

Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary — Hamilton
Preaching: Principles and Practice
in Preparing Relevant and Biblical Sermons PR 601
Syllabus: Spring 2011

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Tuesdays 1:15-4:15 p.m.
AC 354/356

I. Course Description

This course is designed to enable the student to construct an expository sermon based upon the skills of exegesis. Students will gain experience explaining, proving, and applying a biblical passage and delivering two biblical sermons without notes. A year of a biblical language and/or NT 502 Interpreting the New Testament are prerequisites for the course.

II. Course Relationship to the Curriculum

This course is an introduction to the principles of preparing relevant biblical sermons. Lectures and exercises cover a stage-by-stage explanation of how preachers think as they prepare to preach. The aim of the course is to help students understand what is required to preach effectively and to practice what they understand. Recitation sessions provide opportunity for students to preach and have their efforts recorded on DVD/video for playback and critique by the professor.

III. Course Objective

As a result of this course students should be able to deliver a sermon without the use of notes derived from the biblical text. In order to accomplish this, the student will: (A) Have a basic procedure that moves one from the biblical text to a sermon based on that text. (B) Develop skill in constructing a clear outline consisting of full, declarative sentences that relate to a basic idea. The outline should also show transitions in parentheses between the major points and if necessary the supporting points. This will be measured by handing in an outline of the first and the final sermons for grading. (C) Have a working definition of expository preaching. (D) Understand the basic elements in sermon construction and what they should accomplish—introduction, central idea (based on an exegetical idea), transitions, illustrations, development of the sermon, and conclusion. (E) Begin to develop a skill in writing a sermon manuscript geared to the way audiences listen. (F) Develop an effective filing system for supporting materials used in sermons. This will be measured by a report on the system at the end of the course. Students will collect at least seventy-five [75] **new**

illustrations. (G) Watch and listen to five [5] assigned video recorded sermons and determine what makes an effective sermon. (H) Read two books on the theology of preaching and the importance of prayer in preaching. (I) Read one book on preaching and plagiarism. (J) Students will measure their ability to interact with the course reading and lectures by sitting a final examination. (K) Listen to *PulpitTalk* audio journal for review and reinforcement of class lectures and practice. (L) Preach two sermons. (M) Students will memorize a verse of Scripture. (N) Students are to attend the Ockenga Lectures on Preaching 14-16 March.

IV. Course Textbooks

Required:

Haddon Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001).
Scott M. Gibson, *Should We Use Someone Else's Sermon? Preaching in a Cut and Paste World* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008).
John R.W. Stott, *Between Two Worlds* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1982).
Donald R. Sunukjian, *Invitation to Biblical Preaching: Proclaiming Truth with Clarity and Relevance* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2007)
Keith Willhite and Scott M. Gibson, eds. *The Big Idea of Biblical Preaching: Connecting the Bible to People* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998).
John Piper, *The Supremacy of God in Preaching* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1990).
E.M. Bounds, *Power Through Prayer* (various publishers).
Recorded sermons on DVD are in the Seminary Bookcentre.
Set of *PulpitTalk*, the audio journal of the Center for Preaching. Purchase set from the Center for Preaching @ 978.646.4190 for PR class student rate.

Recommended:

H. Grady Davis, *Design for Preaching* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1958).

V. Course Requirements and Grading

1. Attendance at lectures and exercises. Students are expected to be *on time* for class. Late work will not be accepted.
2. Develop a filing system for collecting supporting material for sermons. The system can be on 3x5 cards, 4x6 cards, or in a computer. During the course of the semester, collect and file at least seventy-five (75) illustrations. You will report whether you have completed this assignment on the last day of class, Tuesday, 26 April 2011. Students will place their ten best illustrations on Cams for the benefit of the entire class.
3. Read Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*. Rather than read the book in a single sitting or two, you will profit more through reading it section by section as it is discussed in class.
4. Read Willhite and Gibson, *The Big Idea of Biblical Preaching*. Write a three (3)

page (maximum) single-spaced paper using the following questions: a. Do you think the book has a central idea? What do you think it is? b. Summarize the thrust of the editors' argument. In light of this, why did Willhite and Gibson select the chapters from other authors to be included in the book? c. What have you learned from reading the book? d. Discuss at least three things you learned from reading the book. Please put name and box # on the *back* of the last page, not on the front page/s. Report is due on 15 March 2011.

5. Read Gibson, *Should We Use Someone Else's Sermon?* Write a three page (maximum) single-spaced paper using the following questions: a. What is the central idea of the book? b. Discuss at least three things you learned from reading the book and how you'll apply it to your preaching. Please put name and box # on the *back* of the last page, not on the front page/s. Report is due on 29 April 2011.

6. Read Stott, *Between Two Worlds*. Please consider the following: a. What is the central idea of the book? b. What did you find in the book that was new to you? c. With what do you disagree? Why? The assignment should be no more than five (5) single-spaced pages. Please put name and box # on the *back* of the last page, not on the front page/s. Report is due on 29 April 2011.

7. Complete reading for Bounds and Piper.

8. Prepare an *outline* for the first sermon. The professor will correct the outline and return it to the student. The student will be able to rework the outline as many times as he or she would like before the first sermon is preached. Once the sermon is preached, the correction of the outline for a higher grade is no longer an option. The outline is due Thursday 10 March 2011.

9. Prepare a *manuscript* for the first sermon. Due the day you preach. This will be an eight (8) minute message without notes.

10. Watch and listen to five (5) sermons on DVD from the Bookcentre. Please refer to the list of questions in this syllabus — section IX. Complete thoroughly the questions for each sermon. The DVD is sold in the Bookcenter. You must use the *UPDATED (FALL 2009) PR 601 DVD (NOT CDROM)* sermons. All others will not be accepted. Report is due on 29 March 2011.

11. Prepare an *outline* for the second sermon. The outline must conform to that which has been taught in class. The professor will correct the outline and return it to the student. The outline is due Thursday 31 March for the first group and Tuesday 5 April for the second group.

12. Prepare a manuscript for a complete sermon that both explains and applies the passage. This will be a fifteen (15) minute message without notes. The manuscript and corrected outlines are due the day you preach. The outline must conform to that which has been taught in class.

13. Listen to *PulpitTalk* segments to reinforce understanding of course concepts.

14. Attend *all* Ockenga Preaching Lectures—14-16 March for extra credit.
15. Sit a *one hour maximum time limit* end of the course closed book and closed note book final examination.
14. Students will memorize Romans 1:16.

VI. Course Administration

A. Attendance Policy

Attendance is required for the class. If a difficulty arises, please see the professor. Please make every effort to be at class on time.

B. Due Dates and Late Penalties

See the calendar in the catalog. Late work will not be accepted.

C. Assistance

Please come to see me with your questions. I have a sign up sheet located outside my office.

VII. Course Calendar

- Tues., 1 February: NO CLASS
- Tues., 8 February: Introduction to each other and the Course
The Worlds of the Expositor
What is Expository Preaching?
Read: Robinson pp. 1-32.
- Tues., 15 February: What's the Big Idea?
Read: Robinson pp. 33-46.
Due: Questions on pp. 47-50.
- The Essentials of An Effective Sermon
Read: Robinson pp. 51-72.
Follow up after class: Listen to *PulpitTalk* 4:2

READING WEEK 21-25 February

- Tues., 1 March: Do I Have Anything to Preach?
Read: Robinson: pp. 73-100 on the developmental question.
Due: Exercises on pp. 97-100.
- The Exegetical and Homiletical Idea

Read: Robinson pp. 101-113.

Due: Select two passages for your two preaching exercises at the end of the semester. The passage for the first sermon will be selected from a list provided by the professor. For the second sermon, hand in the passage address on a 3x5 card with your name and box number on the card. You may not preach from a passage on which you've written an exegesis paper or will be writing an exegesis paper. You must select a new passage. Select a short unit of thought.

The Shapes Sermons Take

Read: Robinson pp. 115-137.

See also: Sunukjian on outlining.

Follow up after class: Listen to *PulpitTalk* 4:3.

Tues., 8 March:

Making Dry Bones Live

Read: Robinson pp. 139-164.

The Sharp Edge of Filing

Getting Off to a Good Start

Read: Robinson pp. 165-175.

All's Well That Ends Well

Read: Robinson pp. 175-182; 229-245.

Due on Thursday 10 March to Dr. G: Prepare an outline for your first sermon. The outline should be in proper form and should be as detailed as necessary for an *eight (8) minute* sermon.

Tues. 15 March:

Words on Target

Read: Robinson pp. 183-199.

Dynamics of Delivery

Read: Robinson pp. 201-224.

Due: Report –*Big Idea of Biblical Preaching* by W&G.

Follow up after class: Listen to *PulpitTalk* 3:3, 1:2 & 3:1.

READING WEEK 21-25 March

Tues., 29 March:

Eight Minute Sermons

Be sure that you communicate a **clear idea**.

Deliver the sermon without notes.

Due today: DVD sermon analysis.

Due 31 March: Outline for second sermon—first group.

- Tues., 5 April: Eight Minute Sermons
Due today: Outline for second sermon—second group.
- Tues., 12 April: Fifteen Minute Sermons
Note: You are to bring to class a blank DVD or VCR tape. Please place your name and box number on the DVD or VCR tape and sleeve. Thank you.
 Be sure to communicate a **clear idea**.
 Deliver the sermon without notes.
- Tues., 19 April: Fifteen Minute Sermons
 Be sure that you communicate a **clear idea**.
 Deliver the sermon without notes.
- Tues., 26 April: *Final exam*
 a. Attached Report/Sheet from back of syllabus.
 b. Posted on Cams: Select ten (10) of the best sermon illustrations out of the seventy-five (75) collected.
 c. Report that you have set up a filing system.
- Friday 29 April:
 a. Report on Stott, *Between Two Worlds*.
 b. Report on Gibson, *Should We Use Someone Else's Sermon?*

VIII. Your Sermon Will be Judged on the Following:

A. Content

a. Is the sermon clear? Is it well organized? Does it flow easily? Does the audience understand you?

b. Does the sermon have effective content? Is it based on sound exegesis? Does it have good supporting material and relevant illustrations?

B. Delivery

a. Does your delivery sound as though you really want to communicate? Does your voice have variety? Are you enthusiastic?

b. Does your body support what you are saying? Do you have eye contact that is direct and personal? Do you use gestures?

c. Do you want to be heard? Do you demonstrate conviction and sincerity?

IX. Questions to Consider When Listening to or Reading a Sermon

For the assignment: *Write out each question followed by your response.* Please be specific — give examples for what is asked.

1. What do you think is the main idea or concept the preacher was trying to get across? Please state it and analyze and comment on it.
2. When through with the introduction, did you want the preacher to go on? Y/N Did it capture interest so that you would want him/her to continue? Y/N How did he/she do? Analyze and comment.
3. Did he/she illustrate? Y/N If so, what did he/she do? — to explain, prove or apply? Did he/she succeed? Y/N Why or why not? Analyze and comment. You must provide specific examples of how the preacher explained, proved, or applied the text.
4. Do you think the conclusion drove home the main idea of the sermon in a way that caused you to want to respond? Analyze and comment.
5. What do you think that you as a listener might do, think or change as a result of hearing the sermon?
6. Do you think the delivery helped or hindered the presentation? What were its strengths? What about weaknesses? Analyze and comment.
7. Do you think that the sermon grew out of the biblical text? Or was it imposed on it? Analyze and comment.

X. Grading

The percentage categories on the back sheet of the syllabus equal 100. However, since this is a skills course, I take into consideration improvement in the student's performance in oral assignments. Conversely, a digression in a student's performance is also a factor that goes into grading.

If one does not collect all the illustrations required for the course, then the student will lose 5 points. Likewise, not reading the textbook has point-deducting consequences (10 points). This will especially come into play if a student is border-line between grades.

As for all written assignments, I am looking for good use of grammar, interaction with the material, spelling, etc. The *Student Handbook* spells out the rigorous call for excellence in all grading assignments, which will be followed in the course. See below.

The Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary Student Handbook states:

Grade A is given for meeting with conspicuous excellence the demands which can fairly be made in relation to the requirements of the course. These demands would normally include unusual accuracy in fact, completeness in detail, perfection in form of work, independence of method, grasp of the subject as a whole and constructive imagination.

Grade B is given for exceeding the minimum satisfactory attainment and for meeting certain aspects of the course with excellence.

Grade C is given for attaining satisfactory familiarity with the course and for demonstrating at least some ability to use this knowledge in a satisfactory manner.

Grade D is a passing mark but indicates unsatisfactory control over the material.

Grade F declares that the course has been failed.

XI. Format for Sermons

a. Please remember to place your name and box number either on a cover sheet or at the top of the first page.

b. At the top of the page will be the following:

Text: (This is the address of the biblical passage from which you are preaching.)

Subject: (What is the author talking about? Don't forget to use an interrogative: who, what, why, when, where, which, how.)

Complement: (What is the author saying about what he is talking about?)

Main/Exegetical Idea: (Subject + Complement = Main Idea)

Homiletical Idea: (This is a pithy statement of your main idea.)

Purpose: (Why are you preaching this sermon? A purpose is specific and measurable.) "As a result of hearing this sermon, I want my listeners to...."

What follows is either your outline or manuscript. Remember to write your outline in full sentences. Put transitions into parentheses. Outlines should have a complete introduction, conclusion, and transitions written out in full. A clear outline will be clear to your listeners.

As for manuscripts, follow the model of the outline by indenting your paragraphs to help you to see the flow of the sermon.

Name _____

Box _____

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How many class sessions did you attend? _____ (check if) all,
or _____ (give number).

How many illustrations did you collect? _____ (give number).

Did you develop a file system? Please describe:

Have you read Robinson's *Biblical Preaching*? _____ (yes/ no)

How much? _____ (give percentage).

Have you read Piper's *Supremacy...Preaching*? _____ (yes/ no)

How much? _____ (give percentage).

Have you read Bound's *Power through Prayer*? _____ (yes/ no)

How much? _____ (give percentage).

Did you listen to *PulpitTalk*? _____ (yes/ no)

Report on Willhite and Gibson, *Big Idea* _____ (grade). 5%

Report on Stott, *Between Two Worlds* _____ (grade). 5%

Report on Gibson, *Should We Use Someone...* _____ (grade). 5%

Outline for first sermon _____ (grade). 5%

Eight (8) minute sermon and manuscript _____ (grade). 20%

Sermon DVDs Exercise _____ (grade). 10%

Fifteen Minute Sermon, Outline & Mss. _____ (grade). 40%

Final Examination _____ (grade). 10%

Attended all Ockenga Lectures on Preaching _____ (yes/ no)

(Late work will not be accepted.)

Course Grade _____