

GARRETT THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
COURSE OF STUDY PROGRAM – SUMMER 2019
324E - PREACHING

Professor: Peter Civetta
Email: p-civetta@northwestern.edu
Phone: 773-332-4010

Office: 1801 Hinman Ave, Evanston

CLASS DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES –

Too often the study and teaching of preaching have split apart the content of a sermon from its delivery. In addition to crafting meaningful words for our sermons, we also need to consider how we will present those words to the congregation. At its core, a sermon is not a text, a piece of paper; a sermon is a lived experience. Preaching always happens in a particular place at a particular time. Even if you preach the same sermon multiple times, it will be different on each occasion. In this course, we will explore all aspects of preaching, seeking to merge the content of our preaching to its delivery.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

The Preaching Life by Barbara Brown-Taylor

The Heart of Black Preaching by Cleophus LaRue

Bird by Bird: Some Instructions on Writing and Life by Anne Lamott

and then you act: making art in an unpredictable world by Anne Bogart

RECOMMENDED TEXT:

Craddock on the Craft of Preaching by Fred Craddock

Specific reading sections can be found in Pre-Assignments 1 and 2.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND EXPECTATIONS:

There are three pre-assignments that are due before we meet in July. All pre-assignments should be done as soon as you are able, but they must be turned in no later than June 15th. The pre-assignments are designed to help me get to know you, your church, and your congregation along with offering you the opportunity to contemplate and explore what preaching means in your life and ministry. While not particularly difficult, these pre-assignments will provide the basis for all we will be able to accomplish, so I encourage you to engage with them fully.

The third pre-assignment is a video conference with me, which we cannot set up until the first two assignments are completed. The conferences should be scheduled between May 15th and June 15th, although I will be open for earlier times if you are ready. Please plan accordingly for getting the first two assignments completed in time for us to schedule a conference. I anticipate

GARRETT THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
COURSE OF STUDY PROGRAM – SUMMER 2019
324E - PREACHING

that the prep work for the course will take you 10-15 hours to complete in total. When you submit written assignments, you also need to send a copy to coshomework@garrett.edu.

During our course time, we will focus our attention on getting in as much preaching time as we can. To that end, I will be asking for what I call 2” picture frame sermons: short, fully fleshed out sermons. A full assignment explains what I am after, but at its core, we want to gain as much preaching experience as we can. With limited time, it makes sense to require shorter sermons. You can expect to preach three times during the week. The first sermon you will prepare ahead of time and bring with you. A second sermon will be assigned in class, and you will have the opportunity to revise one of them for your final preaching experience. In between preaching experiences, we will have discussions around key topics connected to preaching, including use of the body, voice, and space along with theological and scriptural reflection.

The final breakdown of your grade is the following:

Effort and Participation	10%
Three Pre-Assignments @ 15% each	45%
Three Sermons @ 15% each	45%

One final note: Preaching is a very personal and oftentimes vulnerable experience, and I will be seeking to create a safe, sacred space for our work together. Although this course should challenge you, the goal is to build up the people of God to do God’s work in the world. Raise the bar of your own expectations. Plus, we can have some fun in the process.

BAD PREACHING JOKES:

A Lutheran pastor always started each service with "The Lord be with you." The people would respond, "and also with you." But, one Sunday the PA system wasn't working so the first thing he said was "There's something wrong with this microphone." The people responded, "and also with you."

A preacher was completing a temperance sermon: with great expression he said, "If I had all the beer in the world, I'd take it and throw it into the river." With even greater emphasis, he said, "And if I had all the wine in the world, I'd take it and throw it into the river." And then, finally, he said, "And if I had all the whiskey in the world, I'd take it and throw it into the river." He sat down. The song leader then stood very cautiously and announced with a pleasant smile, "For our closing song, let us sing Hymn #365: 'Shall We Gather At the River.'"

There was once a pastor who had a little five year old daughter. Now the little girl noticed that every time her dad stood behind the pulpit, and was getting ready to preach he would bow his head for moment before he began. So one day she asked him about it. "Well, honey" the preacher answered, "I'm asking the Lord to help me preach a good sermon." The little girl looked up at her father and asked, "Then how come he doesn't do it?"