Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary — Hamilton
PR 701: Preaching for Special Occasions
Syllabus: Fall 2013

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Office Hours by Appointment
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Tuesdays 2:00-5:00 p.m.

I. Course Description

This course is designed to enable students to construct and practice expository sermons for special occasions, in addition to introductions of speakers and after dinner speeches. Students will gain information on the background for sermons preached at special occasions: wedding, funeral, baptism, communion, in addition to the introduction of guests and an after dinner speech. PR 601 Preaching Principles and Practice, and PR 602 Preaching for Modern Listeners are prerequisites for the course. Master of Theology students may enroll in this course for Th.M. credit. Th.M. students are to see the professor on the first day of class.

II. Course Relation to the Curriculum

Preaching for Special Occasions builds on the central idea philosophy taught in the two required preaching courses. The course brings together the pastoral skills requisite for preachers of special occasions. Theological understanding, historical perspective, exegetical insight, and pastoral sensitivity merge together in this course as one begins to construct special occasion sermons.

III. Course Objective

Goal: To enable students to develop the skill of preparing and preaching special occasion sermons and an after dinner speech without notes.

Objectives: As a result of this course students should: (1) Have a basic procedure that moves one from the biblical text to a sermon based on the text for a special occasion. (2) Understand the basic elements that comprise the special occasions covered in the course. (3) Be able to deliver the sermon without the use of notes at a special occasion. (4) Collect at least forty new illustrations for their files.

IV. Course Textbooks

Required:

V. Course Requirements and Grading

1. Attendance at lectures and exercises.

2. Collect and file at least twenty-five (25) new illustrations. You will report whether you have completed this assignment on the last day of class, Tuesday, 13 December.

3. Read Gibson, *Preaching for Special Services*. Based on what you have learned in this course and in PR 601 and 602, comment on at least four of the issues discussed in *Preaching for Special Services* and write how you might apply them to your own special occasion preaching. Limit your report to three (3) single-spaced pages. The report is due 13 December.

4. Read Wiersbe, *The Dynamics of Preaching*. Based on what you know about homiletics, take at least four of the principles discussed in *The Dynamics of Preaching* and discuss how you might apply them to your own preaching. Limit your report to three (3) single-spaced pages. The report is due 22 October.

5. Read Chapell, *The Hardest Sermons You’ll Ever Have to Preach*. Based on what you have learned in this course and in PR 601 and 602, comment on at least four of the issues discussed in *The Hardest Sermons You’ll Ever Have to Preach* and write how you might apply them to your own preaching. Limit your report to three (3) single-spaced pages. The report is due 13 December.

6. Read all the books assigned.

7. Present sermons for the following: baptism, wedding, funeral, communion, and present an introduction and an after dinner speech. Maximum ten minute limit.

8. Complete the exegesis for each passage for each sermon.
9. Hand in full outlines for each sermon and for the speech.

10. Hand in full manuscripts for each sermon and for the speech.

11. For extra credit, read Koessler, *Folly, Grace, and Power: The Mysterious Act of Preaching*. Comment on at least four issues discussed in *Folly, Grace, and Power* and write how you might apply them to your preaching. Limit your report to three (3) single-spaced pages. The report is due 13 December.

**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 or your grade will be assessed one full letter grade for each minute beyond 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

10 September: Introduction to the Course
               The special occasion sermon (Gibson 15-23)

17 September: Considerations for Baptism sermons (Gibson 65-83)
               Exegesis and homiletics of passages

24 September: Baptism sermons

1 October: Considerations for Wedding sermons (Gibson 25-41)
           Exegesis and homiletics of passages

8 October: Wedding sermons

READING WEEK 14-18 OCTOBER

22 October: Considerations for Funeral sermons (Gibson 43-64)
            Exegesis and homiletics of passages
            Wiersbe report due

24 October: Funeral Sermons

5 November: Considerations for Communion Sermons
            Exegesis and homiletics of passages (Gibson 85-99)

READING WEEK 11-15 NOVEMBER

19 November: Communion sermons

26 November: NO CLASS (Work on Gibson reading 101-110)

3 December: The composition of the After Dinner Speech
            Introductions and their construction and importance
            (Gibson 101-110)

10 December: Tuesday evening @ 6:00 p.m. @ Dr. Gibson’s house
              After Dinner Speeches
              ***PLEASE NOTE TIME CHANGE***
              Due: Gibson and Chapell reports, illustration report,
              and course summary sheet from the back page of the
              syllabus

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

1. What do you think is the main idea or concept the preacher was trying to get
   across? Can you state it?
2. When through with the introduction, did you want the preacher to go on? Did
it capture interest so that you would want him/her to continue? How did he/she do?

3. Did he/she illustrate? If so, what did he/she do?—to explain, prove or apply? Did he/she succeed? Why or why not? Please provide examples.

4. do you think the conclusion drove home the main idea of the sermon in a way that caused you to want to respond?

5. What do you think that you as 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?

7. Do you think the sermon grew out of the biblical text? Or was it imposed on it?

**X. 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.
How many class sessions did you attended? __________ (check if) all, or __________ (give number).

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

Did you read all the pages assigned? __________ (Y/N and %).

Baptism Sermon (Outline & Mss.) __________ (grade). 15%

Wedding Sermon (Outline & Mss.) __________ (grade). 15%

Funeral Sermon (Outline & Mss.) __________ (grade). 15%

Communion Sermon (Outline & Mss.) __________ (grade). 15%

After Dinner Speech (Outline & Mss.) __________ (grade). 15%

Report on Gibson’s Preaching for Sp. __________ (grade). 5%

Report on Wiersbe’s Dynamics __________ (grade). 5%

Report on Chapell’s Hardest Sermons __________ (grade). 5%

Participation: __________ (grade). 10%

Extra Credit: Folly, Grace, and Power __________ (grade). Extra

Course Grade __________