

## **COURSE OF STUDY SCHOOL**

Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary  
2121 Sheridan Road, Evanston, IL 60201  
847-866-3942

### **YEAR TWO**

#### **214 PRACTICE OF PREACHING**

##### **Course Description:**

This course is designed to help students develop and preach sermons that proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ in a way that engages, informs, supports and encourages members of the congregation in their Christian discipleship. It is focused on developing both the craft of the sermon, with fundamental skills, and the art of preaching, by encouraging each student to use their particular skills. Attention to the worlds of the preacher, the texts, the congregation and community, and the world beyond our communities will be given.

##### **Course Objectives:**

The overall goal of this class is the development of preachers and their sermonic skills. The coursework is designed to allow students to meet the following objectives:

- Understand the sermon as the proclamation of the Gospel (good news), the Bible as foundational to preaching, the role of the Holy Spirit in preaching, and worship as the context for preaching.
- Become familiar with different genres of biblical literature for preaching and the use of the lectionary in preaching.
- Learn the meaning and purpose of exegesis and develop appropriate skills for exegeting the biblical text and the preaching context in the development of sermons.
- Learn different sermon and preaching styles and be able to select styles that are appropriate to both the text and the context of each preaching event.
- Be sensitive and responsive to the diversity of race and culture that represents the worldview that is the church, and help all voices to be heard in their preaching; and also to preach in a way that all listeners can hear the Word of God.

**A. Books:**

**Required Texts:**

- Allen, Ronald J. *Preaching: An Essential Guide*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2002.
- Buttrick, David G. *Preaching Jesus Christ: An Exercise in Homiletic Theology*. Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2002.
- Childers, Jana. *Purposes of Preaching*. St. Louis, Missouri: Chalice Press, 2004.
- Mitchell, Henry. *Celebration and Experience in Preaching, Revised edition*. Nashville, Tennessee: Abingdon Press, 2008.
- Tisdale, Leonora Tubbs. *Preaching as Local Theology and Folk Art*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997.
- The United Methodist Music and Worship Planner.
- The New Revised Standard Version of the Bible.

**Highly Recommended Text:**

- \* Buttrick, David. *Homiletic: Moves and Structures*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987. **This book will explain the way to structure a sermon, and how to develop movements within the sermon.**

**Other Recommended Texts:**

(Students are not required to purchase these texts, however they are recommended purchases for your preaching library.)

- \* Allen, Ronald J. *Interpreting the Gospel: An Introduction to Preaching*. St. Louis, Missouri: Chalice Press, 1998.
- \* Allen, Ronald J. *Preaching the Topical Sermon*. Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1992.
- \* Craddock, Fred. *Preaching*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1990.
- \* Eslinger, Richard. *The Web of Preaching: New Options in Homiletic Method*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2002.
- \* Forbes, James A. Jr. *The Holy Spirit and Preaching*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1989.
- \* González, Justo L. and Pablo A Jiménez. *Púlpito: An Introduction to Hispanic Preaching*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2005.
- \* Hogan, Lucy Lind. *Graceful Speech: An Invitation to Preaching*. Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006.
- \* Kim, Eunjoo Mary. *Preaching the Presence of God: A Homiletic from an Asian American Perspective*. Valley Forge: Judson Press, 1999.
- \* Taylor, Barbara Brown. *The Preaching Life*. Cambridge, MA: Cowley

Publications, 1993.

\* Webb, Joseph. *Preaching Without Notes*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2001.

## **B. Course Requirements and Instructions:**

1. **Please use all texts as dialogue and reflection partners!** For each book, ask yourself what this text has to say to you about your preaching. Preaching is a journey, and where you are now is not where you will be in another year or so. Even books you have read before will speak to you differently as you re-read them. Make notes in margins. Jot down questions. For each book, ask yourself: Where does it challenge you? Where does it affirm you? Where does it excite you? Where does it make you angry? (WARNING: Where books make you angry or uncomfortable are clues to where you have some work to do!)
2. Please note that each question may have several parts. For each book, your written work should be evidence of both your understanding of the material AND your reflection upon it for your preaching context. DO NOT neglect the reflection or application portions or your grade will suffer! Summarizing the authors' insights will not help your preaching much. **Preaching requires thinking, and so do assignments for preaching courses!**
3. All work must be typed using double-spacing and 12 pt Times New Roman or Arial font. Use 1 inch margins and number pages consecutively through the assignments. Use one side of the paper only and black ink. Begin each item on a new sheet of paper and include the number and statement of the question on the page. Please use a standard cover page with the name of the school, name and number of the course, and name of the professor.
4. Please use appropriate citations and identify sources properly.

### **Pre-Class Assignments:**

- a. Do three 6-8 page exegesis papers in preparation of preaching. One text must be from the Hebrew Bible, and one from the New Testament. One is your choice. Exegesis should include 1 page each on what is happening in your life, in the life of the congregation that you serve, and in the community. In exegeting the text, you must also read the text in several translations and note questions that arise from your reading, as well as key words and phrases. You should consult at least three commentaries in order to understand the context of the scripture. The FIRST of these exegetical papers should be completed before March 10 and sent directly to me at [paisley5@aol.com](mailto:paisley5@aol.com). *This allows me to be in conversation with you as you prepare your sermons and give you some help on the front end!* The second exegesis should be sent to me by April 1, and the third by May 1. (HINT: Having read Tisdale will help you with the sections on the congregational context.)
- b. Write three sermon outlines using materials in Buttrick's *Homiletic* and/or Allen's *Preaching: An Essential Guide*. Each outline should be 1-2 pages, with main ideas in complete sentences for each section, and a word or two that will indicate images or stories or examples for each section of the sermon. One outline is due by March 20; a second is due by April 10, and the third is due by May 31. Please send these directly to

me at [paisley5@aol.com](mailto:paisley5@aol.com). (HINT: Read Allen as you begin this assignment.)

c. Write a half-page paragraph for each required text that summarizes the author's main argument and main points. This paragraph should not contain *your* opinions, but those of the authors. Write a following half-page paragraph for each required text on your reflection upon the author's argument and teaching, and its applicability in your setting. (4-6 pages) *This assignment may be done in sections as you read each book.*

d. Using the information in Tisdale on exegeting the congregation, write a 5 page summary of the context in which you preach. Pay attention to significant events in the life of the congregation's history and present church life, symbolic elements in worship and congregational life, and symbolic texts. (Symbolic events may include an annual BBQ, as well as traditional worship elements that cannot be changed without huge conflicts.) (5-6 pages) **This is not to reflect your opinions on what the church should be, but rather a reflection of what it is and what matters to the congregation (core commitments).**

e. Using the essays in Childers, write responses to three of them. 1. One with which you resonate and agree, focusing on areas of agreement and reasons for them that relate to your preaching context. This response should reveal to me some of your passion for preaching and give me your answer to the question, "Why must I preach?" 2. A second response must be to an essay where you either disagree with the writer or need to nuance what she/or he has said in order for it to have meaning for you. Do not simply tell me what you think, dialogue with the author about preaching in your context. 3. A third response is to an essay of your choice, sharing a new insight or understanding of the preaching task and *how this new understanding might be a resource for your preaching in your current appointment.* (6-8 pages)

f. In *Preaching: The Essential Guide*, Allen states that sermons are acts of interpretation, "But in ways that fit every situation, God desires for pastor and people to have optimum understandings and experiences of grace." Considering your congregation and Allen's contributions, discuss the meaning of good news for preaching in *your* congregational context. What are the specific sources of the good news? What is the specific word of good news that your congregation *most* needs to hear? How will you share it? Tell me the texts and preaching strategies that you will use to share the particular good news that the congregation needs to hear. (3-4 pages)

e. Write a response to David Buttrick on one of the Christological problems or images *that he identifies* in the church today, using your congregation as a reference. How does Buttrick help you understand your congregation? In what ways is he not helpful? In what ways do you preach Christ to your congregation and community? **Use Buttrick's terms and theology to explain. (3-4 pages)**

g. Mitchell discusses the importance of preaching to the whole person. Relate a specific way in which this understanding might be used in a sermon that you would like to preach to your congregation. How might this affect the impact of the sermon? (1-2 pages)

*These assignments may be emailed to me when they are all completed – and if there are particular questions about assignments, you may email me with them as well. Hopefully, this will provide greater clarity about the assignments.*

### **Sermon assignments:**

- a. Begin preparation for three sermons. One must be from the Old Testament (not Psalms or Proverbs), and one from a New Testament text. One of the sermons must be a topical or thematic sermon, as described by Allen. You will use the exegesis papers and outlines prepared above. Using Allen and Mitchell, make sure that you have for your preparation, provide the following for each sermon:

1. At least two paragraphs on the context in which each sermon might be preached: what was going on in your life, the life of the congregation, and the world at the time
2. the claim of the text for each preaching event
3. The behavioral objective or main point for each sermon
4. An 1-2 page outline of the sermon with main ideas in complete sentences for each section, and a word or two that will indicate images or stories or examples for each section of the sermon

b. Using the work above, develop and preach one sermon in your setting. This sermon should be between 12-20 minutes, depending on your church setting. You must submit a VHS tape or DVD of the sermon in the context of the worship service along with the sermon manuscript. *Failure to submit a DVD or VHS version of the sermon and worship service will adversely affect your grade.* A bulletin of the service is not required, but would be appreciated.

### **In-Class Assignments**

- a. Brief readings will be assigned with reflection papers on several days of the course. The purpose of these is to allow you to reflect further on topics raised in class or for discussion the following day.
- b. Each student will preach one sermon in class, approximately 12-15 minutes long. You will use the work done in the assignment above for this sermon. A written manuscript or extended outline of 3-4 pages will be turned in for each sermon, but may need to be modified based on corrected work and classroom comments. The text chosen should be attached as the first full page of the sermon. You may preach from the manuscript, the outline, notes or without notes. You may prepare the sermon prior to the first day of class, but please be prepared to make *changes* as needed during the class session prior to the sermon.
- c. Following the preaching event, the class will deconstruct the sermon and work to improve it together. At the request of the professor, we may meet for individual work in order to further identify your gifts and strengthen the sermon.
- d. All class members will respond to sermons preached with courtesy and helpfulness.

### **D. Class Requirements and Grading:**

Students are expected to be faithful in their pre-class reading and reflection papers, in attendance in full participation in class activities, and in the preaching of their sermons. The grading system is meant to denote the quality of the

Course of Study work as follows:

**A (100-95) A- (90-94) B+ (87-89) B (84-86) B- (80-83)**

**C+ (77-79) C (74-76) F (under 74 points)**

The final letter grade is based on both pre-class and in-class work.

- **Pre-class assignment = 50%**

Please note grades for these assignments will be based on perceived understanding and reflection on the material. PLEASE consider your experience and context in your response, but make your responses a reflection based on the material. Do NOT simply summarize the text, nor should you simply write about what you do in the pulpit without the text shaping your response. PLEASE read carefully each question and answer each portion of it. Rewrites will be an option when necessary to bring work up to appropriate standards.

- **Preparation, faithful attendance, in-class assignments and participation in class = 10%**

While it is true that not all students are vocal in class, all students are expected to participate actively in class activities. Allowances will be made for different modes of learning based on the cultures and social realities of students

- **In-Class Sermon = 40%**

Since this is a preaching class, students will be graded on both the development and the preaching of sermons. Although preaching at Course of Study will be in class environment, students are encouraged to be as natural as possible in preaching these sermons.