Dr. Scott M. Gibson, Professor  
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Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary  
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Office Hours by Appointment  
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Wednesdays 8:00 - 11:00 a.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 Goal and Objectives

Goal: Enable students to become familiar with conducting research and writing for formal study and for popular forums all the while reinforcing the principles of clear biblical preaching as taught in the wider preaching program.

Objectives: 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 write articles or rewrite sermons for publication purposes. (5) Become familiar with one serial publication of homiletical literature by providing a bibliographic inventory of the journal’s homiletical content.

IV. Course Textbooks

Required:


Various handouts from the professor.

Recommended:


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 12 December.

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 by noon on Monday 17 November to each class member and the professor. The paper will be discussed in class on Wednesday 19 November.
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 by noon on Monday 1 December. The article(s) will be discussed in the 3 December class.

12. Complete a Project on Preaching assigned in agreement with the professor. The project is due on the day of presentation, 10 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.

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
17 September: Writing Skills for Research
24 September: Seminar on Paper Presentations
              Exegesis and Homiletics of Sermon Passages
1 October: Preaching in Class
8 October: No Class—Students will work on writing and researching projects and papers

READING WEEK 13 - 17 OCTOBER
Students will work on writing and researching projects and papers

22 October: Preaching Project Orientation
29 October: Writing to Publish
5 November: No Class—Students will work on writing and researching projects and papers

READING WEEK 10 - 14 NOVEMBER
Students will work on writing and researching projects and papers

19 November: Presentation on Research Papers
26 November: No Class—Students will work on writing and researching projects and papers
              Thanksgiving Break—Thursday-Friday 28-29 November

3 December: Presentations on Articles
10 December: 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.
Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary  
PR 901  
Research Seminar in Preaching  
Syllabus: Fall 2014

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 _______________