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PR 632 Preaching from the Gospels: Introduction to the Theology and Practice of Preaching

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**Preaching from the Gospels:
Introduction to the Theology and Practice of Preaching
PR 632 Course Syllabus**

Class Schedule: Monday 5:30 – 8:15 PM

Room Assignment: BC 228 Lecture; BC 235 Preaching

INSTRUCTOR CONTACT INFORMATION

Stacy R. Minger, Ph.D.

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Office: Beeson Center 217
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Office Hours: Tuesdays 12:30 – 2 PM, Thursdays 9:15 – 10:45 AM, or by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The purpose of *Preaching from the Gospels* is to approach the study and practice of Christian proclamation through hermeneutical and theological engagement with the Gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Attention will be given to preaching from the teachings of Jesus, Jesus' parables and miracles, as well as Jesus' life (birth & infancy, baptism, temptation, transfiguration, passion, death and resurrection). This course encourages students to wed their skills in biblical interpretation with pastorally responsive and theologically reflective proclamation.

The purpose of PR courses is to promote a partnership of teaching and learning that 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 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 life-long 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. This course will assume that proclamation of the Gospel by means of Scripture is the central (although not exclusive) activity by which the Church is continually created, sustained, corrected, and strengthened by God's Word to worship and participate in the life of the Triune God.

This course is therefore designed as an extended conversation that will exemplify and encourage pastoral competence in speaking the Word of God to form Christian conviction and character with a community that bears witness to the Kingdom that has arrived in Christ. Preaching will be regarded as an act of worship offered to the God of Israel and Jesus Christ who continues to speak and enact his gracious promises and saving purposes through the witness of the Prophets and Apostles in the power of the Holy Spirit.

An important objective of this course will be to gain a vital and necessary understanding of preaching as a theological and ecclesial practice that requires: 1) the practices of daily prayer and obedience – pastoral discipline; 2) consistent reading, study, and appropriation of Scripture as the Word of God addressed to God’s people and for the world; 3) the testing of biblical interpretation by means of the central theological convictions of the Church Catholic, and in particular, the Wesleyan tradition, to insure faithful homiletic performance that glorifies God and produces Christian disciples who aspire to a shared life of holiness in Christ. To be consistent with the nature and purpose of preaching as a theological discipline, a strong emphasis will be placed upon the life-long task of acquiring practical wisdom appropriate to the pastoral vocation: the spiritual and moral attentiveness and insight necessary to call the Church to know, love, and serve the Triune God whose speech authors its life and secures its future.

Prerequisites: SP501 and Inductive Bible Studies – 2.

GENERAL COURSE OBJECTIVES (Asbury Seminary Catalogue)

Having successfully completed the core elective requirement in Preaching, student should be able to:

- Identify critical issues related to articulation of the biblical witness within a variety of contemporary contexts, and reflect on their relationship to the primary pastoral responsibility of faithfully communicating the Gospel in a manner that calls the Church to worship, love and obey the Triune God;
- Demonstrate fluency in the biblical narrative as the language and grammar of preaching, and a capacity for integrating theological wisdom, scriptural knowledge and cultural understanding in service of the mission of the Church;
- Demonstrate homiletic competence that integrates exegesis, theology and hermeneutics for preaching as a liturgical activity of the Church that bears witness to the kingdom of God proclaimed by Jesus Christ and narrated in the whole of Christian Scripture;
- Articulate a practical theology of Christian preaching that 1) demonstrates a capacity for integrating theology and pastoral practice and 2) displays an understanding of how the Wesleyan tradition informs pastoral ministry and the ecclesial practices of biblical interpretation and preaching.
- Demonstrate presentational skill with regard to vocal control, paralanguage and body language that supports the sermon content as well as its reception by the worshipping body.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS

Bauer, David. An Annotated Guide to Biblical Resources for Ministry. Hendrickson, 2003.

Beasley – Murray, George R. Preaching the Gospel from the Gospels. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1996.

Long, Thomas. Preaching the Literary Forms of the Bible. Fortress, 1988.

Kalas, J. Ellsworth. Preaching from the Soul: Insistent Observations on the Sacred Art. Nashville: Abingdon, 2003.

RECOMMENDED TEXTS

Cantalamesa, Raniero. The Mystery of God's Word. Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1994.

Long, Thomas G. The Witness of Preaching. 2nd Ed. Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 2005.

Webb, Joseph M. Preaching without Notes. Nashville: Abingdon, 2001.

INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES

Class time will be structured to facilitate interaction with the assigned reading and with each other. It is my desire, as the instructor, to invite you into a learning community where each person's life experience and insight into the texts become resources for critical engagement and mutual learning. Each class period will consist of movement through a variety of learning activities based on individual, small group, and corporate interaction.

Recognizing the variety of learning preferences present in each class setting, our learning together will be supported by opportunities for 1) *concrete experience* through the expression of feeling and impressions related to the act of preaching, 2) *reflective observation* through viewing sermon videos and the sermons of your peers, 3) *abstract conceptualization* which engages thinking mechanisms engaged in your reading of course texts, sermon preparation, and responding to writing assignments as well as preparing critiques of the sermons you hear and give, and 4) *active experimentation* as you have the opportunity to preach (based on Kolb's learning styles, 1984).

COURSE SCHEDULE

Date	Topic	Readings	Assignments Due
2/11	Course Introduction	Syllabus	
2/18	The Content & Context of Preaching	Kalas, 9-42 Beaseley-Murray, 6-29	
2/25	The Sermon Form	Kalas, 43-93 Long, entire text	Reading Response
2/26 & 2/27	Beeson Preaching Lectures: Fleming Rutledge Estes Chapel 11 AM		
3/3	Rutledge Discussion The Gospel in the Life of Jesus	Kalas, 95-121 Beaseley-Murray, 30-66	Rutledge Response
3/10	The Gospel in the Miracles of Jesus Incarnational Communication	Beaseley-Murray, 67-105 Kalas, 129-139	Gospel Presentations
3/17	Sermon #1: The Gospel in the Life of Jesus		Sermon Prep Form
3/24	Sermon #1: The Gospel in the Life of Jesus		Sermon Prep Form
3/31	Spring Break		
4/7	The Gospel in the Teachings and Parables of Jesus	Beaseley-Murray, 106-262	

4/14	Sermon #2: The Gospel in the Miracles of Jesus		Sermon Prep Form
4/21	Sermon #2: The Gospel in the Miracles of Jesus		Sermon Prep Form
4/28	Sermon #2: The Gospel in the Miracles of Jesus		Sermon Prep Form
5/5	Sermon #3: The Gospel in the Teachings and Parables of Jesus		Sermon Prep Form
5/12	Sermon #3: The Gospel in the Teachings and Parables of Jesus		Sermon Prep Form
5/22	Final Papers due in hard copy at BC 217 by 12 Noon.		

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Response Papers. Two, 2 - 3 interaction papers will be assigned across the course of the semester (see course schedule for due dates). The topic and specific instructions for the completion of each interaction/reflection paper will be posted at least one week before it is due.

The interaction papers provide a forum for you to: 1) Critically interact with the assigned reading; 2) Prepare for class discussion; 3) Link the readings to your life experience; and 4) Consider issues central to a theology of preaching.

Gospel Presentation. By 2/18 each student will indicate which Gospel he or she will be preaching from through the course of the semester. Groups will then be formed of all the students who are preaching from the same Gospel. On 3/10 each group will give a 15-20 minute presentation on the Gospel. The presentation will include matters related to authorship, audience, book structure and theological themes.

Sermons.

- Three sermons will be preached for PR 632. Each student will choose which Gospel he or she will preach from throughout the semester; all three sermons will be from the same Gospel.
- Sermons will be delivered **extemporaneously** – that is, you will prepare thoroughly, but you should not memorize the speech nor read it word-for-word from a manuscript.
- Time limits for sermons must be observed in order to allow for all scheduled sermons to be delivered as well as provide opportunity for class feedback and critique of each presentation.
- All three assigned sermons must be completed in order to receive a grade for this course.

Sermon #1. This sermon will focus on **Jesus' life** (birth, baptism, transfiguration, passion or resurrection narratives). The first sermon gives you the opportunity to preach, present and receive feedback apart from the weight of a grade. The points designated for this assignment are granted based on your sermon preparation report and self-evaluation response.

The Preparation Report will be submitted in hard copy the day you preach. Specific instructions for preparing this report will be posted and discussed in class. The Self-Evaluation Response will be submitted via email by the Friday following the class in which you preached.

Time Limit: 10-12 minutes.

Sermon #2. This sermon will focus on one of **Jesus' miracles**.

The Preparation Report will be submitted in hard copy the day you preach. Specific instructions for preparing this report will be posted and discussed in class. The Self-Evaluation Response will be submitted via email by the Friday following the class in which you preached.

Time Limit: 13 - 15 minutes.

Sermon #3. This sermon will be preached from a **teaching or parable of Jesus**.

The Self-Evaluation Response will be submitted via email by the Friday following the class in which you preached.

Time Limit: 13 - 15 minutes

Self-Evaluation Sermon Responses. After each sermon, you will view the videotape of your presentation and complete the sermon evaluation form found on Moodle. Your comments should reflect thoughtful engagement with the course readings, lectures, and class discussion. A sample self-evaluation will be posted for you to review in preparation for completing your own evaluation.

The evaluation should be completed and posted to the course in Moodle by the Friday following the class period in which you preached. Upon receiving your self-evaluation, I will provide you with my completed evaluation and grade via email. Expect to receive my completed evaluation of your sermon on the same form that you will use for your self-evaluation.

Final Essay. The final essay of 7-8 pages is not a research paper; rather this assignment provides you the opportunity to express your theology of preaching. Details for completing this assignment will be provided later in the semester and will differ depending on whether PR 632 is your first preaching class or an elective.

COURSE EVALUATION

Points for the course will be distributed according to the following schedule:

Written Work

Reflection Papers (2@5 points) 10 points

Theology of Preaching Paper 10 points

Group Gospel Presentation

5 points

Sermons

Sermon #1

Prep Report 5 points

Self Evaluation 5 points

Sermon #2

Prep Report 5 points

Sermon 20 points

Self Evaluation 5 points

Sermon #3

Sermon 30 points

Self Evaluation 5 points

100 points

Your final grade for the course will be determined by the total points earned:

Grade	Points Needed	Letter Grades as described in the ATS Academic Catalog
A	95 – 100	Exceptional work: surpassing, markedly outstanding achievement of course objectives.
A-	90 – 94	
B+	87 – 89	
B	83 – 86	Good work: strong, significant achievement of course objectives
B-	80 – 82	
C+	77 – 79	
C	73 – 76	Acceptable work: basic, essential achievement of course objectives
C-	70 – 72	
D+	67 – 69	
D	63 – 66	Marginal work: inadequate, minimal achievement of course objectives
D-	60 – 62	
F	0 – 59	Unacceptable work: failure to achieve course objectives

COURSE ASSUMPTIONS

Classroom Community. It is assumed that you will engage in behavior that builds class community. This expectation includes: engaging in class discussion, practicing active listening, demonstrating respect toward all members of class, and refraining from nonverbal behavior that detracts from community.

Attendance. It is assumed that you will attend each class and be on time for each session. If you are ill or experiencing a family crises, you should contact me before class begins to make arrangements for such an absence. Unexcused absences will result in your final grade being reduced by 5%.

Writing Skills. It is assumed that you have already developed writing skills appropriate to a Master's level degree program. You should be able to compose grammatically correct sentences, write well-developed paragraphs, and express your ideas in a well-organized coherent manner. In addition, you should be able to follow the MLA writing style guidelines, using correct citation and notation (see <http://www.mla.org/>). Evaluation of written work submitted without attention to grammar, form, and style guidelines as well as the use of inclusive language will impact the student's grade. If you would like to sharpen your essay writing skills (for the three interaction papers and final paper) check out this web site: http://www2.actden.com/writ_den/tips/essay/

Information Commons. It is assumed that you have the skill to access the library catalog and electronic databases. If you do not know how to use the available resources, be sure to ask the staff of the Information Commons for assistance and training.

Completion of Assignments. It is assumed that you will turn your assignments in on time. All written assignments are due at the beginning of class on the due date. Late work will result in a 5% grade reduction for each day that passes beyond the due date.

Academic Integrity. All written work and oral presentations for this course must be the original work of the student. The use of sources to support and develop one's written and oral presentations is

encouraged with the appropriate documentation (please refer to Asbury Seminary's policy regarding plagiarism on page 25 of the Student Handbook).

Inclusive Language. Consistent with the values of Asbury Seminary, members of this class will embrace the use of inclusive language in reference to human beings in all course communication. The following statement provides the theological rationale:

The recommendations included in this pamphlet were developed with the understanding that differentiation between the sexes is rooted in God's creative act. The use of inclusive language is not intended to undermine this view of God-ordained gender differences.

However, males and females, while different in being, are both created in the image of God and share the same worth. Employing inclusive language reflects a commitment to affirming women's presence and worth in our community. (First Class, ATS Info, Resource Center, Inclusive Language)

FORM & STYLE GUIDELINES

Please use the following guidelines when submitting written work (Interaction Papers, Sermon Preparation Reports, Sermon Responses and the Final Essay).

1. Your work should be prepared according to the following guidelines:
 - a. Double space document.
 - b. Times New Roman, 12 point font
 - c. 1" margins: top, bottom & both sides (you may need to adjust margins if your default is set at 1.25").
 - d. Do not justify the right hand margin
 - e. Page numbers in the upper right hand corner
 - f. Provide a separate Reference Page at the end of the document
Use MLA style citation guidelines (cite in the body of the text, no footnotes or
 - g. endnotes). See the following web sites for assistance:
<http://webpages.pvbears.org/hslibrary/mla.htm> and <http://www.mla.org/>

2. Attend to the following writing, language usage and grammar
 - a. Standard 8 ½ x 11 inch paper
 - b. Stapled, please no binders or paper clips
 - c. Write in complete sentences with attention to grammatical construction.
 - d. Write in paragraphs. A paragraph should contain one central idea or concept to which all other sentences in the paragraph stand in relationship. (Paragraphs should be indented ½").
 - e. Use clear transitions. As an essay, your written work should be presented as a conceptual whole with clarity as to how the separate components relate to each other and work together in accomplishing the purposes of the assignment.
(http://www2.actden.com/writ_den/tips/essay/)
 - f. As you discuss your convictions and commitments with regard to speech communication, it is appropriate to use the first person singular pronoun, "I."
 - g. Please **do not** use the second person, "you," or the third person plural pronouns, "we" or "us." The use of these pronouns is appropriate to a conversational form of writing; however, given the formal, academic nature of these assignments conversational expression detracts from the presentation.
 - h. Eliminate the word, "this" when it is not used with the noun it modifies.

- i. Use your computer spell check and grammar check. Have another person proof read your paper, give them permission to be ruthless!

PERSONAL NOTE

I am pleased to have you in class and look forward to getting to know you better as we proceed through the semester. Please take note of my office hours and stop by for a visit; you do not need to have a class question or concern!

However, if you do have questions or concerns – absolutely – come see me! There are several course related reasons that may prompt you to stop by or make an appointment:

- One of the unique challenges encountered by students in this class is the fear of public speaking. A call to ministry does not automatically eradicate the anxiety related to speaking before an audience. Please don't let the anxiety overwhelm or paralyze you.
- You are not confident that your work/sermon preparation meets the criteria of the assignment. I would be happy meet with you. It is always better to clarify prior to an assignment or preaching than experience regret afterward.
- Receiving sermon critiques can be ego bruising and emotionally challenging experience. If you want further clarification with regard to an evaluation, guidance on how to address identified weaknesses for future speech assignments, or simply a listening ear, I am available to you.