

Perkins Regional Course of Study School
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COS 122: Theological Heritage I

Pre-Class Assignment

A Brief Introductory Word:

Since the beginning of the faith Christians have deeply valued the life of the mind. As St. Paul since its earliest days, set aside people whose vocation is to peer deeply into the mysteries of the faith or to put it differently, to try to make sense of the common confession that Christians make in their worship.

You are, in this course, part of that people set apart for this task. Your vocation the task to which God has called you is, quite simply, *to think*. The reading and writing you will do in the coming months are not preparation for the ministry; it is the ministry. This work is not something that you set aside for the more basic and important ministerial work of, say sermon preparation or hospital visitation. Rather, it is the basic and important work of a genuine Christian vocation.

. It is God who calls you to the work, God who is with you as you persevere in it, and God who brings it to its conclusion. I encourage you, then, to devote yourselves to this work, to trust that God is with you in it. The reward of peering deeply into the mysteries of faith is greatness: the reward is knowing Christ himself (Philippians 3:8).

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.

Course Goals for COS 122 Theological Heritage I: Introduction

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

Rowan Williams, *Tokens of Trust: An Introduction to Christian Belief* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2007).

Ted A. Campbell, *Methodist Doctrine: The Essentials Revised Edition* (Nashville: Abington Press, 2011).

Pre-Class Assignment (30% of Total Grade)

For your pre-class assignment, you must write two essays and one mock Op-Ed. As you write, you are encouraged to approach the essays as a spiritual exercise through which new theological and pastoral insights may emerge. Each essay is worth 100 points. The Op-Ed is also worth 100 points.

1. Conduct *Tokens of Trust*. Then write a thesis driven essay (4-6 pages in length) addressing the following questions:
 - a. *Tokens of Trust*. Of what, if anything, is Williams trying to convince you? In other words, what is Williams trying to accomplish with this text? How is he doing it?
 - b. According to Williams, what is the purpose or objective of Christian theology? And how should Christians pursue theology inquiry? Be specif

