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Course Description

Examination of the literary-rhetorical characteristics of various genres of Scripture; implications for preaching. Practice developing and delivering messages using communication methods such as story, visuals, and discussion.

Course Relationship to the Curriculum

This course provides advanced training in preaching and literary analysis of Scripture. Building on PR 601 and exegesis courses, this course helps students interpret and proclaim Scripture in a way that is true to the text as well as adapted to modern listeners. The course applies literary and rhetorical theory to the actual practice of ministry with a view toward helping students lead and communicate well.

Course Objectives

Knowledge:
- Reflect upon the literary and rhetorical nature of the Bible.
- Master the literary/rhetorical characteristics of biblical narrative.
- Understand the literary/rhetorical characteristics of various genres such as parables, proverbs, law, etc.

Skill:
- Use literary/rhetorical criticism in exegesis.
- Use knowledge of rhetoric when preaching two sermons from those genres:
  - A narrative sermon.
  - A sermon from another genre.
- Lead a seminar using multiple teaching methods.
- Critique a published sermon.

Attitude:
- Increase both humility and confidence as you preach.
- Support your classmates.
- Enjoy the artistry of the Bible.
- Value rigorous study.
- Value creativity in preaching.
Course Textbooks


*Note: Out of print. Use Amazon, the library, Arthurs, or other sources to secure this book.

Course Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Presenter</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan 31</td>
<td>Seminar: Variety—Why and How</td>
<td>Arthurs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb. 7</td>
<td>Seminar: Preaching Narrative</td>
<td>Arthurs</td>
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<td>Feb. 14</td>
<td>Seminar: Preaching Narrative</td>
<td>Arthurs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb. 21</td>
<td>Reading Week—meet with your discussion group.</td>
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<td>Feb. 28</td>
<td>Sermon 1</td>
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<td>March 7</td>
<td>Sermon 1</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>March 14</td>
<td>Seminar:</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 21</td>
<td>No class, catch up with yourself.</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 28</td>
<td>Reading Week—meet with your discussion group.</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 4</td>
<td>Seminar:</td>
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<td>April 11</td>
<td>Seminar:</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 18</td>
<td>Sermon 2</td>
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Paper due for group that preaches next week.
April 25  
Sermon 2  
Paper due for group that preached last week.

May 2  
Sermon 2  
Paper due for group that preached last week.

May 6  
No class. Reading grade due to Arthurs by 12:00 p.m.

**Course Requirements**

**Attendance and Late Work:** Attendance required for all sessions. Consult with Dr. Arthurs if this is impossible. Note: *Late work will receive a maximum grade of 50%*. If you cannot turn in an assignment due to emergency, speak with me.

**Reading:** See the sources above. These total about 760 pp. In addition, each seminar group will distribute to each member 40-50 pp. (electronic copies preferred) on each genre.

Note: Reading is 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. Also include in your report: did you meet with your discussion group during Reading Week 1 and Reading Week 2.

**Homiletic conversation groups (2):** During each of the reading weeks, you will meet with a small group for discussion. Many pastors often find that small groups like these are a great help in their weekly ministry of preaching and teaching. This is an opportunity to cultivate an analytical mind and humble spirit. During each of the weeks you will meet for at least 1 ½ hrs. of directed conversation dealing with the topics below. These activities are not graded, but there is a 25 pt. penalty (each) for not doing them. Report if you did them when you email me your reading grade on the date noted in the schedule.

- **Reading Week 1: Sermon Analysis:** Your group will choose a total of four sermons, one per preacher, from the list below. You may choose another preacher if you clear the choice with me before you watch.

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

Watch/listen to the sermons then meet with your small group to discuss them. Dig deep.

Not: “The preacher had good delivery. I liked it, and it was easy to listen to.”
But: “The preacher’s delivery was captivating because of her expert use of the pause. She used silence to rivet attention at two crucial points: x and y. Besides the expert use of silence, the preacher’s voice reinforced the content very well. When she described her childhood joys, her voice was lively and quick. When she expressed anger, I could hear it in her flat pitch and harsh tone.”

Not: “I couldn’t figure out the preacher’s big idea.”

But: “I was confused as I listened and am still confused as I try to state the preacher’s big idea. It seems that the preacher had two big ideas, x and y, but he did not demonstrate how they relate to each other or how they arise from the text. The intro ‘funneled’ nicely into x, but then the conclusion stated y.”

- **Reading Week 2: First Sermon Evaluation:** By now, everyone will have preached and watched the video of their first class sermon. Take some time to evaluate your own preaching and that of the rest of your group members. This will be a deeper analysis than the few minutes that you are afforded in class directly after your sermon. Be encouraging, and remember to speak the truth in love!
  - Choose a five minute portion of your own sermon for the group to watch on video (bring the e-copy).
  - Begin by critiquing yourself. 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. Possible points to discuss:
    - Try to think about why a particular approach worked well (or not so well!).
    - Did the form of the sermon relate the tone of the text? How could this be improved?
    - Was the sermon well adapted to the hypothetical audience?
    - Did the body language and use of voice help or hinder?
    - Think of your own topics—it’s a conversation! Remember to be encouraging.

Conclude by praying for one another’s homiletical development and faithfulness.

**Seminar:** Research the literary-rhetorical characteristics of a biblical genre from the list below (or clear another choice with me), and suggest how to preach that form of literature. Teach in seminar format—with lecture, discussion, and visuals. Details:

- **Two weeks before your seminar:** Meet with Arthurs. Be prepared to discuss the readings you are doing, the readings you will require, and the main ideas you will present.
- **One week before your seminar:** Distribute a packet of readings (40-50 pages) for each student in class.
- **During the seminar:** Devote one third of your time to lecture, one third of your time to discussion, and one third of your time to vicarious learning (e.g. sample sermons, exercises). PR 728 is a seminar class.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gospel</th>
<th>Lyric poetry</th>
<th>Wisdom Lit (either stable or radical)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Speeches</td>
<td>Parable</td>
<td>Apocalypse</td>
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<tr>
<td>Epistle</td>
<td>Law</td>
<td>Prophecy</td>
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Sermon 1: Preach a narrative sermon from a narrative text. Your audience is this class. No notes. Time limit: _______.

Sermon 2: Preach from one of the genres that has been presented in class. Use at least two of the communication methods that have been presented in class seminars. Preach to a hypothetical audience of people you currently minister to or are likely to minister to in the future. Skeletal notes permitted (1/2 page max.) Time limit: _______.

Paper: 12 pp. max. (double spaced, 12 pt. font). Analyze a published sermon (audio or video published is recommended). Exegete how the preacher responded to the literary-rhetorical features of his/her text. Describe both strengths and weaknesses and reflect upon how you can incorporate some of the preacher’s homiletics in your own preaching. Cite sources you have read for this class. Follow this format:

- Introduce the preacher and the context for the sermon (approx. 2 paragraphs).
  e.g. Don Sunukjian is a well known preacher and homiletician who teaches at Talbot . . . . One of his most famous sermons is entitled “A Night In Persia.” Using first-person monologue, he retells the story of Esther. The recording used for this paper was made at Multnomah Bible College, Portland, OR, in 1993. The audience consisted of . . . .

- Thesis and preview (1-2 paragraphs).
  e.g. By retelling the story Esther through the perspective of a pagan, Sunukjian recreates the dramatic irony and tension of the original story. To explicate that thesis, I will first examine irony in the book of Esther, then demonstrate how Sunukjian reproduces the rhetorical effects of that irony in his sermon, suggest three ways he could have improved on this superb example of genre-sensitive preaching, and then finally reflect on what I have learned that can benefit my own preaching.

- Describe two to five literary-rhetorical features of the text (approx. 3 pages).
  e.g. One striking literary-rhetorical feature of the story of Esther relates to its point of view. The narrative is told with remarkable dramatic irony. Blah blah defines “dramatic irony” as “blah blah,” and that is exactly what the narrator of Esther does, for the name of God is never mentioned, yet the presence of God pervades the story. The reader knows this, but the characters in the story do not. The rhetorical significance of dramatic irony is blah blah.

- Describe how the preacher incorporates (or fails to incorporate) those features into the sermon (approx. 5 pages).
  e.g. Sunukjian adroitly recreates the impact of the irony in his sermon. He does so by telling the story through the eyes of a pagan. Thus the preacher prompts the listeners to infer things the pagan narrator does not intend. Thus Sunukjian borrows the text’s own method of communication and brings it into the 21st century. For example, Harbona, the narrator, states “blah blah,” but as listeners, we know otherwise.

- Reflect upon what you learned and can apply to your own preaching (approx. 2 pages).
  e.g. I have learned that preaching does not always have to be deductive, frontal, or “in-your-face.” It can also be inductive, subtle, and cajoling. I need to practice this, especially as I communicate with post moderns since they value story and mystery. Sunukjian clearly has a big idea in mind, but he communicates that idea obliquely.
For Th. M. credit: Read 400 pp. extra on preaching and/or genre. Reading done for your seminar does not count toward this total. Submit a 2 page summary of what you read.

**Estimated time invested**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Grade Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Seminar</td>
<td>25 hrs.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sermon 1</td>
<td>18 hrs.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sermon 2</td>
<td>18 hrs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper</td>
<td>15 hrs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>24 hrs.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>100 hrs.</strong></td>
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**Grading Criteria**

**Seminar:**

*Content*
- Has the subject been researched thoroughly?
- Is there a blend of theory and praxis? Is the seminar helpful for the actual practice of ministry?

*Format*
- Does the presentation use these communication forms: lecture, discussion, visuals, and activities/experience?
- Is time managed well?
- Is the presentation engaging and clear?

**Sermons:**

*Content*
- Is the sermon clear?
- Is it grounded in sound exegesis?
- Does the sermon demonstrate the relevance of the Bible to the needs and interests of the audience?
- Does the sermon use variety to reproduce some of the rhetorical dynamics of the text?

*Delivery*
- Is the preacher both natural and passionate?
- Does the preacher’s nonverbal communication reinforce the verbal?
Evaluation Sheet
PR 728, Preaching With Variety
Sermon 1: Narrative

Name: ____________________________________    Time:  ______
Text: ____________________________________     Grade: ______

Structure

   Use of intro and/or conclusion (if appropriate)

   Plot/organization

Exegesis

Application (direct or indirect)

Use of Language (vivid, concrete, conversational)

Delivery
Evaluation Sheet
PR 728, Preaching With Variety
Sermon 2: Other Genre

Name: ____________________________________    Time: _____
Text: ____________________________________     Grade: _____

Preaching with Clear Development

______________________________________________________________________________

Preaching with Accurate Interpretation

______________________________________________________________________________

Preaching with Creative Communication

______________________________________________________________________________

Preaching with Engaging Delivery