



COS 422

Theological Heritage IV: Wesleyan Movement Spring 2026

Instructor Contact Information

Instructor: The Rev. Dr. Ricky James

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The best way to ask me questions related to general matters of course content, policies, or procedures is to use email. I will make every effort to respond within 24 hours.

Meeting Dates and Times

This course will be taught online through Course Connect and ZOOM. All assignments will be due by the times listed below, and no assignments will be accepted after June 22, 2026.

We will meet through ZOOM on Mondays from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m., central time, on the following nights: (links available through Course Connect): April 13, April 20, April 27, May 4, May 11, May 18, May 25, and June 1.

These are required meeting times, and there is no way to make these up if you are unable to attend. Additionally, while in attendance you must have your camera on, and be in a place where you can be fully engaged without distraction (i.e. not in a moving automobile).

In addition to these 16 hours of class meeting, there are 4 hours of classwork that takes the form of watching several recorded lectures and videos, along with writing and responding to posts.

Course Description and Outcomes

This course covers the significant individuals, decisive events, and theology of the Methodist Movement. Utilizing categories of grace, faith, and holiness, the student will appropriate the Wesleyan heritage.

Students will be able to:

1. Understand and reflect on the movements, major figures, and events that led to the revivals of the 18th century, especially the lives of John and Charles Wesley.
2. Understand and articulate the vision of holiness and the theology of grace as it shaped the Wesleys, and the structures of the Methodist movement.
3. Identify and discuss significant theological and historical developments in American Methodism, including ordination and episcopacy.
4. Reflect theologically on their Wesleyan heritage and identity.

Required Readings

Students are expected to obtain their own copies of the following texts.

Heitzenrater, Richard. *Wesley and the People Called Methodist*
Richey, Russ., Ken Rowe, and Jeanne M. Shmidt. *American Methodism: A Compact History*
Stokes, Mack B. *Major United Methodist Beliefs*.
The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church (2020/2024)

Course Prerequisites

Participants in this course must have successfully completed COS 312—Our Theological Heritage: The Reformation. Questions concerning prerequisites, or requests for waivers must be addressed to the Director of Course of Study, The Rev. Beth Miller (milleea2@millsaps.edu)

Course Assignments

PRE-WORK

1. Watch Recorded Lecture on Syllabus Introduction, available on Course Connect.
2. Make an online post in Course Connect introducing yourself (questions found in the prompt).
3. Secure copies of and begin reading the following texts.

Wesley and the People Called Methodist by Richard Heitzenrater
The Book of Discipline (§§ 102-105, Pages 47-92 and §§ 160-164, Pages 105-147)
American Methodism: A Compact History by Richey, et. al
Major United Methodist Beliefs by Mack B. Stokes

WEEK ONE (April 13 through April 19)

1. Attend online class meeting, April 13. Class Topic: English Religious History.
2. Make an online post of 500 words, reflecting on how/if you were taught Methodist history and theology in your local church.
3. Respond to 2 other classmates' posts, reflecting on similarities/differences in your experience.

WEEK TWO (April 20 through April 26)

1. Attend online class meeting, April 20. The Wesley Family and the Rise of Methodism
2. Review *Wesley and the People Called Methodist* by Richard Heitzenrater
3. In 5 pages, write a summary of the major people and writings that you consider to be distinctive influences on John Wesley and/or 3 events which helped mold John Wesley into the spiritual leader he became. **(Due April 26, at 11:59 p.m.)**

WEEK THREE (April 27 through May 3)

1. Attend online class, April 27. Class topic: Growth of English Methodism
2. Watch lecture "Origins of the EUB" on Course Connect
3. Make an online post of 500 words, reflecting on the EUB movement.

WEEK FOUR (May 4 through May 10)

1. Attend online class, May 19. Class topic: Early American Methodism
2. Watch online link of "Clayride: A Gallop through United Methodist History."
3. Make an online post of 500 words, reflecting on what is included/excluded in this history.
4. Respond to 2 other classmates' posts, reflecting on why you think something is included/excluded.

WEEK FIVE (May 11 through May 17)

1. Attend online class, May 11. Class topic: Growth and Schism
2. Review *American Methodism: A Compact History* by Richey, et. al.
3. In 5 pages, write about three key moments in the history of American Methodism and explain how their importance impacted growth of the movement. **(Due May 17, at 11:59 p.m.)**

WEEK SIX (May 18 through May 24)

1. Attend online class, May 18. Class topic: Methodism in the 20th Century
2. Watch the series of short videos under the heading “Voices of American Methodism.” These videos show a sampling of the variety of people who have made Methodism in America what it is today. Videos include clips from the 1968 Uniting Conference, Interviews with pioneer women bishops Marjorie Matthews and Leontine Kelly, and reflections from members of the Central Jurisdiction.
3. In a post of 500 words, reflect on one aspect of Methodist history that you see in a different light after watching the videos.
4. Respond to 2 other classmates’ posts.

WEEK SEVEN (May 25 through May 31)

1. Attend online class, May 25. Class topic: Methodism in the 21st Century
2. Review Part V: Social Principles of *The Book of Discipline* (§§ 160-164, Pages 105-147).
3. In 5 pages, select a specific Social Principle from The Book of Discipline and explain how our Wesleyan theological commitments inform this position. Relate whether you agree or disagree with the church’s position, and how you would counsel a member of your congregation who embraces a different viewpoint than your own. **(Due May 31, at 11:59 p.m.)**

WEEK EIGHT (June 11 through June 7)

1. Attend online class, June 1. Class topic: Methodist Theological Distinctives
2. Review the book *Major United Methodist Beliefs* by Mack B. Stokes.
3. In 5 pages, define the following theological beliefs as John Wesley understood and taught them and give an example of each that you have experienced or witnessed: Prevenient Grace, Justifying Grace, Sanctifying Grace, and Christian Perfection. **(Due June 8, at 11:59 p.m.)**

Expectations for Written Work

Written assignments may be submitted in electronic form through course connect or emailed to instructor. Assignments should be in 12 point, Times New Roman font, using double spacing and one-inch margins on a US Letter sized page. All quotations/citations must be clearly indicated and attributed to their source by means of footnote or endnotes.

Grading

Written assignments constitute 80% of your grade and will each be assessed on a 20-point scale. All lectures and online posts are mandatory and constitute 20% of your grade.