1-1-1999

MI 735 Wesleyan Theology of Mission

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MI 735. WESLEYAN THEOLOGY OF MISSION

DESCRIPTION
This course examines the life and theology of John Wesley (1703-91), focusing especially on his understanding and practice of mission. Through a study primarily of Wesley's sermons and other writings, students will seek to discern a Wesleyan theology of mission.

OBJECTIVES
The primary objective is to understand Wesley's own theology as a theology of mission. Secondary objectives are to draw upon Wesleyan resources for a contemporary theology of mission and to gain missiological insights from the experience of early Methodism.

COURSE METHOD
Class sessions will be conducted as a graduate seminar. Each participant will be expected to contribute to our shared learnings based upon their readings, research, and experience.

We will look at major themes in Wesley's theology and practice to discern the implications for mission. We will concentrate primarily on Wesley's writings rather than the vast literature about Wesley. The course will combine lecture, discussion, and reports from the reading of Wesley's works for each of the major topics considered. The final paper will be based on focused research and will seek to draw relevant missiological implications from the study.

TEXTS


The Sermons of John Wesley - Sermons 54-64. Custom Course Packet.

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES


**COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

1. Class participation based on advance study of assigned readings. The readings interweave Wesley’s teachings with historical perspectives on Wesley and early Methodism.

2. Each student will choose one of the points or themes of Wesley's theology for an in-depth study continuing throughout the semester. At appropriate points in the course, students will report the findings of their research.

3. Each student will lead a discussion of one of the assigned Wesley sermons. The presenter should explain the background of the sermon and the discussion should focus on, or show the relevance for, missiological themes.

4. A final paper (approx. 15-20 pages) summarizing the findings on one’s chosen theme (#2, above) will complete the course work. The specific topic will be chosen in consultation with the professor. The final paper will be due on Dec. 6. There will be no final exam.

Some possible topics:
- Any major doctrinal theme (Grace, creation, sin, sanctification, the Trinity, ecclesiology, evangelism, etc.)
- Wesley's theological methodology
- Wesley’s understanding of mission
- Wesley's use of cell groups (or other structures)
- Wesley's evangelistic methodology
- Wesley's understanding of history (or eschatology)
- Wesley's own experience (in relation to his theology and mission)
- Methodism as a movement
- Wesley's understanding of discipleship
- Wesley and Pietism
- Comparative study: Wesley and some other major figure (missiological comparison)
- Wesleyan theological as interpreted by -- (1 or more interpreters. Give mission focus)

**EVALUATION**

In grading, the course components will be weighted approximately as follows: Class participation, including input from readings (40%), sermon discussion (20%), final paper (40%).

**GUIDELINES FOR FINAL PAPER**

1. You may use either the anthropological style (recommended by the ESJ School) or the Chicago/Turabian style, but be consistent. The paper must be typed or computer-printed, and should include appropriate documentation of sources cited or consulted. (See “Academic Writing in the ESJ School,” available as a hand-out from the ESJ School Office.)

2. Attach a title page giving the paper’s title, your name, course name and number, my name, and date. Staple in upper left-hand corner. Please do not use a cover or binder. (I may later request a second clean copy of your paper for my files.)

3. The paper should be at least 15 pages. More is fine but the grade will depend on the content, development of the argument, and evidence of adequate research, not length.
4. At least half a dozen major sources should be used, and more is not uncommon for this type of paper. Clearly indicate all quoted material.

5. The paper should contain no spelling errors. Use a spell-checker.

6. Students for whom English is not their natural language may want to get editorial assistance. I will evaluate only the final product. Correct English tends to have a favorable influence on grade.

**SCHEDULE AND ASSIGNED READING**

(Numbers of Wesley Sermons correspond to Outler, *WJW*, and Burwash)

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<td>Sermon 39, “Catholic Spirit”</td>
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Sermon 41, “Wandering Thoughts”
**Recommended:**  Jennings, 47-69  
Collins, 153-90  
Runyon, 222-33

**NOV. 2 - THE RENEWAL OF THE CHURCH**
**Readings:**  Sermon 16, “The Means of Grace”  
Sermon 61, “The Mystery of Iniquity”  
Sermon 122, “Causes of the Inefficacy of Christianity”  
Snyder, 91-142  
Heitzenrater, 261-308

**NOV. 9 - DISCIPLESHIP: BALANCING LAW AND GRACE**
**Readings:**  Sermon 24, “Upon our Lord’s Sermon on the Mount,” IV  
Sermon 50, “The Use of Money”  
Sermon 51, “The Good Steward”  
**Recommended:**  Jennings, 71-117  
Runyon, 146-67

**NOV. 16 - THE GENERAL SPREAD OF THE GOSPEL**
**Readings:**  Sermon 4, “Scriptural Christianity”  
Sermon 63, “The General Spread of the Gospel”  
Sermon 106, “On Faith”  
**Recommended:**  Jennings, 119-56  
Dayton in Meeks, 65-96

**NOV. 30 - THE RESTORATION OF ALL THINGS**
**Readings:**  Sermon 15, “The Great Assize”  
Sermon 62, “The End of Christ’s Coming”  
Sermon 64, “The New Creation”  
**Recommended:**  Jennings, 157-79  
Collins, 191-204

**DEC. 7 - A CONTEMPORARY WESLEYAN THEOLOGY OF MISSION**
**Readings:**  Snyder, 153-65  
Heitzenrater, 309-23  
**Recommended:**  Jennings, 181-222  
Collins, 205-07  
Runyon, 168-221
SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY


Green, V. V. H. *The Young Mr. Wesley*. 1961.


Harrison, G. Elsie. *Son to Susanna: The Private Life of John Wesley*. Nashville: Cokesbury,
1938.


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__________. *John Wesley, the Master Builder*. London: Epworth, 1927.


