

# BRIERCREST

## THEO 774 The Theology of John Wesley Summer 2016

Professor: Dr. Victor Shepherd (Adjunct from Tyndale Seminary)  
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Course Dates: May 16-20, 2016

3 Credit Hours

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

A study of the central theological ideas and context of the Wesleyan movement. This course will focus on the careful analysis of influential Wesleyan texts and how they contribute to Christian thought and practice.

### INSTRUCTOR'S NOTE

This course examines major aspects of Wesley's theology as expounded chiefly in his Sermons on Several Occasions. Theological, ecclesiastical, social and intellectual environments will be probed, as well as developments in post-Wesley Wesleyanism. Attention will be given to the nuances of the denominations represented by those enrolled in the course.

**PREREQUISITES:** Previous course in Systematic Theology preferred.

### COURSE TEXTS

Outler, Albert C. *John Wesley's Sermons: An Anthology*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1991.  
(Numbers opposite readings in outline below refer to pages in the text.)

Waller, Ralph. *John Wesley: A Personal Portrait*. New York, NY: Bloomsbury Academic, 2003.

Students are expected to refer Briercrest Seminary's Format and Style Guides and Guide for Writing Research Papers, available as PDF documents here: <http://briercrest.ca/current/seminary/academics/important-documents/>.

These texts are available in store and online at the Briercrest Bookstore: <http://briercrest.ca/bookstore>.

Students are responsible for course materials and communication on Canvas (<https://briercrest.instructure.com>; cf. <http://briercrest.ca/online/canvas>) and their myBriercrest.ca email account.

### COURSE OBJECTIVES

Students successfully completing this course will:

- have encountered representative material from Wesley himself;
- appreciate the multiform context (social, intellectual, religious and theological) in which Wesley wrote theology;
- understand how theology, for Wesley, was always "practical divinity"; i.e., how it subserved the proclamation and exemplification of the Kingdom of God rather than subserving speculative concerns – without thereby sacrificing theological substance, intellectual integrity, or ecumenical significance;
- appreciate the multidimensionality of Wesley's theology; e.g., his detailed knowledge of Patristics, his debt to the Puritans, and his appreciation of Counter-Reformation spirituality;
- locate Wesley in the tradition of the church catholic;
- have Wesley contribute to the students' theological and spiritual formation.

**COURSE OUTLINE AND CONTENT****Daily Classes** (Numbers opposite readings refer to pages in the text.)

May 16 AM	<p>“The Image of God” 13            “The Circumcision of the Heart” 23            “The One Thing Needful” 33 (Before 1738)</p>
May 16 PM	<p>“Salvation By Faith” 39            “Free Grace” 49            “The Almost Christian” 61 (After 1738)</p>
May 17 AM	<p>“Awake, Thou That Sleepest” 85            “Scriptural Christianity” 97            “Justification by Faith” 111</p>
May 17 PM	<p>“The Spirit of Bondage and of Adoption” 133            “The Witness of the Spirit (I)” 145            “The Witness of the Spirit (II)” 393</p>
May 18 AM	<p>“The New Birth” 335            “The Marks of the New Birth” 173            “The Great Privilege of Those That Are Born of God” 183</p>
May 18 PM	<p>“The Original, Nature, Properties, and Use of the Law” 255            “The Law Established Through Faith, I” 267            “The Law Established Through Faith, II” 277</p>
May 19 AM	<p>“The Means of Grace” 157            “The Duty of Constant Communion” 501</p>
May 19 PM	<p>“The Use of Money” 347            “The Good Steward” 419            “The Danger of Riches” 45</p>
May 20 AM	<p>“On Sin in Believers” 359            “The Repentance of Believers” 405</p> <p>“Christian Perfection” 69  <i>“Can You Conceive Anything More Amiable Than This? Anything More Desirable?”</i>  <i>A Note on Wesley’s Challenge Concerning Christian Perfection</i> (Paper by V. Shepherd, distributed before the course)</p>

**ASSIGNMENTS*****Pre-Course Assignments:***

Read the Waller text in its entirety. From your reading of the text, write a 1200-1500 word paper in which you:

- (1) discuss the theological and missiological presuppositions of Wesley's pre-'Aldersgate' life and ministry;
- (2) state briefly and assess the controversies that arose throughout his ministry.

Weight: 20%

Due: May 16, 2016

***Mid-Course Assignments:***

Attendance for the entire class is expected. There are no written assignments expected during the course week, but students are expected to review assigned portions of the text as outlined in the course schedule below in preparation for class.

***Post-Course Assignments:***

(1) Choose a text from the bibliography below and read it in its entirety. Write a critical review (2000 words, approximately) of the book. (Feel free to consult with the instructor on guidance for choosing a text.)

Weight: 40%

Due: July 15, 2016

(2) Major Research Essay. Research and compose a research topic arising out of the instruction and topics dealt with in the week and as outlined below. The paper should be approximately 3000 words in length and be properly documented and use both primary and secondary sources. Papers should conform to the Briercrest Seminary Format guide. Please feel free to consult with the instructor on topic selection.

Weight: 40%

Due: July 15, 2016

**Possible Essay Topics**

- 1] The Social Background of the 18th Century Revival
- 2] The Political Background.....
- 3] The Religious or Theological or Ecclesiastical Background...
- 4] The Puritans and Wesley: Convergence and Divergence
- 5] Wesley's Theological Debt to the Church of England
- 6] Wesley and Whitefield on Predestination
- 7] Wesley and Whitefield on the New Birth
- 8] Wesley's Understanding of Sanctification (Perfection)
- 9] Theological Differences between John and Charles Wesley

- 10] Wesley and the Church Fathers (Patristics)
  - 11] Wesley's Understanding of Prevenient Grace
  - 12] Wesley on Faith or Justification or Repentance or Assurance
  - 13] An Aspect of Charles Wesley's Hymnody
  - 14] Wesley's Disputes with the Calvinists
  - 15] Wesley's Spiritual Pilgrimage: From Mysticism and Moralism to Saving Faith (Aldersgate)
  - 16] Wesley's Horror at Material Prosperity
  - 17] An Overview of and Comment on "And Earnest Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion" (1743)
  - 18] Wesley's Understanding of Holy Communion
  - 19] Wesley's Soteriology
  - 20] Wesley and Calvin on the Law of God
  - 21] Wesley's Ecclesiology
  - 22] The Wesley Brothers' Understanding of the Lord's Supper from an examination of Hymns on the Lord's Supper.
  - 23] (Wesley's articulation of any major doctrine)
- (Any topic approved by Professor Shepherd)

### **SEMINARY CALENDAR**

Students are expected to be aware of the policies that govern course work at Briercrest Seminary, all of which are published in the current Seminary Calendar:

<http://briercrest.ca/current/seminary/academics/seminary-calendar/>.

#### ***Attendance Policy***

Students are expected to attend 100% of each modular they register for. If this is impossible, arrangements must be made with the course professor. A maximum of 1 full day of class can be foregone. Students should request to withdraw from the course or move the course to an audit if additional time is missed.

#### ***Course Schedules***

Classes begin at 9:00 a.m. on Monday morning and run a minimum of 30 hours through the course of the week. The schedule is determined by the course professor. Students should check the syllabus for specifics. When the syllabus does not state class times, students are responsible to check with the professor prior to making travel plans.

#### ***Assignment Submission***

All assignments must be submitted no later than eight weeks after the last day of class as stated in the syllabus. The correct due dates will be clearly noted in the syllabus and each faculty member will state in

their syllabus how assignments should be submitted. Assignments submitted within a week after the due date will be accepted with a 10 per cent penalty. For additional information refer to the late assignment policy or the extension policy in the [academic calendar](#).

### ***Return of Graded Assignments***

Professors are expected to return graded assignments within six weeks of the due date. If they fail to do so, students may submit an inquiry to the [Seminary](#). If an extension is granted, the professor is no longer obligated to meet this deadline.

### ***Academic Honesty***

Students are accountable to perform each task according to principles of academic honesty. Please refer to pages 25-26 in the [academic calendar](#) for more information.

### ***Academic Accommodations***

Any student with a disability, injury, or illness who may need academic accommodations should discuss them with the course instructor after contacting the Student Success Centre in person (Room #213), by telephone (1-306-756-3230) or by email ([studentsuccesscentre@briercrest.ca](mailto:studentsuccesscentre@briercrest.ca)).

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Andrews, Dee E.; *The Methodists and Revolutionary America, 1760-1800*

Baker, F.; *Charles Wesley's Verse*

“ *From Wesley to Asbury*

“ *John Wesley and the Church of England*

Borgen, O; *John Wesley on the Sacraments*

Bready, J.; *England Before and After Wesley*

Brown-Lawson, A.; *John Wesley and the Evangelicals of the Eighteenth Century*

Campbell, T.; *John Wesley and Christian Antiquity*

Campbell, T.; Gunter, S.; Jones, S.; Maddox, R.; Miles, R.; *Wesley and the Quadrilateral*

Clifford, A.C.; *Atonement and Justification*

(Wesley and the Puritans compared with the Ref.)

Collins, K.; *A Real Christian: The Life of John Wesley*

“ *A Faithful Witness: John Wesley's Homiletical Theology*

“ *The Scripture Way of Salvation*

“ *John Wesley: A Theological Journey*

“ *The Theology of John Wesley*

Coppedge, A.; *John Wesley in Theological Debate*

Dallimore, A.; *A Heart Set Free: The Life of Charles Wesley*

“ *Susanna Wesley*

Davies, R.; *Methodism*

Davies, R., George, R. and Rupp, G., eds.; *A History of the Methodist Church in Great Britain* (4 vols.)

Deschner, J.; *Wesley's Christology*

Green, J.B.; *John Wesley and William Law*

Gunter, Scott, Gunter, W.; *The Limits of "Love Divine"*

Harper, S.; *John Wesley's Message for Today*

Hatch, Nathan O., and Wigger, John H (eds.): *Methodism and the Shaping of American Culture*

Heitzenrater, R.; *Mirror and Memory: Reflections on Early Methodism,*  
*The Elusive Mr. Wesley* (2 vols.),

" *Wesley and the People Called Methodists*

" *The Poor and the People Called Methodists*

Hildebrandt, F.; *Christianity According to the Wesleys*

Jennings, T.W.; *Good News to the Poor: John Wesley's Evangelical Economics*

Jones, S.; *John Wesley's Conception and Use of Scripture*

Kimbrough, S.; *Charles Wesley: Poet and Theologian*

Langford, T.; *Methodist Theology*  
*Practical Divinity*

Lindstrom, H.; *Wesley and Sanctification*

Maddox, R.; *Responsible Grace* \*\*\*\*

" (ed.); *Aldersgate Reconsidered*

" (ed.); *Rethinking Wesley's Theology For Contemporary Methodism*

Marquardt, M.; *John Wesley's Social Ethics*

Newton, J.; *Susanna Wesley and the Puritan Tradition in Methodism*

" *John Wesley: His Puritan Heritage*

Oden, T.; *Doctrinal Standards in the Wesleyan Tradition*

" *John Wesley's Scriptural Christianity* \*\*\*\*

(Note the references at end of each chapter.)

Oden, T. and Longden, L, eds.; *The Wesleyan Theological Heritage: Essays of Albert Outler*

Peters, J.; *Christian Perfection and American Methodism*

Pollock, J.; *George Whitefield*

" *John Wesley*

Rack, H.; *Reasonable Enthusiast* \*\*\*\*

Rowe, K., ed.; *The Place of Wesley in the Christian Tradition*

Rudolph, L.; *Francis Asbury*

Runyon, T.; *The New Creation: John Wesley's Theology Today*

Rupp, E.G.; *Religion in England, 1688-1791*

Ryle, L.; *Select Sermons of George Whitefield*

Sangster, W.; *The Path to Perfection*

Smith, T.; *Whitefield and Wesley on the New Birth*

Snyder, H.; *The Radical Wesley*

Stacey, J., ed.; *John Wesley in Contemporary Perspectives*

Stone, Ronald H.; *John Wesley's Life & Ethics*

Tabraham, Barrie W.; *The Making of Methodism*

Tuttle, R.; *John Wesley: His Life and Theology*  
" *Mysticism in the Wesleyan Tradition*

Tyson, J.; *Charles Wesley on Sanctification*

Wainwright, G.; *Geoffrey Wainwright on Wesley and Calvin*

Wakefield, Gordon S.; *Methodist Spirituality*

Watson, D.L.; *The Early Methodist Class Meeting*

Watson, P.; *The Message of the Wesleys*

Williams, C.; *John Wesley's Theology Today*

Wiseman, P., ed.; *John Fletcher's Checks to Antinomianism*

Wood, A.; *The Inextinguishable Blaze*