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DO 690 John Wesley's Theology Today

Kenneth J. Collins

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John Wesley’s Theology Today
DO 690
(2 or 3 hours)
Kenneth J. Collins, PhD

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 American evangelicalism, and the history of Christian spirituality.

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 I make any changes in this format, I will be sure to inform you.

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:
ExL Support Contact Information

For technical support, library research support, library loans, and ExL media contact Information Commons: info_commons@asburyseminary.edu
Phone: (859) 858-2233; Toll-free: (866) 454-2733

For general questions and administrative assistance regarding the ExL program, contact Dale Hale: Exl_Office@asburyseminary.edu
Phone: (859) 858-2393

Accessing Information Commons Materials

1. General Questions:
   1. The Information Commons is a "one-stop shop" for all student research, circulation and technical needs. The Information Commons hours are posted here: http://www.asburyseminary.edu/information/hours

2. Materials Requests:
   1. To search the library catalog for available materials, click here: http://www.asburyseminary.edu/information/

   2. ExL Students may request books, photocopies or emailed attachments of journal articles/portions of reference books from Asbury Seminary's Library. Please allow 3-10 business days for all requests to be filled. Contact the Information Commons for costs and instructions on how to make requests.

   3. ExL students are encouraged to make use of local library resources. Students who live within a 50 mile radius of either the Florida or the Kentucky campus should come to campus to obtain their materials.

3. Research Questions:
   1. ExL students are encouraged to contact the Information Commons for research assistance including help determining the best sources to use for a paper, finding book reviews, or research questions about using the online databases or any other library materials.

4. Online Databases:
   1. To access the online library resources including the library catalog and full-text journal databases, go to http://www.asburyseminary.edu/information/ and enter your 10-digit student ID# number in the login box. Your student ID# is provided on the biographical information section of the student
registration webpage. Add a 2 and enough 0’s to the front to make a 10-digit number (20000XXXXX where XXXXX = your student id).

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. 

Student initiative and creativity will be evidenced in the responses to the Questions of the Week.

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:

Burwash, Rev N. *Wesley's Fifty Two Standard Sermons*. Salem, Ohio: Schmul Publishing Co., 1967. **Note: All Sermons Must Be Read.**


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 Withdrawing 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 Plain Account 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
Mrs. Wesley leaves him
Francis Asbury sails for America
Fletcher’s 1 and 2 Checks published
Meets Howell Harris at Trevecca
Fletcher’s 3 and 4 Checks published
Wesley issues Vols. 11-16 of his Works
Replies to Richard Hill’s *Farrago Double-Distilled*
Vols. 17-25 of Wesley’s Works published
Arrest in Edinburgh
*Calm Address* published
Death of Peter Bohler
Asbury decides to stay in America
Death of Westley Hall
Wesley first meets Dr. Coke
Foundation-stone of City Road Chapel laid
First number of Arminian Magazine
Death of Voltaire
Opening of City Road Chapel
Publishes *Popery Calmly Considered*
Letter to Bishop Lowth on ordination for America
At his Nephew’s concert
Death of Mrs. Wesley
Adam Clarke at Kingswood School
Visit to Holland
Deed of Declaration
Ordinations for America
Francis Asbury Ordained
Death of John Fletcher
Hears George III in House of Lords
Conference begins at Bristol
Visits Holland
Dr. Coke sails with three missionaries
Begs £200 for London poor
Conference in Manchester
Second Series of Sermons Published
Death of Charles Wesley
Burial of Charles Wesley in Marylebone
Conference at Bristol
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**

Instructions:

Please consider the information offered in these modules in light of this syllabus in which the bibliographical details (author, full title, etc.) are articulated.

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 before you take each exam.

**Module One**  (First Module to be Completed by September 8, 2008)

Topic: Salvation by Faith

Fifty-Two Sermons Reading: I-V

I. Salvation by Faith
II. The Almost Christian
III. Awake, thou that sleepest
IV. Scriptural Christianity
V. Justification By Faith

John Wesley: A Theological Journey: Chapters 1-2

**Module Two**  (Second Module to be Completed by September 15, 2008)

Topic: Justification by Faith

Fifty-Two Sermons Reading: VI-X

VI. The Righteousness of Faith
VII. The Way to the Kingdom
VIII. The First Fruits of the Spirit
IX. The Spirit of Bondage and of Adoption
X. The Witness of the Spirit
John Wesley: A Theological Journey: Chapters 3-4

Conversion in the Wesleyan Tradition: Introduction

**Module Three**  (Third Module to be Completed by September 22, 2008)

Topic: The Importance of Humility

Fifty-Two Sermons Reading: XI-XV
- XI. The Witness of the Spirit
- XII. The Witness of our Own Spirit
- XIII. On Sin in Believers
- XIV. The Repentance of Believers
- XV. The Great Assive

John Wesley: A Theological Journey: Chapters 5-6

**Module Four**  (Fourth Module to be Completed by September 29, 2008)

Topic: The Witness of the Spirit

Fifty-Two Sermons Reading: XVI-XX
- XVI. The Means of Grace
- XVII. The Circumcision of the Heart
- XVIII. The Marks of the New Birth
- XIX. The Great Privilege of those that are Born of God
- XX. The Lord our Righteousness

John Wesley: A Theological Journey: Chapters 7-8

Conversion in the Wesleyan Tradition: Chapter 2

**Module Five**  (Fifth Module to be Completed by October 6, 2008)

Topic: Wesley’s Doctrine of Sin

Fifty-Two Sermons Reading: XXI-XXV
- XXI. Upon our Lord’s Sermon on the Mount
- XXII. Upon our Lord’s Sermon on the Mount
- XXIII. Upon our Lord’s Sermon on the Mount
- XXIV. Upon our Lord’s Sermon on the Mount
- XXV. Upon our Lord’s Sermon on the Mount
John Wesley: A Theological Journey: Chapters 9-10

Module Six (Sixth Module to be Completed by October 13, 2008)

Topic: The Way to Perfect Love

Fifty-Two Sermons Reading: XXVI-XXX
XXVI. Upon our Lord’s Sermon on the Mount
XXVII. Upon our Lord’s Sermon on the Mount
XXVIII. Upon our Lord’s Sermon on the Mount
XXIX. Upon our Lord’s Sermon on the Mount
XXX. Upon our Lord’s Sermon on the Mount

John Wesley: A Theological Journey: Conclusion

Conversion in the Wesleyan Tradition: Chapter 3

First Exam: Due Friday Morning, 9:00 a.m. October 17, 2008

Module Seven (Seventh Module to be Completed by October 20, 2008)

Topic: The Standards of Redemption

Fifty-Two Sermons Reading: XXXI-XXXV
XXXI. Upon our Lord’s Sermon on the Mount
XXXII. Upon our Lord’s Sermon on the Mount
XXXIII. Upon our Lord’s Sermon on the Mount
XXXIV. The Original Nature, Properties, and Use of the Law
XXXV. The Law Established through Faith

The Theology of John Wesley: Introduction, Chapters 1 and 2

Module Eight (Eighth Module to be Completed by October 27, 2008)

Topic: The Importance of the Moral Law

Fifty-Two Sermons Reading: XXXVI-XL
XXXVI. The Law Established through Faith
XXXVII. The Nature of Enthusiasm
XXXVIII. A Caution Against Bigotry
XXXIX. Catholic Spirit
XL. On Christian Perfection
Module Nine  (Ninth Module to be Completed by November 3, 2008)

Topic:  The Catholic Spirit

Fifty-Two Sermons Reading:   XLI-XLV
XL I.  Wandering Thoughts
XL II.  Satan’s Devices
XLIII. The Scripture Way of Salvation
XLIV. Original Sin
XLV. The New Birth

Module Ten  (Tenth Module to be Completed by November 10, 2008)

Topic:  The Flow of Redemption

Fifty-Two Sermons Reading:   XLVI-XLVIII
XLVI.  The Wilderness State
XLVII.  Heaviness Through Manifold Temptations
XLVIII.  Self-Denial

Module Eleven  (Eleventh Module to be Completed by November 17, 2008)

Topic:  Challenges on the Way to Perfection

Fifty-Two Sermons Reading:    XLIX-L
XLIX. The Cure of Evil Speaking
L.  The Use of Money

Module Twelve (Twelfth Module to be Completed by November 24, 2008)
IX. Course Procedures:

This course can be taken for either 2 or 3 credit hours. Those who take the course for 3 hours must complete the outline assignment that will form 20% of the grade, tests 40%, and class participation and reading 40%. For those who take the course for 2 hours, the exams will count for 60% of the grade and class participation and reading 40%.

A. Online Guidelines

Please be sure to share a brief profile (maybe even a picture) of yourself in the Participants Section (Under People to the left of your home screen).

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

*The Course Related section will contain a copy of the Syllabus.*

The *Question of the Week* forum, listed in each separate week, 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 *Question of the Week* forum.

*To the Professor* (under the Course Related section) is for private correspondence between you and me. This will contain items that you do not want to appear online before all of your classmates or items that you think may embarrass you or the
professor if they were to appear publicly.

*The Files section*  (under Administration, on the left hand side of your screen) contains a number of folders with Course Materials.

*Resources*  (under Activities, on the left hand side of your screen) provides access to a number of specific tools available to all ExL students. These include access to the Student Info Commons, Chapel Services in Orlando and Wilmore, an Academic Calendar, a Wesley bibliography and a Powerpoint Viewer among other things. 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 the percentage of the grade with respect to the number of hours taken as listed above. **These are not open-book exams.**

C. Sermon Outlines:

Three Credit hour 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 (if you consult this resource) 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 Monday of the last week of class. It is your responsibility to see to it that your sermons arrive on time. **Though you are only outlining sixteen sermons, all fifty-two sermons must be read.** Late submissions will result in grade reduction. The outlines will make up 20% of the grade. They should be mailed to me, bound in some fashion, at the seminary: 204 N. Lexington Ave., Wilmore, Kentucky 40390. **The outlines are due Monday, December 1, 2008 at my seminary address.** Do not send this material electronically; it will not be accepted.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sermon</th>
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<tr>
<td>Salvation by Faith</td>
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<td>The Almost Christian</td>
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<td>Scriptural Christianity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justification By Faith</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
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. You can simply include this information with your final exam. That is, 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 Burwash 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. Also, indicate the number of times you have posted in the course.

E. What Constitutes Reading

There have been several instances when students indicated (in a later confession) that they had simply "skimmed" the reading assignments and counted the pages in their reading report. This is unacceptable and represents deficient work. To prevent this occurrence again students may fulfill their reading assignment in one of two ways: First, they can outline all the reading material for the course and place it in a bound notebook. Or second, they can freshly underline or highlight their textbooks (using a yellow marker or such) giving evidence that they have grappled with the material. Either method is acceptable. You do not have to hand in this material. The professor will take the word of the students that they have abided by this policy.

F. Short Paper on Justice and Mercy

You are required to write a brief, two to three page paper (12 pt, double-spaced) on Wesley's handling of issues of justice and mercy in his theology and ministry. My article, "The Soteriological Orientation of John Wesley's Ministry to the Poor," is posted in the Files section (left hand side of the screen) under Microsoft Word documents. This paper will not be a part of your grade. Send a bound hard copy of your paper to my seminary address: (Asbury Theological Seminary, 204 N.
Lexington Ave., Wilmore, KY 40390). This paper is due Monday, December 1, 2008 at my seminary address. Do not send this material electronically; it will not be accepted.

G. Class participation

Class participation and completion of the assigned tasks (CD's and readings) will count as 40% 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.

XI. Bibliography

Primary Sources: Books

Unpublished at This Point


**Published**


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/](http://wesley.nnc.edu/).
theology.today is a publishing platform for theological debates and research edited by Sorin Sabou. To do this, frequent use is made of the lust for sensationalism (Jesus and women; homosexual love; Jesus as prototype of alternative lifestyles; non-theological, undogmatic beginnings of Christianity). Mere supposition and unproven postulates are asserted as stimulants for a debate intended to have public effects. Such constructions do not stand up to historical criticism, for neither the existence of a Secret Gospel of Mark nor a Signs Source can be made probable, and the Gospel of Thomas belongs to the second century. Schnelle, U. (2009) Theology of the New Testament. Baker Academic, Grand R DO 690 John Wesley’s Theology Today. Allan Coppedge. John Wesley, Wesley’s Fifty-two Standard Sermons, ed. N. Burwash. _, A Plain Account of Christian Perfection. Kenneth Collins, The Scripture Way of Salvation. Harold Lindstrom, Wesley and Sanctification. Kenneth Collins, A Real Christian. Read more. Wesleyan-Arminian theology, manifest today in Methodist and Holiness churches, is named for its founders, the Wesleys, as well as for Jacob Arminius, since it is a subset of Arminian theology.[1] In 1736, these two brothers traveled to the Georgia colony in America as missionaries for the Church of England; they left rather disheartened at what they saw. At its heart, the theology of John Wesley stressed the life of Christian holiness: to love God with all one’s heart, mind, soul and strength and to love one’s neighbour as oneself. See also Ministry of Jesus. Wesley’s teaching also stressed experiential religion and moral responsibility.[2].