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PR 610 The Theology and Practice of Preaching

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Syllabus

Course: PR610 X1 (SP 2009)

Title: The Theology and Practice of Preaching

Hours: 3.00

Published: Yes, on 01/16/2009

Prerequisites:

OT(IBS)6xx and SP501

- or -

NT(IBS)6xx and SP501

Department: Preaching

Faculty: Dr. Chuck Killian



Email: chuck.killian@asburyseminary.edu

Office:

SPO:

Meetings:

During 02/09/2009 to 05/22/2009 Online via ExL.

Maximum Registration: 16

Catalog Description: This course nurtures a vision of Christian preaching as a theological and pastoral activity of the church in service to the gospel. The core objectives of this course have been established to facilitate critical understanding of and competence in view of (1) preaching as witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ revealed in the Christian Scriptures and (2) preaching as both a gift of the Holy Spirit and a human vocation which serves the creation of a community called to worship the Triune God as revealed through the narrative of the whole biblical canon. This course approaches preaching as a theological practice and from a perspective shaped by the Wesleyan tradition; it is informed by a conscious integration of doctrinal and biblical exegesis and the practice of theological hermeneutics. Emphasis is placed on the lifelong task of acquiring practical habits appropriate for cultivating judgment required for faithful communication of the biblical witness in service of the Word of God, as an act of Christian worship and within the context of personal, social, and cultural challenge and change.

Objectives:

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4. [Virtual Campus](#)
5. [AIS](#)

PR610X1 (SP09) - The Theology and Practice of Preaching

- [All logs](#)
-
- ◀ Previous activity
-

• Next activity ►

You are here

- [Virtual Campus](#)
- / ► [PR610X1 \(SP09\)](#)
- / ► [Resources](#)
- / ► [Syllabus](#)

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PR610XL

ExL Fall, Spring 2009

Asbury Theological Seminary

Wilmore, Kentucky

Professor Chuck Killian, Ph.D.

Email address: chuck.killian@asburyseminary.edu

"Most of your congregation will see you most of the time as a leader of worship and a preacher of sermons." Welcome to PR610XL. I am very glad you are taking this course with me this fall. You could not be living in a more demanding, more opportunity-filled time than right now, and your ministry will help shape the new directions the Church will be taking in the twenty-first century. As a communicator of the Gospel your work for the Lord has tremendous significance--and we will be working together to make your ministry even more effective. What a challenge for you and me! May it please God to help us!

You and I are living at a time when the Church is doing some serious rethinking of its role in the world as the Body of Christ. A lot of this internal discussion is given to preaching and worship . . . and the outcome is far from settled. I would be surprised if you have not brought to this ExL experience some very deep questions about your work as a functioning or potential leader of worship and preacher of sermons. In my ministry within the Church I have talked with local pastors, missionaries, and denominational leaders. In many cases the conversation comes around to what it means to preach today. It is good that we struggle with what preaching means because it sharpens our understanding of our ministry and focuses our attention on Jesus Christ and His desire for His Church.

As a member of the Asbury Seminary learning community you will be part of a "preacher-friendly" atmosphere in which to study your distinctive task of preaching the "good news." I hope, as a result of having participated in this ExL course on preaching, you will not only learn more about the craft of sermon construction and delivery, but you will be encouraged in your role as a proclaimer of the saving Word of God. You are important to the Church, the world, and the kingdom of God! And you are important to us! This ExL course is a "foundations course." That is, it is a course designed for the person who has not had any formal training in the research, writing, and delivery of sermons. You may very well have preached many times, maybe for years, but the crucial word here is "formal." By that we mean specific instruction of methods that may add to what you already know about communicating the will and Word of God. The course makes no judgments about your present preaching ministry, if you have one. To that I can only say: "Go for it!" I assume God is blessing your efforts, and I will be praying for you each week as you serve the Lord. However, this course will help you fine-tune what you are doing. If you have never preached before then this course will introduce you to proven methods for communicating God's will for human life and destiny.

It might help you to know a little about me; I certainly want to know something about you. My professional profile is available at <http://www.asburyseminary/Killian.html>. What I want you to know first is that I love the Lord, and I love the work of Christ's Church. I love to hear sermons! I should; I hear enough of them! You will know what I mean when I say that Jesus Christ has brought meaning and purpose to my life. I am basically a happy man, and I say "Thanks be to God."

I began preaching, they tell me, when I was five years old. I preached to my uncle's cows, telling them, my aunt Opal said, "You cows better start giving more milk or you all are going to hell." She said it was rather successful. That early inclination for preaching never left me, although it got somewhat corrected and more formalized with time and experience. My church life has been affiliated with the Pilgrim Holiness Church, the

Wesleyan Methodist Church, and in 1969, I joined the United Methodist church and am an ordained elder of the South Indiana Conference. In 1970, I received my PhD from Indiana University in Speech and Theatre; and for the past 32 years have been teaching preaching, drama and storytelling here at ATS. I have held pastorates in New York, Ohio, Indiana and Kentucky. For the past four years, I have been pastoring at the Mayodan United Methodist Church, Mayodan, NC. I will soon be entering a more full time retirement from parish life, but will continue to adjunct at Asbury. I love the church and love to preach, and thoroughly enjoy hearing sermons. I suppose over the past 30 years, I have heard and critiqued some 5000 sermons and it is still refreshing and delightful to 'hear the Word exposed'. That is why I am looking forward to our encounter together.

Post something about yourself to the Discussion Center. We are going to be spending some quality time together and it will help if I know about your work, your education and interests, your family, and your dreams for serving the Church. A good place to start is to think about questions like these: What is your family background? Are you married and do you have children? What are your personal goals for ministry? What does it mean to you to preach the Gospel? And what would you like to see in a course like this one?

Class Structure

The Course Center will contain a copy of the syllabus as well as all class modules.

The Discussion Center will be used for all public communications. Anytime you have a question or comment about the course, the modules, the assignments, or anything else which would be of interest to your classmates and me, you should post to the Discussion Center.

The PR610XL Office is for private correspondence between you and me. This will contain items that you do not want to appear publicly before all of your classmates or items that you think may embarrass me if they were to appear publicly.

The Archives Center will be used for storing conversations that have already taken place during the course of the semester. This keeps the Discussion Center from becoming too unmanageable.

The Chat Center is intended primarily for real-time interaction among students. You can get together with other members to study, ask questions, or to explore topics. None of the conversations carried on in this location are ever saved.

The Resource Center provides access to a number of specific tools available to all ExL students. These include access to the B.L. Fisher Library, the Services in Estes Chapel, ExL Updates, Guidelines for Success, Helpful Hints, Interesting Links, a Powerpoint Viewer as well as a Real Audio Player. I encourage you to take advantage of all these resources, and particularly to utilize the chapel access in order to connect with the seminary's on-campus opportunities for spiritual growth.

The Objectives of The Game

Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and curing every disease and every sickness among the people. Matthew 4:23

The overall goal of the course is to enable you to prepare and deliver sermons more effectively. The results are up to God!

The sub-goals by which we will meet the large goal are:

1. to discover the richness of the biblical message of God's saving and helping grace as revealed in the Gospel of Luke.
2. to develop a method for studying biblical passages for preaching.
3. to learn to constructively evaluate sermons, your own and others, in order to sharpen your listening skills.
4. to preach more effectively by constructing and delivering sermons that are biblically controlled, clear in development and expectation, and relevant to contemporary life.

By the end of the course it is hoped that the following will have occurred:

- a. Discovery, not mastery is the goal of effective communication.
- b. Observation is critical for shaping one's understanding and comprehension of the genre.
- c. Good practicum (praxis) grows out of a healthy understanding of theory behind the performance.
- d. By identifying personal understandings about preaching and by telling our own stories, we can build community and help objectify our strategy in learning.
- e. Communication has its own history; therefore knowing the roots of the genre instill confidence in the

tradition.

f. Preaching can be an inductive tool to assist in understanding the theory.

g. Preaching is a worship experience.

h. Preaching is spiritually formative.

i. Methodology is as theological as content.

j. Preaching is ultimately the work of the Holy Spirit.

k. Articulating a theology of preaching ought to dictate one's convictions about who they are, why they do what they do, and how to do it.

The Game Plan

1. You will read two texts:

Donald Demaray: AN INTRODUCTION TO HOMILETICS and Fred Craddock: PREACHING.

Demaray's book is designed for those who have had little or no instruction in the theory of basic homiletics. It is a good read. Craddock's book builds on the basics of Demaray and is designed for those who want to move into some deeper levels of understanding why the basics are critical to understanding the theology of preaching. Craddock is ultimately concerned about preaching narratively.

Recommended reading but not required to buy book: Haddon Robinson: BIBLICAL PREACHING.

2. You are expected to have solid writing skills that allow you to express yourself in a concise and understandable manner. Proper grammar and proper spelling are a must. Please double check your written assignments before you send them to me. Be sure to use the "spell check" program on your computer. If I think your writing needs help, I will tell you. Continued poor writing will result in a lower grade for the course. It might be a good thing for you to read a few sermons. You may have such a book in your own library. Perhaps you could go to your local library and find copies of books of sermons there. Those of you who live near a theological library will have more than you need! This could be a part of any collateral reading you may want to do, plus give you some insight as to how others develop their sermons.

I have no problem with manuscript preparation but no manuscript presentation. I want you to preach as free from notes as possible. Keep in mind a sermon manuscript should be constructed "like you talk," not as a research document. That is, the sermon reflects your personality, your way of saying things. It is very personal. This means you will use the language of the people, using ways of understanding that are common to them. "No-nos" are: (1) using highly technical language, (2) using Greek or Hebrew words, (3) using words or ideas that are not easily understood by your people, and (4) using complicated sentence structure. Be direct, clear, personal, friendly.

Your Theology of Preaching paper due at the end of the course will be your summary statement as to what you understand preaching to be: its biblical and theological roots, the characteristics and objectives that will be present in the preparation and delivery of sermons, and outcomes as to what preaching will do. The paper will be about 6-8 pages in length with adequate footnoting and research that will show evidence of the underpinnings of your theology. Keep in mind this paper is now a requirement for all sections of Pr 610 course being taught on campus and ExL. It will carry 20% evaluation towards your final grade. Let me encourage you to keep good notes on your readings and observations and use them appropriately in your paper.

3. Preaching You will have the privilege of preaching two sermons. The first sermon will be from a passage of Scripture of your own choosing. Maybe it is your favorite passage, a passage that you live by, or a passage that has been 'gnawing' at you for some time. Time limit: 10-15 minutes. Your second sermon will be from Luke's gospel. You may select any passage for preaching that you like. Time limit: 13-20 minutes. Unfortunately I will not be able to be present when the sermon is preached. This means I will have to rely in part on the observations of a "listening group" that you select. The group will consist of at least five people. The normal composition of the group will be left up to you but should include a cross section of youth and adults. If you cannot get a group together then you should not take this course. This is a mandatory requirement.

You may have more persons in your listening group than this, of course, but you will need to identify the five participants in your group. They will be responsible for giving you feedback on the sermon they heard. The group should hear both sermons so they can indicate areas of growth for you. Please send the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of these folks to me via the "to Office" icon. I want to write them and express appreciation for their willingness to help both of us.

I will be sending you the forms for these people to fill out after hearing each sermon. They need to be willing

to fill out these forms immediately after hearing the sermon (or as soon as the congregation is dismissed if the sermon is preached in a service of worship). You will collate their responses on a form provided for that purpose and send them to me. This will enable you and me to discuss your sermon delivery from their standpoint. Your report is due within forty-eight hours of the time when the sermon is preached.

You may want to talk with your listening group after getting their feedback. That is not required but it would be helpful. If you do that, let me know how that turned out. If for some reason a person drops out of the listening group, please replace that person and send me the necessary information on the new person, and who that person is replacing.

Your first sermon must be audiotaped and a copy sent to me. Your final sermon must be videotaped and a copy sent to me. I will give immediate feedback.

What you will need is:

1. a place to preach your sermons.
2. a way to record your sermons (audio and video).
3. at least five people to serve as your listening group.

I suggest you use Uncle Sam's "Priority Mail" for shipment of the tapes.

4. Preparation The basic structure of the course will encompass four modules: 1. The readings; 2. sermon one; 3. sermon two; and 4. the theology of preaching paper.

Module one: we will work through the readings and interact together as a class.

Module two: you will audiotape your sermon before the listening group, get their feedback and forward that to me within 48 hours.

Module three: you will videotape your final sermon from Luke before your listening group, get their feedback and forward the tape to me within 48 hours.

Module four: your thinking together about a theology of preaching and your final paper sent to the "to Office" icon by the stated due date.

5. Evaluations The final grade is the course will be as follows:

1. Readings, annotations, and any other written interactions: 25%
2. Oral work, 2 sermons, 50%
3. Class participation: getting materials on time, active in discussion, and theology of proclamation paper 25%

6. Schedule

Module # 1, the month of February

Assignment 1: send a brief bio to all the class via Discussion Center. Feel free to send your reflections on the class makeup. Begin reading Demaray. DUE: 2/13

Assignment 2: Write a paragraph or two, no more than a page, about 'your call' or your coming to faith. Continue your reading of Demaray. DUE 2/15

Assignment 3: What are you hoping to get out of this course? Looking at the catalog description, what are your expectations? Limitations, given the ExL offering of this course? Finish reading Demaray. Begin reading Craddock. DUE 2/19

Assignment 4: Critique of Demaray. Be able to identify at least five critical ingredients, from your perspective, that you gleaned from the book. What is the 'big idea' of the book? Summarize your findings, observations and critique of the book in one page.

What are taking from the book as you prepare for your first sermon? Continue reading Craddock. DUE 2/22

Assignment 5: Continue reading Craddock. Begin thinking about your first sermon. Identify your passage and dialogue about it with your dyad member. Keep in mind that all interactions with dyad member comes into my office as well, automatically. Craddock will be helpful, as well as Demaray, in helping your develop your theology of preaching paper. Keep good notes. What is the passage of your first sermon and where are you in the planning stages of it? What steps are you taking in getting into the text? What is the 'one idea' that you want to preach from that passage? DUE 2/28

Assignment 6: Finish Craddock. How does Craddock help amplify Demaray? What two or three 'rich resources' can you identify in Craddock that you will take with you into the preparation and delivery of your sermons? One page. DUE 2/29

Please note the due dates. Evaluations are tied to quality of interaction and work finished on time.

Module #2, the month of March

Assignment 7: Send a brief outline/design of your sermon to your dyad. Discuss it with each other, make

suggestions and observations about your material. Keep in mind the things you have gleaned from your readings and research. DUE 3/7

Assignment 8: Preach the sermon before your listening group. Make sure they have the critique sheets to use for evaluation. There will be no credit given unless the five participants respond with evaluations. You will audiotape this sermon and send a copy of this to your dyad member and one to me. You will collate the evaluations and send that to your dyad and me as well. What did you learn about yourself and your preaching from this experience? Make sure I have your text from Luke by this deadline. DUE 3/21

Assignment 9: By now, you should be into the 'depths' of study on your final passage from Luke. The following resources might prove helpful in 'getting into the text' and 'coming out of the text' with a message. Send to your dyad and me a rough outline/design/plan you wish to take in the preparation and delivery of the sermon. Please notice that I am giving you two weeks to work on this. Study the passage you have selected for preaching by answering the following questions. Be concise in your answers, yet full enough so that I understand what you are saying.

- (1) What is happening (the action) in your passage?
- (2) What moods do you see in the passage? How are these moods discernible?
- (3) What words or ideas do you see that may need explaining to a congregation?
- (4) What is the central idea (the "big idea") of your passage? Write it out in one clear simple sentence.
- (5) What are the basic theological teachings of your passage?
- (6) What does Luke want Theophilus to believe and/or do as a result of having read this part of the Gospel?
- (7) What does the passage seem to mean for Christian believers today?
- (8) What does the passage mean for you as a person, not just as a preacher? What insights did you get from biblical interpreters? Organize a full outline for preaching this passage. Due 3/28

A word about commentaries, etc. God has placed within the church women and men whose calling is to learn about the culture, history, language, and theology of biblical books, and publish their findings in commentaries, biblical encyclopedias, and bible dictionaries. These brothers and sisters do us an invaluable service, helping us grasp in clearer ways the meaning of passages. Because they are human they do not always understand the passage the same way. Nonetheless, we can learn from them and their work can enhance our preaching.

Module #3 the month of April

Assignment 10: Your dyad member and I will have critiqued your final rough draft of outline/design/plan for the sermon. DUE 4/4

Assignment 11: You will preach before your listening group your final sermon. You will distribute critique sheets to them. You will videotape this sermon and send a copy to your dyad member and one to me. You will gather the critique sheets, collate them and send them to me. You should conduct a final, oral discussion with your group and take note of what they are saying to you. Keep in mind I am giving you two weeks to complete this. I hope this time will give you ample opportunity to fit it into everyone's schedule. DUE 4/18

Assignment 12: For the completion of this module, write a one page reflection on what you learned about yourself, about preaching, and what you are taking away from this experience. In preparation for your theology of preaching paper, how did this experience inform/correct your 'theology'? DUE 4/25

Module #4 the month of May

Assignment 13: This will be your final project in the class. This 6-8 page paper will be made available to the entire class via the course center. It will incorporate your readings, findings, theological undergirdings, observations, and commitments to preaching. It will indicate your scholarly 'take' on this by adequate footnotes, biblical resources and critical observations. While this is not to be a research paper, it must show signs of in-depth work that goes beyond emotive thinking. DUE 5/15

A Statement of Course Philosophy

The preaching of the gospel requires spiritual sensitivity and ample study. While the Holy Spirit may inspire and provide guidance on occasions when study and meditation on the written Word may not be possible, it is the approach of this course that those occasions are the exception, not the rule. As pastors (spiritual guides, leaders of worship and preachers of sermons) we owe it to God and to His people to do everything on our power to adequately provide insight in our sermons.

This means we should give unrushed time to those disciplines that are necessary for the preparation and delivery of sermons. Preaching a sermon is an event (a happening) in which the Spirit of God may come

with insight and power. To preach the gospel is to speak the Word of God with the intent of persuading the hearer to action. The primary goal of preaching is to help create a moment in which there may be a meeting of the great God and the hearer (and the speaker). That meeting cannot be guaranteed; however, we can pray for it. God alone decides the moment of his coming.

The effectiveness of the sermon is not based on the personality or ability of the preacher. Spiritual preparation for preaching and worship is important for preacher and people alike. Expectancy is the proper mood for preaching and hearing the gospel. Anytime a biblical passage is selected, prayed over, studied, and proclaimed one has a sermon. This means there is no such thing as a "practice sermon." Every sermon is an offering to God of our vocation to be His servants, and it is also an invitation to the people to listen to the revealed will of the Lord God Almighty.

This course emphasizes "learning by doing." In some academic courses one learns a body of material and is then tested on it to see how much one has learned. But we will be putting principles into practice before becoming fully proficient in them. This means that mistakes and foul-ups are part of the learning process, and we do not get up-tight about them. I take that into consideration in factoring your grade. If I do my job right and you do yours, by the end of the course all of us will be better at the business of preaching than when we began. If that happens, then this will be a 'happy course'.

A Summary

1. You have twelve assignments and due dates. In my record, there will be an indication of a grade or work completed as assigned and in on time. Should you have emergencies that merit some consideration, please let me know.
2. I want this course, especially from the technical end of things (ExL-ness) to be as uncomplicated as possible. Please alert me if there are issues that are not clear to you. You deserve clarity.
3. So welcome to journey of becoming more apt, relevant, and fit for preaching. I am confident that I will be better, too, for having had you in class.

May the peace of Christ be with you! Amen.

Chuck Killian

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