

**Syllabus and Assignments**  
**COURSE OF STUDY SCHOOL**  
Upper Midwest Extension Course of Study School  
Morningside College, Sioux City, Iowa  
March 9-10, 2012 -- April 20-21, 2012

112 - Pastor as Theologian in the Wesleyan Spirit

Instructor: The Rev. William D. Cotton - revcottonhill@hotmail.com

Consideration of the role and responsibility of the pastor as theologian with emphasis upon our Wesleyan heritage and the student's own growing sense of theological identity. Basic terms, tasks, and methods of Christian theology are introduced, and representative themes, both classical and contemporary, are defined and illustrated.

**Objectives include:**

- 1) Challenge students to re-examine their understanding of faith.
- 2) Critical consideration of theological methods and the role of the Wesleyan use of scripture, tradition, experience, and reason.
- 3) Introduction to theological language and problems therein, such as theodicy, revelation, christology, law and grace, justification, ecclesiology, and eschatology.
- 4) Development of pastor's identity as a theologian.
- 5) Utilization of theology as a resource for pastoral functions.

Required Texts for 112 Pastor as Theologian in the Wesleyan Spirit

Kenneth Carder, *Living Our Beliefs: The United Methodist Way* (Discipleship Resources, 1996).

Justo L. Gonzalez and Zaida Maldonado Perez, *An Introduction to Christian Theology*, Abingdon Press, Nashville.

Needed Texts

*2008 Book of Discipline* of The United Methodist Church

Van A. Harvey, *A Handbook of Theological Terms* (MacMillan, 1964).

Charles M. Wood and Ellen Blue, *Attentive to God: Thinking Theologically in Ministry* (Abingdon Press, Feb 2008, ISBN 9780687651627)

Wesley Sermons: Online References

John Wesley, "The Character of a Methodist."

<http://new.gbgm-umc.org/umhistory/wesley/character>

### **Written Work:**

Our standard deadline for submitting work is one month before each class session. Anything arriving later than that will need a special exemption in order to be accepted.

All papers must be typed and double-spaced with one-inch margins on all sides. Use Arial 11 or Times New Roman 12 for fonts. Do not add a title page (save a tree). Your title should appear on page 1 with your name on each page. All citations must be footnotes using the style found in *Turabian* or another standard footnote source.

**Grades:** The COS school now requires that we give a letter grade. In graduate school an A to A- is considered excellent, B+ to B is considered very good, B- to C is a passing grade. Any grade of C- or below indicates that the student needs additional help in understanding and working with theological concepts.

### **Grading Score:**

1. Class participation 40% - 40 points possible for each session.
2. Having all assignments in on time with good grammar, spelling, and proper footnote citations 10% - 10 points possible for each session.
3. Written assignments 50% - 50 points possible for each session. Note that each assignment has a point number assigned.

### **Written Assignments:**

**Assignment for the First Session** - A paper with four parts -- five to six pages total (*50 points total*).

*The first part:* According to Gonzalez and Carder, define Theology. How is Theology different from Philosophy? What are the limits to Theology?

*10 points*

*The second part:* How do we know God? According to Gonzalez, why do the proofs for the existence of God come up short? What is the Word of God and how does it best get communicated? Why does Gonzalez tell us that the best way to approach the Trinity is not to explain it? *10 points*

*The third part:* Four questions, each worth *5 points*. 1) What is the Gnostic error? 2) What is the danger that Gonzalez lifts up by teaching that sin is an inheritance? 3) What is our responsibility toward the creation? 4) What positive things can be learned from evolution regarding the creation?

*The fourth part:* A family comes to you for counsel. Their son has died in a terrible accident after drinking and using drugs. The parents have been told by their preacher that the boy is lost. How will you approach this situation, what will you say, etc? *10 points*

**Assignments for the Second Session (50 points total):**

*First paper (2-3 pages)* - How do United Methodists understand the following terms:

Prevenient grace, Justifying Grace, Sanctifying Grace *(20 points total)*

*Second paper (2-3 pages)* - According to Gonzalez, who is Jesus the Christ? Is Jesus human like us? If so, how can he also be divine? *(20 points)*

According to Gonzalez and Carder, what is the mission of the church? What changes do we need to make for the church to accomplish its mission? As pastor, how do you see your role as servant leader in the church? *(10 points)*