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PR 631 Preaching from the Psalms

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PREACHING FROM THE PSALMS

PR 631 Course Syllabus

3 Credit Hours

T/TH 9:30 – 10:45AM

Room Assignment: BC 223 & BC 235

“We can neither understand nor preach the gospel tangibly enough. A truly evangelical sermon must be like offering a child a beautiful red apple or holding out a glass of water to a thirsty man and asking: ‘Wouldn’t you like it?’”

Dietrich Bonhoeffer

INSTRUCTOR CONTACT INFORMATION

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Office Hours: Tuesday 1 – 2 PM, Wednesday 9 – 11 AM, and by appointment.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The purpose of *Preaching from the Psalms* is to approach the study and practice of Christian proclamation through hermeneutical and theological engagement with the Psalms. Attention will be given to the dialogic character of the Psalms, as well as the major themes of God’s steadfast love and faithfulness, the wonders of God’s activity, covenant identity, lament and praise, concern for justice, trust and abandonment to God. 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

Cantalamessa, 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.

McCann, Clinton, Jr. and James C. Howell. Preaching the Psalms. Nashville: Abingdon, 2001.

Mays, James L. Preaching and Teaching the Psalms. Eds. Patrick D. Miller and Gene M. Tucker. Louisville: John Knox Press, 2006.

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

RECOMMENDED TEXTS

Augustine, St. Exposition on the Book of Psalms. Schaff, Philip, Ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Christian Classics Ethereal Library. <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf108.html>

Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Meditations on Psalms. My Soul Find Rest. Trans. & Ed. Edwin Robertson. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002.

Calvin, John. Commentary on Psalms. Grand Rapids, MI: Christian Classics Ethereal Library. <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf108.html>

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

Slade, Carole. Form & Style: Research Papers, Reports, Theses. 12 ed. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2003.

Strunk, William, Jr. and E B White. Elements of Style. <http://www.bartleby.com/141/index.html>

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 insight into Scripture, the course texts and life experience 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).

As the instructor, I may occasionally use Power Point presentations to highlight ideas and/or guide the class interaction. If used, the Power Point presentations will be placed in the PR 610 Course Folder no later than 2 hours prior to the start of class on any given day. You may choose

to print these and bring them to class for note taking purposes. Please bring a Bible to each class; if a particular text book is assigned for discussion on a particular day bring it as well.

Please note: due to the nature of the class as one that is designed not to “transmit” information, but rather interact with what we our reading as well as engage each other in a seminar format – *I strongly encourage you to participate in this class-collegial setting without the use of laptop computers.* While the use of these technologies in other learning settings may be of great value, in this setting their use will hinder the development of the desired learning environment.

COURSE SCHEDULE

A complete course schedule will be distributed on the first day of class. The course schedule will present: 1) reading assignments to correspond with class discussion, 2) due dates for interaction papers, the final paper, and video responses/self-critiques, and 3) the preaching calendar.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Interaction Papers. Three, 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 in the PR 631 course folder on First Class 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. These five essays will contribute to the substance of your final theology of preaching paper.

Final Essay. The final essay of 10 - 12 pages is not a research paper; rather this assignment provides you the opportunity to express your theology of preaching. The writing of this essay will take place throughout the semester via the five course interaction papers. Specific guidance for completing this assignment will be provided in the PR 631 course folder on First Class one month before prior to the due date.

Sermon Critiques. You will complete two sermon critiques in which you will listen to or view sermons either as they are placed on reserve or are available on the Internet. The critique for each viewing will be slightly different, reflecting the course material across the semester (directions for each critique will be posted in the PR 631 course folder on First Class no later than ten days prior to the assignment’s due date). These critiques are designed as learning experiences that will give you the opportunity to 1) critique sermons (outside of a worship setting) through the application of class readings and discussion; 2) demonstrate your ability to identify a sermon’s strengths and weaknesses in terms of the biblical/theological content, organization/development, communicative strategies, and delivery; 3) increase your acumen in the art of preaching; 4) gain an understanding of the instructor’s baseline for grading student sermon’s in the preaching lab setting.

You may chose to complete one or both of the sermon critique assignments with one or two others from the class. When the assignment is done in dyads or triads, only one critique should be submitted. If you learn more fruitfully through engagement and conversation with another person, this option may be for you. If it is a challenge to make connections between what you

have read and what you observe, you also may benefit by working with a partner. Please submit your critiques to my office in the PR 631 course folder on First Class.

Sermons.

- 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.
- A Preparation Report will accompany each sermon preached in class. Instructions for completing the Preparation Report are found at the end of this syllabus.
- Time limits for sermons will 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. A selection of Psalms will be made available from which you may choose a text for Sermon #2. The first sermon gives you the opportunity to present and receive feedback apart from the weight of thinking about a grade. The points designated for this assignment (50 pts) 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 in the PR 631 folder in First Class and discussed in class .

Time Limit: 10 - 12 minutes.

Sermon #2. A selection of Psalms will be made available from which you may choose a text for Sermon #2. The 250 points designated for this assignment are distributed as follows: Sermon, 150 points; Sermon Preparation Report, 50 points and Self-Evaluation Response, 50 points.

The Preparation Report will be submitted in hard copy the day you preach. Specific instructions for preparing this report will be posted in the PR 631 folder in First Class and discussed in class.

Time Limit: 13 - 16 minutes.

Sermon #3. A selection of Psalms will be made available from which you may chose a text for Sermon #3. The 300 points designated for this assignment are distributed as follows: Sermon, 200 points; Sermon Preparation Report, 50 points; and Self-Evaluation Response, 50 points.

The Preparation Report will be submitted in hard copy the day you preach. Specific instructions for preparing this report will be posted in the PR 631 folder in First Class and discussed in class.

Time Limit: 15 - 20 minutes

Self-Evaluation Sermon Responses. After each sermon, you will view the videotape of your presentation and complete the appropriate sermon evaluation form found in the PR 631 course folder on First Class. Your comments should reflect thoughtful engagement with the course readings, lectures, and class discussion. The evaluation should be completed and emailed as an attachment to my office in the PR 631 course icon within one week of the sermon presentation. 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.

Praying the Psalms. As the servants of Christ, preparing to preach is never a sterile academic exercise or a task undertaken merely to fulfill a significant pastoral responsibility. In order to affirm that a posture of prayer is wholly consistent with and central to our academic training for ministry, we will not only study the Psalms for the purposes of preaching but we will pray them together through the semester as a corporate spiritual exercise. On the first day of class you will be given a calendar with a reading from the Psalms indicated for each day of the semester. Each day that we meet for class a different student will be designated to begin class with interaction from a Psalm read during the week. The form of the interaction is not prescribed; here you may allow your own creativity, use of the psalter, musical gift, or any other expression of leading in a corporate time of prayer to guide you in your planning. This experience of prayer may be planned for 5 - 10 minutes of class time.

This element of class participation and ministry is highly valued as a vital expression of shared Christian community.

COURSE EVALUATION

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

Written Work	
Interaction Papers (2@ 15 pts; 1 @ 20pts)	50 points
Sermon Video Critiques (2 @ 50 pts each)	100 points
Theology of Preaching Paper	200 points
Sermons (Proclamation, Sermon Preparation Report, Self-Evaluation)	
Sermon #1	50 points
Sermon #2	250 points
Sermon #3	300 points
Class Participation	<u>50 points</u>
Total Points	1000 points

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

Letter Grade	Points Needed	Letter Grades as described in the ATS Academic Catalog (29)
A	950 - 1000	Exceptional work: surpassing, markedly outstanding achievement of course objectives.
A-	900 - 949	
B+	870 - 899	
B	830 - 869	Good work: strong, significant achievement of course objectives
B-	800 - 829	
C+	770 - 799	
C	730 - 769	Acceptable work: basic, essential achievement of course objectives
C-	700 - 729	
D+	670 - 699	
D	630 - 669	Marginal work: inadequate, minimal achievement of course objectives
D-	630 - 669	
F	600 - 629	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. 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.

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).

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 Video Critiques, Sermon Preparation Reports, Sermon Responses and the Final Essay).

1. should be prepared according to the following guidelines:
 - a. Double space
 - 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 Works Cited page at the end of the document
 - g. Use MLA style citation guidelines

2. Attend to the following writing, language usage and grammar issues"
 - a. Write in complete sentences with attention to grammatical constructions.
 - b. Write in paragraphs. A paragraph should contain one central idea or concept to which all other sentences in the paragraph stand in relationship.
 - c. 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.
 - d. As you discuss your convictions and commitments with regard to speech communication, it is appropriate to use the first person singular pronoun, "I."
 - e. Please **do not** use the second person, "you," or the third person plural pronouns, "we" or "us."
 - f. The word "this" is a demonstrative adjective that must always be followed by a noun ("this syllabus"). Using "this" by itself results in ambiguity
 - g. Use your computer spell check and grammar check. Have another person proof read your paper, give them permission to be ruthless!

A grading rubric for papers can be found at the end of this syllabus.

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! If your schedule does not allow a meeting during my posted office hours, I am happy to make arrangements to meet with you at another time.

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 and 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.

SYLLABUS REFERENCES

Fant, Clyde E. Bonhoeffer: Worldly Preaching. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1975.

Kolb, D. A. Experiential Learning: Eperience as the Source of Learning and Development. Englewood Cliffs, N.J., Prentice-Hall, 1984.

GRADING RUBRIC FOR WRITTEN WORK

Excellent/Outstanding - A

Focus	Sharp, distinct response/s to interaction question/s with evident awareness of the import of the question/s.
Content	Substantial, specific, and/or illustrative content demonstrating sophisticated ideas.
Organization	Sophisticated arrangement of content with evident and/or subtle transitions.
Conventions	Evident control of grammar, mechanics, spelling, usage, and sentence formation

Good/Notable - B

Focus	Demonstrates a clear understanding of the interaction question/s and responds with sufficient focus.
Content	Sufficiently developed content with adequate elaboration or explanation
Organization	Functional arrangement of content that sustains a logical order with some evidence of transitions.
Conventions	Sufficient control of grammar, mechanics, spelling, usage and sentence formation

OK/Average - C

Focus	Focuses on the topic presented in the interaction question/s, but lacks specificity in written response.
Content	Limited content with inadequate elaboration or explanation
Organization	Confused or inconsistent arrangement of content with or without attempts at transition.
Conventions	Limited control of grammar, mechanics, spelling, usage and sentence formation

Weak/ Below Average - D

Focus	Minimal evidence of responding to the interaction question/s.
Content	Superficial and/or minimal content.
Organization	Minimal control of content arrangement.
Conventions	Minimal control of grammar, mechanics, spelling, usage and sentence formation

Poor/Unacceptable - F

** This rubric is an adaptation of **The Pennsylvania Writing Assessment Scoring Guide**

<http://www.pitt.edu/~ciddeweb/FACULTY-DEVELOPMENT/FDS/wac.html>

Retrieved 9/20/04

Sermon Preparation Report

Please note: the intention of the preparation report is that you will work sequentially through the numbered items as they appear on this assignment.

1. Your Name
2. Scripture Text/s
3. Sermon Title
4. Congregational Description (*You may choose to describe as your audience/congregation for this sermon your home congregation, the congregation seminary graduates in your tradition/denomination typically serve, or if you are a student pastor or doing an S. Min – the church you currently serve.*)
 - a. Location of church: regionally & locally
 - b. Age of the church: when was it established
 - c. Demographic composition of the congregation: age, education, income
 - d. Denominational and Theological identification
 - e. Predominant Style of Worship
 - f. Other dynamics which inform the preaching context.

Please post 4a – 4f in the course icon at least 24 hours prior to the class period in which you will be preaching.

5. Discuss why you chose this text/s. Of the possible choices why did you settle on this one? What were your considerations and thought processes as you made the choice?
6. Provide documentation of your own inductive work with this text. Name the key insights as a result of your own inductive work. Please be detailed in your comments. To respond to this question you should fully engage the skills learned in IBS 1 & IBS 2 as well as any exegesis courses you have taken at this point.
7. How were the conclusions that you reached - based on your own inductive work - supported, extended, or challenged when you consulted other sources? Discuss in detail. If your conclusions were challenged how did you resolve the tension or come to greater clarity? Was resolving this issue critical to understanding the heart of the passage?

In this discussion you should reference the sources that were most helpful or formative in terms of your thinking and the decisions you made with regard to the actual homiletical content (MLA style, please). Please receive this reminder to extend your inquiry beyond contemporary commentaries and authors; you will want to consult the Church Fathers, the Reformers, Wesley, and the exegetical work of other theologians. You will be assisted in locating these reference works through the use of the Prolepsis and iPreach databases.

8. How is this text to be understood and informed by its placement in the immediate context, the book, and the biblical narrative? If you have addressed portions of this question in #7, simply make that reference and add any additional comments to thoroughly respond to this question.
9. Name the significant theological theme of this passage that is key to the preaching of the text. What does this passage say about the nature of God? Of Humanity? Reflect on this

theme or themes from a Wesleyan Theological framework. Reference the sources that you consulted in forming your response.

10. What of this passage runs counter to the cultural assumptions and values embedded in the context within which you will preach this sermon. Respond in terms of the immediate cultural ethos of the congregation and societal values within which the congregation lives and witnesses.
11. What of this passage is congruent with the cultural assumptions and values embedded in the context within which you will preach this sermon. Respond in terms of the immediate cultural ethos of the congregation and societal values within which the congregation lives and witnesses.
12. What specifically, about your audience analysis informed the decisions that you made in terms of sermon content, communicative strategies, organization/structure, and delivery? Comment on each of these categories, being as specific as possible.
13. What did you find most difficult or challenging in the sermon preparation process?
14. What did you find the most enjoyable or rewarding?

There is no page limit to this assignment. Take as many pages as necessary to thoroughly respond to each question.