

Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary — Hamilton
PR 901: Research Seminar in Preaching
Syllabus: Spring 2011

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Office Hours by Appointment
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Wednesdays 8:30 a.m. - 12:15 p.m.

I. Course Description

The Master of Theology Seminar is designed to instruct students in the area of research skills for preaching and writing. The course will consist of lectures, reading, writing, preaching, and discussion. The course is required for all students in the Master of Theology in Preaching. PR 601 Preaching Principles and Practice, and PR 602 Preaching for Modern Listeners are prerequisites for the course. PR 901 is for Th.M. students only.

II. Course Relation to the Curriculum

The Master of Theology Seminar is one of the two required courses of the Master of Theology in Preaching degree. The course serves as the foundation for all Master of Theology in Preaching students.

III. Course Objective

As a result of this course students should: (1) Have a basic procedure of conducting research. (2) Be able to deliver the sermon without the use of notes. (3) Write a research paper that will focus on one issue in the field of homiletics. (4) Learn how to rewrite sermons for publication purposes.

IV. Course Textbooks

Required:

Robert Hudson, ed., *The Christian Writer's Manual of Style* Updated Edition (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2004).

Nancy Jean Vyhmeister, *Quality Research Papers for Students of Religion and Theology* Second Edition (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008).

Keith Willhite, *Preaching with Relevance* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2001).

Various handouts from the professor.

Recommended:

Judith Appelbaum, *How to Get Happily Published* (New York: HarperCollins, 1992).

John Boswell, *The Insider's Guide to Getting Published* (New York: Doubleday, Main Street Books, 1995 [c. 1994]).

Betsy Lerner, *The Forest for the Trees: An Editor's Advice for Writers* (New York: Riverhead Books, 2000).

Patricia T. O'Conner, *Woe is I: The Grammarphobe's Guide to Better English in Plain English* (New York: Riverhead Books, 1996, 2003).

Lynne Truss, *Eats, Shoots & Leaves* (New York: Gotham Books, 2003).

V. Course Requirements and Grading

1. Attendance at lectures and exercises.
2. Read Vyhmeister, *Quality Research Papers for Students of Religion and Theology*. Do not read the book as a text but more as a resource book.
3. Read Willhite, *Preaching with Relevance* and write a (3 pp.) single-spaced report on *Preaching with Relevance*. Based on what you have learned in this and other preaching courses and in your previous preaching experience, comment on at least four of the issues discussed in *Preaching with Relevance* and write how you might apply them to your own preaching. Limit your report to three (3) single-spaced pages. The report is due 27 April.
4. Read handouts from the professor.
5. Write research paper on a topic in homiletics that is of interest to you. The paper should be research oriented with proper documentation. Limit your paper to ten to fifteen (10-15) double-spaced pages. The paper is due Monday 11 April to each class member and the professor. The paper will be discussed on Wednesday 13 April.
6. Come to class prepared to discuss the exegesis for the passage on which you will preach for the sermon.
7. Come to class prepared to discuss the homiletical issues associated with your passage.
8. Hand in full outlines for the sermon.
9. Hand in full manuscripts for the sermon.

10. Preach one central idea sermon on any text.
11. Prepare an article (not the research paper) for publication. The audience for the article is a popular, more on the level of a devotional (be creative). Have the article ready to send to professor and class members on Monday 18 April. The article(s) will be discussed in the 20 April class.
12. Complete a Project on Preaching assigned in agreement with the professor. The project is due on the day of presentation, 27 April.

VI. 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?

C. Time

a. Make sure you stay within the time limit.

VII. Course Administration

A. Attendance Policy

Attendance is required for the class. Please make every effort to be on time for class.

B. Due Dates and Late Penalties

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.

VIII. Course Outline

- 2 February: No Class
9 February: Introduction to the Course
16 February: Writing Skills for Research

READING WEEK 21 - 25 FEBRUARY

- 2 March: Seminar on Paper Presentations
Exegesis and Homiletics of Sermon Passages
9 March: No Class
16 March: Preaching in Class

READING WEEK 21 - 25 MARCH

- 28 March: Preaching Project Orientation
30 March: Writing to Publish
6 April: No Class
13 April: Presentations on Research Papers
20 April: Presentations on Articles
27 April: Presentation on Preaching Project & Wrap Up

IX. Grading

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.

Name _____

Box _____

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

Exegesis and homiletics presentation _____ (grade). 5%

Preaching of Sermon, Outline & Mss. _____ (grade). 20%

Research Paper _____ (grade). 25%

Article for Publication _____ (grade). 15%

Willhite book report _____ (grade). 5%

Preaching Project _____ (grade). 15%

Class Participation _____ (grade). 15%

Course Grade _____