 Fletcher's 3 and 4 Checks published
 08/14/72 Wesley issues Vols. 11-16 of his Works
 03/14/73 Replies to Richard Hill's *Farrago Double-Distilled*
 Dec/73 Vols. 17-25 of Wesley's Works published
 06/04/74 Arrest in Edinburgh
 1775 *Calm Address* published

 04/27/75 Death of Peter Bohler
 Aug/ 75 Asbury decides to stay in America
 01/03/76 Death of Westley Hall
 08/18/76 Wesley first meets Dr. Coke
 04/21/77 Foundation-stone of City Road Chapel laid
 01/01/78 First number of Arminian Magazine
 05/30/78 Death of Voltaire
 11/01/78 Opening of City Road Chapel
 1779 Publishes *Popery Calmly Considered*

 08/10/80 Letter to Bishop Lowth on ordination for America
 01/25/81 At his Nephew's concert
 10/08/81 Death of Mrs. Wesley
 Aug/ 82 Adam Clarke at Kingswood School
 June/83 Visit to Holland
 02/28/84 Deed of Declaration
 Sep/ 84 Ordinations for America
 Dec/ 84 Francis Asbury Ordained
 08/14/85 Death of John Fletcher

 01/24/86 Hears George III in House of Lords
 07/25/86 Conference begins at Bristol
 08/08/86 Visits Holland
 09/24/86 Dr. Coke sails with three missionaries
 Jan/ 87 Begg £ 200 for London poor
 08/04/87 Conference in Manchester

1788	Second Series of Sermons Published
03/29/88	Death of Charles Wesley
04/05/88	Burial of Charles Wesley in Marylebone
08/06/88	Conference at Bristol
07/28/89	Conference at Leeds
1790	Revised Translation of the NT published
07/27/90	Wesley's last Conference in Bristol
07/30/90	Letter to Wilberforce
10/06/90	Last open-air sermon at Winchelsea
10/24/90	Last entry in Wesley's Journal
02/22/91	Last sermon, at Leatherhead
02/24/91	Last letter, to Wilberforce
03/02/91	Dies at City Road at 10:00 a.m.
03/09/91	Buried at City Road

VIII The Modules

Though you should keep up with the flow of the course as presented in the following modules, if you do fall behind, just make sure that you complete the appropriate tasks (with the proper page breaks) before you take each exam.

Module One (First Module to be Completed by February 14, 2005)

Topic: Salvation by Faith

Sermons Reading: pp. 1-48.

John Wesley: A Theological Journey: Chapters 1-2

Module Two (Second Module to be Completed by February 21, 2005)

Topic: Justification by Faith

Sermons Reading: pp. 49-96.

John Wesley: A Theological Journey: Chapters 3-4

Conversion in the Wesleyan Tradition Introduction

Module Three (Third Module to be Completed by February 28, 2005)

Topic: The Importance of Humility

Sermons Reading: pp. 97-144.

John Wesley: A Theological Journey: Chapters 5-6

Module Four (Fourth Module to be Completed by March 7, 2005)

Topic: The Witness of the Spirit

Sermons Reading: pp. 145-192.

John Wesley: A Theological Journey: Chapters 7-8

Conversion in the Wesleyan Tradition Chapter 1

Module Five (Fifth Module to be Completed by March 14, 2005)

Topic: Wesley's Doctrine of Sin

Sermons Reading: pp. 193-254.

John Wesley: A Theological Journey: Chapters 9-10

Module Six (Sixth Module to be Completed by March 19, 2005)

Topic: The Way to Perfect Love

Sermons Reading: pp. 255-298.

John Wesley: A Theological Journey: Conclusion

Conversion in the Wesleyan Tradition Chapter 3

First Exam: March 19, 2005

Reading Week: No Classes or Postings March 21-25, 2005

Module Seven (Seventh Module to be Completed by March 27, 2005)

Topic: The Standards of Redemption

Sermons Reading: pp. 299-346.

The Scripture Way of Salvation: Chapters 1 and 2

Module Eight (Eighth Module to be Completed by April 4, 2005)

Topic: The Importance of the Moral Law

Sermons Reading: pp. 347-392.

The Scripture Way of Salvation: Chapter 3

Conversion in the Wesleyan Tradition Chapter 4

Module Nine (Ninth Module to be Completed by April 11, 2005)

Topic: The Catholic Spirit

Sermons Reading: pp. 393-440.

The Scripture Way of Salvation: Chapter 4

Module Ten (Tenth Module to be Completed by April 18, 2005)

Topic: The Flow of Redemption

Sermons Reading: pp. 441-484.

The Scripture Way of Salvation: Chapter 5

Conversion in the Wesleyan Tradition Chapter 5

Module Eleven (Eleventh Module to be Completed by April 25, 2005)

Topic: Challenges on the Way to Perfection

Sermons Reading: pp. 485-510

The Scripture Way of Salvation: Chapter 6

Module Twelve (Twelfth Module to be Completed by May 2, 2005)

Topic: Personal and Social Ethics

Sermons Reading: pp. 511-548.

The Scripture Way of Salvation: Chapter 7 and the Conclusion

Conversion in the Wesleyan Tradition Chapter 9

Wrap-Up Week May 9-13, 2005 (Open Discussion)

Second Exam: Exam Week (Monday, May 16, 2005)

Please observe that the exams are *not* cumulative. After we finish a section and test it, we move on to another. The “final exam,” then, is simply the second exam and it only covers half the course.

IX. Course Procedures:

A. Online Guidelines

Please be sure to share a brief profile (maybe even a picture) of yourself in the *Discussion Center*. My profile is listed under ExL faculty on Asbury’s homepage (Look under Extended Learning, then ExL People Links or just click on the following:)

<http://www.ats.wilmore.ky.us/exl/people/ppllinks.htm>

While I am sure that each of you are aware of the intended use of each of the items which appear in the DO690X folder, let me summarize the manner in which I intend to use them this semester:

The Course Center will contain a copy of the syllabus as well as all class modules.

The Discussion Center will be used for all public communications. Anytime you have a question or comment about the course, the modules, the assignments, or anything else which would be of interest to your classmates and me you should post to the Discussion Center.

The DO690 Office is for *private* correspondence between you and me. This will contain items that you do not want to appear publicly before all of your classmates or items that you think may embarrass me if they were to appear publicly.

The Archives Center will be used for storing correspondence which has already been explored during the course of the semester. This keeps the *Discussion Center* from becoming too unmanageable.

The Chat Center is intended primarily for real-time interaction among students. You can get together with other members to study, ask questions, or to explore topics.

The Resource Center provides access to a number of specific tools available to all ExL students. These include access to the B.L. Fisher Library, the Services in Estes Chapel, ExL Updates, Guidelines for Success, Helpful Hints, Interesting Links, a Powerpoint Viewer as well as a Real Audio player. I encourage you to take advantage of all these resources, and particularly to utilize the chapel access in order to connect with the seminary's on-campus opportunities for spiritual growth.

B. Testing

Two examinations will be given during the semester: a mid-term and a final. This component will constitute 50% of the grade.

C. Sermon Outlines:

Students must outline the sixteen sermons of Wesley listed below. (Pace yourself by doing about two a week, skipping the week of exams, and you should have no problem.) Each outline must reveal the major themes and emphases of each sermon in a way that is clear, coherent, and comprehensive. *Do not* simply follow Burwash's outlines in terms of the sermons for they do not pick up enough detail. Besides, the outlining should be original. On the other hand, students should not include excessive detail in the outlines. This task, then, calls for judgment on the part of students as to what is soteriologically important and what is not. Exercise such judgment. In addition, these outlines, which must be typed, should be placed in a notebook (or bound in some other fashion) and are due at the seminary post office on **Tuesday, December 7, 2003**. It is your responsibility to see to it that your sermons arrive on time. Late submissions will result in grade reduction. The outlines will make up 25% of the grade. They should be mailed to me at the seminary: 204 N. Lexington Ave., Wilmore, Kentucky 40390.

Sermon I.	Salvation by Faith
Sermon II.	The Almost Christian
Sermon IV.	Scriptural Christianity
Sermon V.	Justification By Faith
Sermon IX.	The Spirit of Bondage and of Adoption
Sermon X.	The Witness of the Spirit
Sermon XIII.	On Sin in Believers
Sermon XIV.	The Repentance of Believers
Sermon XVI.	The Means of Grace
Sermon XVIII.	The Marks of the New Birth
Sermon XIX.	The Great Privilege of Those that are Born of God

Sermon XXXIV.	The Original, Nature, Properties and Use of the Law
Sermon XL.	On Christian Perfection
Sermon XLIII	The Scripture Way of Salvation
Sermon XLIV.	Original Sin
Sermon XLV.	The New Birth

D. Reading Report

An email reading report which indicates that you have completed all of the required reading is due on the date of the final exam. It should be listed at the top of your exam. If you have omitted any reading, then indicate specifically what you left out. Failure to read all of the assignments will result in grade reduction. For example, if you leave out one hundred pages from the Outler and Heitzenrater text, then instead of receiving an “A-” you will likely receive a “B+.” If you leave out more material, then the grade will fall even lower.

E. Class participation

Class participation and completion of the assigned tasks (tapes and readings) will count as 25% of your grade. I am looking for theological reflection, the ability to think globally, the capacity both to see the larger picture of Wesley’s theology and to make appropriate connections. Be creative, feel free in your thinking, and do have fun. A suitable response might be composed of a paragraph or two of about 50 to 75 words. Try not to be too wordy. I look for quality of thought and reflection not quantity of words. You must indicate how many times you posted in the course, along with your reading report, on the day of the final exam. It should be listed, once again, at the top of your exam.

XI. Bibliography

Primary Sources: Books

Unpublished at This Point

- . *The Works of John Wesley*. Bicentennial ed. Vol. 5-6: Explanatory Notes Upon the New Testament. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1984.
- . *The Works of John Wesley*. Bicentennial ed. Vol. 8: Worship and Prayer. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1984.
- . *The Works of John Wesley*. Bicentennial ed. Vol. 10: The Methodist Societies II: The Conference. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1984.
- . *The Works of John Wesley*. Bicentennial ed. Vol. 12: Theological Treatises. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1984.

- . *The Works of John Wesley*. Bicentennial ed. Vol. 13: The Defense of Christianity. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1984.
- . *The Works of John Wesley*. Bicentennial ed. Vol. 14-15: Pastoral, Ethical, and Instructional Writings. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1984.
- . *The Works of John Wesley*. Bicentennial ed. Vol. 16: Natural Philosophy and Medicine. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1984.
- . *The Works of John Wesley*. Bicentennial ed. Vol. 17: Editorial Works. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1984.
- . *The Works of John Wesley*. Bicentennial ed. Vol. 33-34: A Description and Analytical Bibliography of the Publications of John and Charles Wesley. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1984.
- . *The Works of John Wesley*. Bicentennial ed. Vol. 35: General Index and Miscellanea. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1984.

Published

- Curnock, Nehemiah, ed. *The Journal of Rev. John Wesley*. 8 vols. London: Epworth Press, 1909-1916.
- Jackson, Thomas, ed. *The Works of Rev. John Wesley*. 14 vols. London: Wesleyan Methodist Book Room, 1829-1831. Reprinted Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1978.
- , ed. *The Journals of Rev. Charles Wesley*. 2 vols. London: John Mason, 1949. Reprinted Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House 1980.
- Outler, Albert C. *The Works of John Wesley*. Bicentennial ed. Vols. 1-4: Sermons. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1984-1987.
- Telford, John, ed. *The Letters of the Rev. John Wesley*. 8 vols. London: Epworth Press, 1931.
- Ward, W. Reginald, and Richard P. Heitzenrater, eds. *The Works of John Wesley*. Bicentennial ed. Vol. 18: Journals and Diaries I. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1988.
- . *The Works of John Wesley*. Bicentennial ed. Vol. 19: Journals and Diaries II. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1990.
- . *The Works of John Wesley*. Bicentennial ed. Vol. 20: Journals and Diaries III. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1991.
- . *The Works of John Wesley*. Bicentennial ed. Vol. 21: Journals and Diaries IV. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1992.
- . *The Works of John Wesley*. Bicentennial ed. Vol. 22: Journals and Diaries V.

Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1993.

Wesley, John. *Explanatory Notes upon the New Testament*. London: William Bowyer, 1755. Most recent reprint, Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1987.

---. *Explanatory Notes upon the Old Testament*. 3 vols. Bristol: William Pine, 1765. Facsimile reprint, Salem, OH: Schmul Publishers, 1975.

---. *A Christian Library, Consisting of Extracts from and Abridgements of the Choicest Pieces of Practical Divinity which have been published in the English Tongue*. 30 vols. London: T. Blanshard, 1819-1827.

---. *Devotions and Prayers of John Wesley*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1977.

---. *The Journal of John Wesley: A Selection*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1987.

---. *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection*. London: Epworth Press. Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1990.

---. *Wesley's Forms of Prayers*. Library of Methodist Classics. Nashville: United Methodist Publishing House, 1992.

Students may also access the far more extensive Wesley bibliography on Asbury's homepage (look under "Resources") or download it from <http://wesley.nnc.edu/>