

ST. ANDREW BIBLE ACADEMY

INTRODUCING OUR FAITH: THE LIVING GOD

Fall 2002

Tuesday Evenings

Class Times: Tuesday evenings
6:30 - 7:00, gathering time
7:00 - 8:30, class time

Class Dates: 9/17, 9/24, 10/1, 10/8, 10/22, 10/29, 11/5, 11/12 NOTE - No class on Oct 15!

Instructor: Scott L. Engle, Ph.D.

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You can find the syllabus and other course materials at Scott's website. Go to www.engleassociates.com, click on "Scott's After-Hours" and you'll be taken to a page for St. Andrew UMC, from which you can go to a Bible Academy page and then on to a webpage for this class!

IN THE EVENT OF BAD WEATHER, CHECK THE CLASS WEBPAGE TO SEE IF CLASS IS CANCELLED. If we have to cancel a class, we'll simply reduce the class to seven weeks and I'll modify the lectures so we can get back on schedule. If we have to cancel two or more classes, then we'll extend the class further into November.

Course materials:

Weekly worksheets
A study Bible

Optional:

Oden, Thomas C. 1987. **The Living God: Systematic Theology, Volume 1.** New York, NY: HarperCollins

As you can tell from the title, this book is the foundation for this class. It is excellent, though it is not always easy. All the footnotes and references may make it seem intimidating. If you want to get a copy, Prince Press has reissued all three volumes and they are available for Christian Book Distributors for \$30 total!

Migliore, Daniel L. 1991. **Faith Seeking Understanding: An introduction to Christian theology.** Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans

This is one of my primary sources for this class. Migliore's book is excellent, though it too is written a little like a college text.

Course Description

In our Book of Discipline 2000, we United Methodists “profess the historic Christian faith in God, incarnate in Jesus Christ for our salvation and ever at work in human history in the Holy Spirit. . . . Theology is our effort to reflect upon God’s gracious action in our lives. In response to the love of Christ, we desire to be drawn into a deeper relationship with the ‘author and perfecter of our faith.’ Our theological explorations seek to give expression to the mysterious reality of God’s presence, peace, and power in the world. By so doing, we attempt to articulate more clearly our understanding of the divine-human encounter and are therefore more fully prepared to participate in God’s work in the world.”

The purpose of this course is to introduce students to the beliefs about God that most Christians have shared for the last 2000 years. We’ll also examine the beliefs about God held by John Wesley and United Methodists. We will tackle some of the most vexing questions about God that are faced by Christians, such as the relationship between God and evil. We’ll also learn some of the basic Christian vocabulary, which we often use but rarely think about. Most importantly, we’ll see how our beliefs about God shape our lives as Christians and our calling to be, and to make, disciples of Jesus Christ.

Learning Objectives

Those who complete this course should be able to:

1. Appreciate and be able to discuss the deep, ecumenical beliefs about God that all Christians have affirmed for 2000 years.
2. Understand the distinctive beliefs of United Methodists as they relate to our understanding of God and his work.
3. Be more confident in your understanding of basic Christian vocabulary, such as righteousness, revelation, glory, redemption, and salvation.
4. Understand the affirmations about God that are in the great Christian creeds.
5. Understand how, through the Bible, God reveals himself to us.
6. Appreciate various portraits of God from the Bible.
7. Have a deeper understanding of how knowing God can deepen our faith and further our discipleship.

Expectations

To get the most out of this class, you should attend every meeting and be prepared to devote at least a couple of hours each week to the weekly worksheet and bible readings. Our suggestion would be that you devote a half-hour each day, rather than do all the reading at one sitting. This class can be a good means of building a daily “Bible habit” that can sustain and enrich our lives and our congregation.

We would expect you to bring to the class all the questions and uncertainties about God that have puzzled you. We won’t necessarily be able to answer them all, but we want the class to be responsive to your needs, while still ensuring that we cover most of the material in the syllabus.

We expect you to enjoy the class and we will do all we can to exceed your expectations!

Schedule of Class Activities - Fall 2002

Class Date	Topic	Assignments
9/17 (#1)	Introduction to the class Our theological task and method How we can come to know God? Natural theology Revelation The Wesleyan Quadrilateral Knowing and being known	
9/24 (#2)	The Relational God The unity & "threeness" of God God as a loving community God, the great covenant-maker and covenant-keeper Being made in God's image	Weekly Worksheet for Week 2
10/1 (#3)	Holy God as: Transcendent creator Sovereign King Personal Revealer Priest	Weekly Worksheet for Week 3
10/8 (#4)	Holy God as: Righteous Judge Loving Father Powerful Redeemer Good Shepherd	Weekly Worksheet for Week 4
10/22 (#5)	God & creation The goodness of creation The new creation Creation and evolution	Weekly Worksheet for Week 5
10/29 (#6)	God and the mystery of evil Is God all-good and all-powerful? Is God active in our world? Why do bad things happen to good people? Why do good things happen to bad people? What is evil?	Weekly Worksheet for Week 6
11/5 (#7)	God's electing grace and our free will Do we choose God or does he choose us? What do we mean by election? What do we mean by grace? What about predestination? God's foreknowledge?	Weekly Worksheet for Week 7
11/12 (#8)	God's name, nature, and character Is God all powerful? Is God all-knowing? Is God unchanging? Is God all-loving? Does God suffer? Does God have emotions? Is God personal? Is God male?	Weekly Worksheet for Week 8