

Perkins Regional Course of Study School
Professor: Dr. Pam White
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COS 122: Theological Heritage I

An Introductory Word:

Welcome! I'm glad you'll be joining us for this course in Christian theology. Before we meet, these readings and assignments are designed to give us a common starting point for our time together. We'll begin by exploring some of the central questions and beliefs of Christian theology and then consider them through the Wesleyan/Methodist tradition. During the course, we will build on this foundation as we explore theological language and themes, consider how we understand and articulate our faith, and engage in theological reflection. We will also begin to consider how theology connects with the life of the church and the work of ministry. The pre-course work will introduce you to some of the ideas we will explore together and give you an opportunity to begin engaging the material before we meet. I look forward to our time together and to the conversations we will share as we explore what we believe, why it matters, and how it shapes the way we serve in ministry.

Course description:

This course introduces the student to theological reflection in the Wesleyan tradition. Basic terms, tasks, and methods of Christian theology will be introduced. Representative classical themes will be defined and illustrated. The course provides a foundation for further historical and theological study.

Students will be able to:

1. Examine their understanding of faith, sin, salvation, grace, and the place of doctrine in the life of the Church.
2. Use and understand classical theological terms and themes.
3. Critically consider the sources of theological reflection, including scripture, tradition, experience and reason.
4. Reflect theologically as a resource for pastoral ministry.

Required Texts

Justo Gonzales and Zaida Perez. *An Introduction to Christian Theology* (Nashville: Abington Press, 2002).
Ted A. Campbell, *Methodist Doctrine: The Essentials Revised Edition* (Nashville: Abington Press, 2011).

Pre-Class Assignments (30% of Total Grade)
Due: September 25, 2026

Pre-class Assignment #1- González and Pérez (approx. 7 pages)

Read *An Introduction to Christian Theology* by Justo L. González and Zaida Maldonado Pérez. The book introduces seven major questions of Christian theology. For each section, write approximately one page describing the major theological ideas presented by the authors. Focus on identifying and explaining the authors' main ideas rather than offering your personal response. You may summarize, paraphrase, or use brief quotations from the book as you develop your response.

Organize your paper by using the chapter name as a section header for each of the seven topics. The questions below are provided to help guide your response.

These reflections are a way for you to engage the reading and establish a foundation for our conversations during the course.

1. What Is Theology?

This section asks what theology is, and considers its purpose. Explain González and Pérez's understanding of theology. What do they say about the relationship between theology and other fields of knowledge, such as philosophy and science? What do they mean when they describe theology as knowledge, discipline, and wisdom? What role does the community of faith play in theology, and what are the limits of theology?

2. Who Is God?

This section asks how Christian theology understand God, and how we come to know God. Summarize the major ideas González and Pérez present about the knowledge of God, the Word of God, and the Trinity. You may also include their discussion of arguments for God's existence. What do these ideas tell us about how Christians understand who God is?

3. What Is the World? Who Are We?

This section asks how Christian theology understands creation and humanity. Explain González and Pérez's discussion of creation, the relationship between creation and science, human beings as God's creatures, sin, and human responsibility. What are the major theological claims they make about the world and about who we are as human beings?

4. Who Is Jesus Christ?

This section asks who Jesus Christ is and considers the significance of his life and work. Summarize González and Pérez's discussion of the person of Jesus, the work of Jesus, and the meaning of salvation. What are the central theological claims they present about who Jesus is and what Christ accomplishes?

5. What Is the Church?

This section asks what the church is and considers how Christian theology describe its identity. Explain the major images of the church found in the New Testament that González and Pérez discuss. Then describe the “marks of the church” and what they tell us about the nature and identity of the church.

6. How Does the Church Live?

This section considers how the church lives out its faith. Summarize González and Pérez's discussion of the church's life around the Word and the Sacraments. What do they say about the role of the Word in the life of the church? How do they understand the relationship between the Word and the Sacraments?

7. What Is Our Hope?

This section considers the elements of Christian hope. Explain González and Pérez's discussion of hope, Christ as our hope, the reign of God, and eternal life. What do these ideas tell us about the Christian understanding of the future and God's purposes?

Pre-class Assignment #2- Campbell (4-6 pages)

Read *Methodist Doctrine: The Essentials* by Ted Campbell. The book introduces important beliefs, teachings, and themes within Methodist/Wesleyan theology.

Identify five beliefs, teachings, or themes that stand out to you as important to understanding Methodist/Wesleyan theology.

Organize your paper by using the name of each belief, teaching, or theme as a section header for each of the five topics. Under each heading, briefly describe Campbell's presentation of the topic and explain why you selected it. It may be something that is familiar to you, something you have not encountered before, something that you think is especially important to Methodist theology, or something that raises a question for you.

Create a sixth section titled “Further Exploration” and identify one aspect of Methodist doctrine that you would like to explore further during the course and briefly explain why you chose it.

Pre-class assignment completion policy

1. Deadline for submission of pre-class assignments for Perkins Course of Study School: September 25, 2026.

2. Pre-class assignment completion policy

Instructors have the discretion to lower a student's grade for the pre-class assignments and their overall course grade for late submission of pre-class assignments. Submission of all pre-class assignments by the first day of class is required to attend the class. Students who do not have preclass assignments completed by the first day of class will be required to withdraw from the course without a refund.

3. Students are encouraged to contact their instructor if they have any questions about the pre-class assignments for their courses. They should also contact their instructor if they expect to submit their pre-class assignments following the submission deadline.

4. All pre-class assignments will be submitted by uploading the Microsoft Word documents to Perkins Course of Study School's learning management system (LMS), called "Canvas." Perkins COSS staff are available to assist students learn to upload their pre-class assignments to Canvas.

5. COSS Writing Style

All Perkins Course of Study School courses use the same style of writing, known as the Chicago/Turabian style of writing. Basic examples of citations for written assignments are available for reference in the COSS Student Policies and on the COSS web site. All students are encouraged to purchase the following book that is the basis for submitting written work using the required formats for citations/footnotes.

Turabian, Kate L. *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, Ninth Edition: Chicago Style for Students and Researchers (Chicago Guides to Writing, Editing, and Publishing) Ninth Edition

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