PR 722, Preaching and Persuasion: Strategies of Influence
Fall, 2012
Thursday 2:00-5:00

Dr. Jeffrey Arthurs
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jarthurs@gcts.edu

Office Hours:

Course Description

This course examines the theory and place of persuasion in communication, homiletics, and leadership. This course is designed to help students enhance their skills in expository preaching and leadership. Through reading, lecture, discussion, practice, and self-critique students will grow in the ability to analyze and adapt to various audiences so that they can effectively stand “between two worlds”—the world of the text and the audience. Students will analyze their own ethos, analyze a sermon, and preach persuasive sermons.

Course Relationship to the Curriculum

This course provides advanced training in preaching and leadership. It assumes knowledge of exegesis; the homiletical skills of organization and delivery; and advanced writing skills. The course applies rhetorical and communication theory to the actual practice of ministry with a view toward helping students lead and communicate well.

Course Objectives

Knowledge:

- Summarize how persuasion, preaching, and leadership intersect.
- Understand concepts of Aristotelian rhetorical criticism (ethos, pathos, logos, enthymeme).
- Synthesize Aristotelian theory with complementary concepts from modern communication theory (form, empathy, situation, Toulmin).
- Summarize arguments for and against persuasive preaching.

Skill:

- Begin to form an ethics of persuasion.
- Preach persuasive sermons designed to move, convince, and inspire.
- Counter objections audiences are likely to raise.
- Analyze your own ethos.
- Criticize the persuasive effectiveness of a published sermon.

Attitude:

- Increase reliance on the Lord while still acting as a faithful steward.
- Gain confidence in your ability to preach.
- Be encouraged by analysis of your ethos.
• Support your classmates.
• Feel humbled and yet expectant as you lead.

Course Textbooks


Course Reading Packet, on Sakai. Note: M. Div. students are not required to read the final section (Ethics). Th. M. students *are* required.

Course Requirements

**Attendance and Late Work:** Attendance required for all sessions. Consult with Dr. Arthurs if this is impossible. Note: No late work will be accepted. If you cannot turn in an assignment due to emergency, speak with me.

**Description of Assignments**

**Reading:** Self-graded. Assign yourself a grade out of 100 points based on how much you read and how well you read. No grade may be higher than the percentage of pages read. Reading “well” is judged on your attention and comprehension. Inform Arthurs by email of your grade by the date in the syllabus. A chart is included in this syllabus to help you keep track of your reading. Also include in your report: did you meet with your discussion group during both assigned times?

**Paper One:** Self-assessment of your own ethos. Use terms and categories from lectures and class readings and cite sources. Since ethos is audience specific, analyze your ethos with the main group you minister to. Be candid as you critique your strengths and weaknesses. Suggest concrete steps to enhance your ethos. 10 pp. max (12 pt. font, double spaced). See instructions/sample in Sakai.

**Paper Two:** Critique a sermon. Using one or more of the theories covered in class, critique a published sermon. Note: this assignment works best if you have both audio/video and a written transcript. Narrow your focus of inquiry so that you can shed light on some aspect of the sermon’s persuasion. 12 pp. max. (12 pt. font, double spaced). See instructions/sample in Sakai.

At the final class, each person will have ten minutes to orally summarize the paper for the class and answer questions.
Sermon One: Evangelism/Apologetics. Preach an evangelistic sermon to a hypothetical audience of seekers. Be specific. Frame the message for that group. Choose a topic/issue which is part of a series called “The Great ‘Untruths’ About Christianity.” For example:

- To be a Christian you have to check your brain at the door.
- To be a Christian you have to hate homosexuals.
- Christians are hypocrites.

This sermon will likely be a topical expository message (although that is not required). Your goal is to present a truthful and winsome apology and to move the listeners to respond to the gospel, not a caricature or perversion of the gospel. One-half page of notes permitted. Time limit: ______.

Sermon Two: Convince. Develop and preach a sermon designed to convince. Move/change the audience’s minds. Your audience is this class. Use either textual or topical exposition. One-half page of notes permitted. Time limit: ______. Sample topics:

- The sign gifts are still operational today.
- Christians should avoid debt.
- Divorce is never a biblical option.
- Women can serve as elders.
- Believers’ baptism.

Sermon Three: Inspire. Develop and preach a sermon designed to cast vision and motivate response. Your audience is your home church (or the type of church you will minister to in the future) at a vision casting banquet. Use some of the techniques from Dr. Arthurs’ lecture: “Leading from the Pulpit.” Use Monroe’s Motivated Sequence. Use either textual or topical exposition. One half page of notes is permitted. Time limit: ______. Sample topics:

- Stewardship.
- Honor volunteers.
- Evangelism.

Discussion Groups: During the two reading weeks, meet with a small group from your class to discuss sermons. Each session should last 1½ -2 hours.

- First Reading Week: watch a sermon together from one of the preachers below (or clear another choice with me before watching). Analyze how the preacher uses ethos and pathos. Pause the video a few times during the sermon for comments, and then after it is done, probe areas like these:
  - How was the preacher’s delivery? How did it contribute to his/her ethos?
  - Did the preacher use self-disclosure? What was the effect?
  - How did the preacher arrange the sermon? Did he/she use something like Monroe’s Motivated Sequence? Was the arrangement psychologically effective?
  - Did the preacher use humor? What was the effect?
  - Did the preacher use fear appeals? What was the effect?

- Andy Stanley
- Rob Bell
- Tim Keller
- Joshua Harris
- Mark Driscoll
- Francis Chan
- John Piper
- Craig Oliver (Elizabeth Baptist Church, Atlanta)
Jeff Arthurs     Chuck Swindoll
Haddon Robinson  Carolyn Custis James
Nancy Ortberg    John MacArthur

- **Second Reading Week:** Choose a 10 minute portion of one of your class sermons for the group to watch on video (bring the e-copy).
  - Begin by critiquing yourself. Why did you choose this portion of the sermon? What were you pleased with? What would you do differently if you preached this again?
  - After your self-critique invite the other members to give you feedback.
  - Conclude by praying for one another’s homiletical development and faithfulness.

**Elevation for Th. M. credit:** Present a 75 minute seminar on the ethics of persuasive preaching. Use lecture, visuals, discussion. Base your seminar on the readings in the Packet.

**Grading Percentages**

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<tr>
<td>Reading Report</td>
<td>(10%)</td>
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<td>Paper One</td>
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<td>Paper Two</td>
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<td>Sermon One</td>
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<td>Sermon Three</td>
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<td>Date</td>
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<td>Ethos</td>
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<td>Sermon Three: Inspire</td>
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<td>Dec. 6</td>
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<td>Dec. 13</td>
<td><strong>Paper Two</strong>: Rhetorical Analysis of a Sermon.</td>
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Reading Report
Preaching and Persuasion

Name __________________________________________

Box: ________

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<tr>
<th>Text</th>
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<th>Pages You Read</th>
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<tr>
<td><em>Preaching With Purpose</em></td>
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<td><em>Made to Stick</em></td>
<td>290</td>
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<td><em>Why Good Arguments Often Fail</em></td>
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<td>Reading Packet</td>
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<td>+ “Ethics” for Th. M. students</td>
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<td><strong>845 (Th. M.)</strong></td>
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How many class sessions did you attend of the 12 possible?

Did you (or will you) watch yourself on video for all three assignments?
Sermon 1: Evangelistic/Apologetics

Name ______________________________      Time______ 
Text/Topic __________________________           Grade_______

How does the preacher use Ethos?

- Good Will
- Good Character
- Good Knowledge
- Dynamism

How does the preacher use Pathos?

- Formal appeal
- Language

How does the preacher us Logos?

- Audience adaptation (enthymeme)
- Avoidance of poor reasoning (see Sire)

Overall Effectiveness
Sermon 2: Convince

Name ______________________________      Time______
Text/Topic __________________________           Grade_______

How does the preacher use Ethos?

• Good Will

• Good Character

• Good Knowledge

• Dynamism

How does the preacher use Pathos?

• Formal appeal

• Language

How does the preacher use Logos?

• Audience adaptation (enthymeme)

• Avoidance of poor reasoning (see Sire)

Overall Effectiveness
Sermon 3: Inspire

Name ______________________________      Time______

Text/Topic __________________________           Grade_______

How does the preacher use Ethos?

- Good Will
- Good Character
- Good Knowledge
- Dynamism

How does the preacher use Pathos?

- Formal appeal
- Language

How does the preacher use Logos?

- Audience adaptation (enthymeme)
- Avoidance of poor reasoning (see Sire)

Overall Effectiveness