

# HIST/SPIR 599: Love's Redeeming Work The Wesleys and Early Evangelical Spirituality

Mark Noll and Bruce Hindmarsh

June 3-7, 2019; 8:30 - 11:30am

1 or 2 graduate credit hours; or 1 audit hour

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course introduces the spirituality of the eighteenth-century evangelical revivals with a special focus on the life and ministry of John and Charles Wesley. Consideration of the revivals' broader contexts will be balanced by special attention to the Wesley brothers, who were key figures not only in the birth of Methodism, but also in the quest more widely for "true religion" in the modern world. Through their letters, journals, sermons, abridgements, and especially their hymns, students will discover a distinctive form of Christian devotion that transformed the lives of thousands of women and men as "love's redeeming work" was proclaimed with a new urgency in the midst of a rapidly changing world.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

**Upon the successful completion of this course, students should have a clearer understanding of:**

1. To understand, in overview, the rise of modern evangelicalism in the eighteenth century, including especially the contribution of John and Charles Wesley to its leading themes.
2. To appreciate the key features of early evangelical spirituality, including the meaning of conversion, the role of the Bible, the importance of hymnody, the distinctive spiritual practices, the quest for holiness, the cross of Christ, mission, and relation of evangelical devotion to public life and thought.
3. To assess the meaning of "true religion" for the early evangelicals and reflect on the significance of this today.

## COURSE OUTLINE

**Day 1** a) Introduction, syllabus, main interpretive questions

- b) Scene Setting: Landscapes, Antecedents and Origins of North Atlantic Evangelicalism
- c) Strangely Warmed: The Conversions of John and Charles Wesley

**Day 2** a) Died he for me?: John Wesley on "The Scripture Way of Salvation"

- b) Culturally Adaptive Biblical Experientialism: Evangelical Scriptural Devotion
- c) Eclipse or Dawn of Biblical Narrative? Evangelical Bible Reading in an Age of Skepticism

**Day 3** a) American Problem: Evangelical Devotion vs. Republican Ideology and Common Sense Moral Reasoning

- b) Evangelical Devotion and the "Disenchanted" World of the Enlightenment
- c) Love Divine: The Enduring Legacy of Charles Wesley's Hymns

**Day 4** a) The Means of Grace: The Wesleys on Spiritual Practices

- b) Evangelical Devotion in the World: Especially Slavery and Anti-Slavery
- c) Holiness: the Wesleyan Quest for Perfection

**Day 5** a) "A Little Body of Experimental and Practical Divinity": The Wesleyan Hymnbook and the Spiritual Life

- b) The Shameful Tree: Preaching the Cross of Christ to the Most Forsaken
- c) True Religion: Concluding Thoughts

## REQUIRED TEXTS

Jeffrey, David L., ed. *English Spirituality in the Age of Wesley*. Grand Rapids, Mich: Eerdmans, 1994. Reprint edition, Vancouver: Reagent Collegae Publishinga. 2000. ISBN: 9781573831642.

Please Note: This Course Information Sheet is meant to assist in selecting courses. The official syllabus should be consulted for more detailed information. A full syllabus with drop deadlines, policies, and course assignment details is available on Moodle for registered students: [moodle.regent-college.edu/login](http://moodle.regent-college.edu/login)

