**UNITED METHODIST TRADITION** *Rev. Frank E. “Smith” Lilley, Jr.*

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**Purpose**

A licensed local pastor in the United Methodist church is called to preach and teach “the faith which was once delivered to the saints” (Jude 3)—and specifically the United Methodist understanding of Christian faith. Whether leading worship, providing pastoral care, guiding and administering a congregation, or pursuing any of the other numerous duties of a pastor, a pastor’s work is theological. This course will introduce the major themes of the United Methodist tradition in order to equip licensed local pastors for their responsibilities in the church.

**Course Goals**

Knowledge: Develop an understanding of the “Wesleyan Quadrilateral.”

Skill: Know the distinction of the four components.

Skill: Develop an ability to use the quadrilateral in articulating one’s own theology.

Knowledge: Develop an awareness of distinctive Wesleyan Beliefs.

Skill: Appreciate the differences between Wesleyan doctrines and other Christian traditions.

Skill: Develop a working awareness of Wesley’s understanding of grace (prevenient, justifying, and sanctifying).

Skill: Connect the theology of an individual’s personal “call to ministry” and how it is developed from the moment of salvation into a life of discipleship.

Knowledge: Begin to learn United Methodist history.

Skill: Review early Methodist history and examine its connection with ecumenical history.

Skill: Express the relationship of works of mercy and works of piety.

**Required Reading**

The following texts shall be read before the in-person class session on 15 Oct 2022.

*The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church, 2016* (available at <https://www.cokesbury.com/book-of-discipline-book-of-resolutions-free-versions>)

- ¶ 102. Section 1–Our Doctrinal Heritage

- ¶ 103. Section 3–Our Doctrinal History

- ¶ 104. Section 4–Our Theological Task

“Free Grace,” John Wesley (available at <http://wesley.nnu.edu/john-wesley/the-sermons-of-john-wesley-1872-edition/sermon-128-free-grace/>)

“The Scripture Way of Salvation,” John Wesley (available at <http://wesley.nnu.edu/john-wesley/the-sermons-of-john-wesley-1872-edition/sermon-43-the-scripture-way-of-salvation/>)

Selections from *The United Methodist Hymnal*, including one Charles Wesley Hymn, the Nicene Creed (#880), and the two versions of the Apostles’ Creed (#881 and #882)

**Assignments**

*1. Forum Discussion*

Use the Course Connect discussion forum to introduce yourself to the group. After briefly noting who you are and where you serve, answer these two questions: 1) “Why are you a Methodist?” and 2) “What do you hope to learn in this class?” Read each of your classmates’ introductions and respond briefly to two of them. **Due 12 Oct 22.**

*2. Articles of Religion Reflection*

Submit a reflection of 450-600\* words on “The Articles of Religion of the Methodist Church” (available at <https://www.umc.org/en/content/articles-of-religion>). Focus your reflection on these three questions:

1) In light of the Articles of Religion, what are the most important features of Methodist teaching to you?

2) Which if any of the Articles of Religion do you find most challenging or difficult?

3) Which of the Articles of Religion might you emphasize if you were preaching this Sunday at your current congregation? Why?

**Due before class on 15 Oct 22.** Be prepared to share your reflections in class.

*3. Hymn Reflection*

Submit a reflection of 450-600 words on any hymn by Charles Wesley. (Those hymns can be found in the index of the United Methodist Hymnal on page 992.) Considering what you have learned in class and your reading, what major themes of Wesleyan theology do you see in this hymn? **Due 24 Oct 22.**

*4. Creed Reflection*

Submit 1-2 page lesson plan outlining how you would teach either the Apostles’ or Nicene

Creed to a confirmation class. **Due 24 Oct 22.**

*5. Sermon Reflection*

Submit a summary of 600-900 words of either “Free Grace” or “The Scripture Way of Salvation.” The summary should put Wesley’s sermon into your own words while aiming to explain his points to a modern Christian (say, at your own church). Consider where you see scripture, tradition, reason, and experience in the sermon. Consider also how Wesley explains grace in the sermon. **Due 24 Oct 22.**

For all assignments, proofread your work**.** You may (and are encouraged to) use outside

sources but be sure to appropriately cite words and ideas that are not your own. Assignments should be uploaded to Course Connect.

**Grading**

*Component Maximum Points*

Assignment 1 – Introduction and Forum Discussion 5

Assignment 2 – Articles of Religion Reflection 20

Assignment 3 – Hymn Reflection 20

Assignment 4 – Creed Reflection 20

Assignment 5 – Sermon Reflection 20

Class Participation and Reading 15

*90-100 - A*

*80-89 - B*

*70-79 - C*

*60-69 - D*

*<60 - F*

\*A 600 word count will create about 1.2 pages with single spacing or 2.4 pages double-spaced when using normal 1-inch margins, 12 pt. Arial font, and a standard A4 (letter size) page size.

**Contact Hours**

5 hours classroom time

3.5 hours assignments (approximately 30 minutes for assignment 1 and 45 minutes for assignments 2-5)