Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary—Hamilton  
PR 602, Preaching for Modern Listeners  
Syllabus: Fall, 2008  
Monday, 9:15-12:15

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Office Hours:

Course Description

As a result of this course, the student should be able to analyze and adapt to audiences by preparing messages that are both biblical and relevant. Students will speak multiple times and be recorded on video. They will also analyze sermons, reflect on their own experience, and read.

Course Relationship to the Curriculum

Building on PR 601 and exegesis courses, this course helps students interpret Scripture for modern listeners. The focus is on audience analysis and adaptation.

Course Objectives

Performance:

- Analyze audiences.
- Prepare and deliver biblical messages that are both biblical and relevant.
  - Explain how to become a Christian to a particular audience.
  - Preach expository sermons which address specific issues.
- Form accurate exegetical ideas.
- Outline clearly.
- Become more skilled at speaking for the ear, esp. in using purposeful redundancy.
- Employ variety by experimenting with various sermon forms.
- Critique five recorded sermons.
- Memorize a passage of Scripture related to preaching.

Knowledge:

- Review Robinson’s ten stages of sermon preparation.
- Review these basic components of sermons: introduction, transitions, support material, inductive and deductive development, and conclusion.
- Comprehend how to analyze and adapt to an audience.
- Understand the unique challenges of adapting to modern audiences.
- Reflect upon how God has used preaching in your spiritual growth.

Attitude:

- Value expository preaching.
• Gain confidence in your ability to bridge the gap between the text and a modern
  audience.
• Value the use of imagination in preaching.
• Depend on the Lord who uses his Word to transform hearts.

Course Textbooks

Required:
• Gibson, Scott M., ed. Making a Difference in Preaching: Haddon Robinson on Biblical
• “Reading packets 1 and 2,” on CAMS.
• “PR 602 Sample Sermons” (CD Rom), purchased in the Book Center.

Attendance

Ten class sessions. Students are expected to be on time. If you cannot attend a session, or if you
miss one because of emergency, please talk to me.

Description of Assignments

Reading: Recommended that you read assignments by the dates noted in schedule. The readings
 correspond to the lectures. Turn in “Reading Report” on or before the last class session.

Reflection Papers (2): (Non graded assignment). Due as noted in schedule. Both papers are one
 page maximum (12 pt. font, double-spaced).

• Paper One, The Ministry of a Recent Sermon: In the last few months have you heard a
   message which was particularly relevant to your life? Did God speak to you by
   encouraging, rebuking, reminding, or guiding you? The purpose of this paper is not
   merely to summarize the sermon but to reflect upon how it ministered to you.

• Paper Two, The Blessing of Your Own Sermon: As you prepare for your final sermon
   consider why you have chosen your topic and text. Has the preparation warmed your
   heart, enlightened your mind, or moved your will as you have studied? Do you have a
   burden to declare the message to others? How has God used your preparation in your
   own life?

Oral Presentations (and written work for those presentations)

• Explain How to Become a Christian.
  o Choose a particular audience from the list below, and adapt your presentation to that
    audience.
  o Fill out the “Audience Analysis Worksheet” as the first step in your preparation.
    Turn in your worksheet when you speak.
Clearly explain how to become a Christian. At the end of your presentation, listeners should understand well enough to summarize the topic to someone else.

Use any communication methods/channels such as discussion, visuals, story, and lecture which help you achieve the goal.

No notes.

Time limit = 4 minutes. Three point penalty for every 30 seconds over. Note: this is a very rigorous time limit. You will have to be extremely efficient and simple to accomplish the goal within the time limit.

See samples on CAMS.

Bring a video tape. Watch your video tape by the last day of class.

Note: for the best communication, and thus the best grade, strive for simplicity. Do not use jargon (or explain unfamiliar terms as needed), and do use restatement. Use brief forms of support such as analogies and examples.

Audiences:
- Public high school, Saugus, world religions class.
- Third grade public school, Hamilton, “exploring religions” unit in social studies.
- Retirement village (senior citizens), Beverly, weekly chapel.
- Rotary club (business people), North Shore, monthly meeting.
- School board, Hamilton; part of a controversy on “proselytizing” in public schools.
- Youth group, Unitarian church, predominantly Caucasian.
- Youth group, Roman Catholic church, predominantly Hispanic.
- Prison, minimum security, men.
- Prison, minimum security, women.
- Hospital staff, part of a lecture series on the work of chaplains.
- Funeral, non-believing uncle.
- Funeral, believing uncle.
- Harvard Univ., campus crusade monthly meeting.
- Coffee house, Boston, part of a Christian band’s performance.
- Harvard Univ., Korean student association.
- Salem softball league, pre-game chaplain’s speech.
- Women’s retreat, Mt. Zion Baptist Church, predominantly African American.

**Sermon 1:**

From the list below, choose a problem or question faced by people you minister to, and choose a passage of Scripture which directly addresses that problem. Preach to that audience.

*Note: You may choose another problem/text if you gain Dr. Arthurs’ approval first.

*Note: You may do topical exposition for this sermon, using multiple passages rather than just a single passage.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic and Text(s)</th>
<th>Topic and (Texts)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol abuse Eph. 5:15-20</td>
<td>Conflict Matt. 18:15-20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Divorce Matt. 19:1-12</td>
<td>Worry Matt. 6:25-34</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Phil. 4:4-7</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Psalm 23</td>
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<td>1 Cor. 7:8-24</td>
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<tr>
<td>Malachi 2:12-16</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sexual immorality 1 Cor. 6:12-20</td>
<td>Suffering 2 Cor. 4:7-18</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Job</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Habakkuk</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1 Peter 1:3-9</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 Sam. 11</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Death John 11</td>
<td>Materialism 1 Tim. 6:6-10</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Eccles. 5:8-20</td>
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<tr>
<td>1 Thess. 4:13-18</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Taming the Tongue Pure Speech Eph. 5:1-7</td>
<td>Entitlement John 13:1-17</td>
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<tr>
<td>Complaining Phil. 2:12-18</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gossip Proverbs</td>
<td>Phil. 2:1-11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flattery Proverbs</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Talking too much</td>
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<tr>
<td>Homosexuality Romans 1:18-32</td>
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- Inform Dr. Arthurs of your topic and text(s) by date in schedule.
- Preach to a hypothetical audience of people you currently minister to or are likely to minister to in the near future.
  - Spend 10-15 mins. gaining feedforward from that group or from people who know them well.
- Time limit = 18 minutes. Three point penalty for every 30 seconds over.
- No notes.
- Bring a VHS tape or DVD-R (not a DVD-RW). Watch yourself within one week following your sermon.

- **Outline workshop** (non graded). Due as noted in schedule. See sample in your syllabus. Note: the same outline in an expanded form is in CAMS. It is a good example of the principles we’ve talked about in class: simple outline, purposeful redundancy, audience analysis, and so forth.
  - Exegetical idea (subject and complement).
  - Skeletal outline:
    - Complete sentence.
    - Main points/moves. No development beyond the capital letters level.
    - One sentence per point.
  - Write out transitions word for word. Use rhetorical questions and restatement.
  - Indicate at least one issue of relevancy per point (things that need to be explained, proved, or applied).
  - Potential ideas for intro and conclusion.

**Sermon 2:**
- Inform Dr. Arthurs of your topic and text(s) by date in schedule.
Preach a relevant expository sermon to your classmates. Do not create a hypothetical audience.

Employ at least two methods of variety covered in class.

Time limit = 18 minutes. Three point penalty for every 30 seconds over.

No notes.

Bring a VHS tape or DVD. Watch yourself within one week following your sermon.

**Discussion, Sermon Analysis:** (Non graded assignment). Due by date in syllabus. Watch five sermons on CD Rom. Meet with a small group from your class to discuss those sermons. Spend a minimum of 1½ hours in discussion. Use the questions below to guide your discussions. Dig deep. Analyze.

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.”

**Sermon: Dr. Jeffrey Arthurs, “The Truth Is Our Friend.”**

- What is the homiletical idea? Analyze and comment. E.g. is it biblical? Does the preacher demonstrate how it arises from the text? Does the preacher communicate it well with techniques like repetition/restatement?

**Sermon: Dr. Rodney Cooper, “Barnabas, the Encourager.”**

- Does the intro gain attention, surface need, and orient toward the homiletical idea or first point? Analyze and comment.
- Did the conclusion summarize and reinforce the homiletical idea? Analyze and comment.

**Sermon: Haddon Robinson, “The Broken Heart of David Jessison.”**

- Did the form of the sermon (first person narrative) help or hinder the reception of the message? Describe strengths and weaknesses of this form.

**Sermon: Dr. Alice Mathews, “The Wise Woman Person.”**

- Is this sermon rooted in exegesis? Is it also relevant? Provide examples and suggestions (if necessary) on how to improve exegesis and/or relevance.

**Sermon: Rev. Ken Shigematsu, “Journey to Jesus..”**
How did the preacher use support material—to explain, prove, or apply? Analyze and comment. Provide examples.

Grading:

Grading Scale:
- 100-94 = A
- 93-90 = A-
- 89-87 = B+
- 86-84 = B
- 83-80 = B-
- etc.

No late work will be accepted. If you experience illness or emergency, please speak to me personally. At the end of the semester borderline cases will be determined on the basis of class participation, but no grade will be raised more than 5 points.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percent of Report Card Grade</th>
<th>Points Possible</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading report.</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explain how to become a Christian.</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sermon 1</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>300</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sermon 2</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>400</td>
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Criteria for Grading Oral Assignments

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>The “C: Presentation”</th>
<th>The “B” Presentation</th>
<th>The “A” Presentation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Central Idea</td>
<td>Present.</td>
<td>. . . plus accurate, reinforced through repetition, restatement, and illustration.</td>
<td>. . . plus intriguing, memorable.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Conforms to requirements, accurate exegesis (if appropriate).</td>
<td>. . . plus shows depth of research and audience analysis; interesting.</td>
<td>. . . plus keen insight; rivets involuntary attention; includes moving exhortation.</td>
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<td>Organization</td>
<td>Intro and conclusion present; transitions present; drives home one central idea.</td>
<td>. . . plus transitions are crystal clear through use of repetition and restatement; main moves are logically linked; no “rabbit trails.”</td>
<td>. . . plus arrangement (whether inductive or deductive) is psychologically effective.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Language</td>
<td>Clear.</td>
<td>. . . plus appropriate to material and context.</td>
<td>. . . plus vivid and articulate.</td>
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<td>Delivery</td>
<td>Does not distract.</td>
<td>. . . plus reinforces the verbal content.</td>
<td>. . . plus displays genuine passion.</td>
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## Course Schedule: Mondays

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Assignments Due</th>
<th>Lecture/Discussion</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sept. 8</td>
<td><strong>Reading packet:</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>- “‘Preaching and the Life of the Church,’” Arthurs.</td>
<td>Intro to the course.</td>
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<td><strong>Intro to the course.</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Review exegetical idea, outlining, and relevance.</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Sign up for “Explain How to . . .” (audience)</strong></td>
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<td>Sept. 15</td>
<td><strong>Writing:</strong> Reflection paper #1.</td>
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<td><strong>Reading packet:</strong></td>
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<td>- “Applying God’s Word in a Secular Culture,” Quicke.</td>
<td>Audience analysis and application.</td>
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<td>- “Stop Preaching in the Dark,” Willhite.</td>
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<td><strong>Sign up for “Explain How to . . .” (audience)</strong></td>
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<td>Sept. 22</td>
<td><strong>Speaking:</strong> Explain how to become a Christian.</td>
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<td>Sept. 29</td>
<td><strong>Book:</strong> Sunukjian, <em>Invitation to Biblical Preaching</em>.</td>
<td>Adapting to Listeners.</td>
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<td><strong>Reading packet:</strong></td>
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<td>- “Recovering a Sense of Orality,” McClellan.</td>
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<td>- “But I Did Such Good Exposition,” Lovejoy.</td>
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<td>Oct. 6</td>
<td><strong>Reading packet:</strong></td>
<td>Preaching With Variety</td>
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<td>- “Weakened by Powerpoint,” Sunukjian.</td>
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<td>- “Strengthened by Powerpoint,” White.</td>
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<td><strong>Sign up for Sermon 1 (topic, text, and date).</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct. 20</td>
<td><strong>Writing Due:</strong> Outline for Sermon 1. See instructions and sample in syllabus.</td>
<td>Workshop: Outlining and Relevance</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Book:</strong> Gibson, ed. <em>Making a Difference</em>.</td>
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<td>Oct. 27</td>
<td><strong>Speaking:</strong> Sermon 1</td>
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<td>Date</td>
<td>Event</td>
<td>Details</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov. 3</td>
<td>Speaking: Sermon 1</td>
<td>Sign up for Sermon 2 (topic and text)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov. 17</td>
<td>No class, but consult with Dr. Arthurs on topic and text(s) for Sermon 2 by 12:15 p.m.</td>
<td>Book: Chapell, <em>Christ-Centered Preaching</em>.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov. 24</td>
<td>Speaking: Sermon 2</td>
<td>Analysis: Meet with your discussion group by 5:00 p.m. today.</td>
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<td>Dec. 1</td>
<td>Speaking: Sermon 2</td>
<td>Writing: Reflection paper #2.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Reading Report</td>
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SAMPLE: OUTLINE FOR WORKSHOP
“How to Live For God”
1 Thessalonians 4:1-8

Subject: How did Paul instruct the Thessalonians to live in order to please God?
Complement: By being sexually sanctified.

Potential Introduction
Analogy of the first time I dressed my infant son, Daniel, in a sleeper. My wife gave me a “command” without equipping me to carry out the command. Today God will give us a command and also equip us to carry out the command. But first of all . . .

Trans: Why should we avoid sexual immorality? The first reason is because . . .

I. The Lord gives us four reasons we should avoid sexual immorality.

A. The Lord is an Avenger (6b).

[Relevance: this concept needs to be explained: Refers to the future (Judgment Day) and to the present. E.g. troubled conscience, misery of living as a hypocrite, broken relationships (parents, church folk, spouse), disease.]

B. We are called to holiness, not impurity (7).

C. To reject this instruction is to reject God (8a).

[Relevance: This point needs to be proved. First explain “reject” = “set aside,” “treat lightly, as of no value.” The one who treats this command lightly treats God lightly since it is His command. Prove with analogy:

If you tell the player on your volleyball team (if you’re the coach) that we’re going to use play #3, but they do their own thing, you take it personally. Power struggle.

If the actor constantly disregards the director’s instructions, the director will eventually take it personally.]

D. He is giving us his Holy Spirit (8b).

[Relevance: Explanation—we have the power, the enablement. The deepest part of us is pure. Ground the imperative in the indicative.]

Trans: Why should we avoid sexual immorality? Because (review four reasons). Now for the next question: How? How can we tap into the power that makes this a realistic and reasonable commandment, not just the cranky whim of a spoil sport? How can we avoid, dodge, flee, run from sexual sin? How does God equip us to carry out his command?

II. We can avoid sexual immorality through three means:

A. Learn to control your body in holiness and honor (4).

[Relevance: what does this look like in everyday life? Illustrate with analogies: piano, diet, racquetball--learning to serve]. Come down the ladder of abstraction to talk about controlling:

- Feet—flee (Joseph).
- Eyes—avert (Job).
- Hands, ears.
• Develop standards and safeguards. Radio stations, movies, hotel rooms.
• Ask God to change your heart. Matthew 15:19.

B. Do not be like the heathen (5).

[Relevance: what does this look like in everyday life? Use examples: School, work. Media—Titanic (example of passionate lust), TV shows.]

[Relevance: (Implied in the text) Do be like mentors who walk with God. Use examples: Pastors, friends.]

C. Do not take advantage of your brother/sister (6a).

[Relevance: explain “take advantage. Use examples of flattery, peer pressure, tempting dress or behavior.]

Potential Conclusion:

End with hope. Refer to hymn sung earlier.

If you have sinned against God, but now wish to live for him, what does your future look like? Repent, turn from sin to God, and receive the grace of God—the free, full, mercy of God that washes like a mountain river and sweeps through your heart like a mountain wind. Start anew. There may be consequences for your immorality (all of us have those), but with God you’re clean. You will remember the words of the song we sang earlier:

How can I gain from His reward? I cannot give an answer.
But this I know with all my heart: His death has paid my ransom.

Benediction: 1 Thess. 5:23-24
Attendance and Reading Report
PR 602
Arthurs

Name: ____________________________

Box: _________

Number of classes attended: _______

Did you watch yourself on video for each sermon? _______

Did you turn in two Reflection Papers? _______

Did you meet with your group to discuss the sermons on CD Rom? _______

Sunukjian, *Invitation to Biblical Preaching*.
• Number of pages possible: 368
• Number of pages you read by due date: _______

Gibson, ed. *Making a Difference in Preaching*.
• Number of pages possible: 154
• Number of pages you read by due date: _______

Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*.
• Number of pages possible: 386
• Number of pages you read by due date: _______

Reading packet.
• Number of pages possible: 82 (8 ½ x 11 sheets)
• Number of pages read by due dates: _______
Audience Adaptation Worksheet
For use with “Explain How to Become a Christian” assignment
PR 602, Arthurs

1. Briefly summarize the demographics of your audience:
   - Age
   - Gender
   - Race
   - Nationality
   - Educational level
   - Socio-economic standing
   - Special interests/membership

2. Estimate audience’s knowledge of your topic with a mark on the line. Describe briefly on other side.
   - None
   - Partial
   - Expert

3. Estimate audience attitude toward your topic and mark on the line. Describe briefly on other side.
   - Hostile
   - Neutral
   - Favorable

4. Estimate audience attitude toward you and mark on the line. Describe briefly on other side.
   - Hostile
   - Neutral
   - Favorable

5. Spiritual condition of audience (circle terms that apply). Explain briefly on other side.
   - Conscious unbeliever (e.g. genuine skeptic, member of cult, etc.)
   - Nominal Christian (e.g. can be churched or unchurched, assent to basic doctrine, but no living relationship with God).
   - Awakened sinner (e.g. seeker, convicted but not repented, not understanding gospel).
   - Apostate (e.g. repudiated faith without regret).
   - New believer (e.g. may have doubts, misunderstanding, questions, overzealous).
   - Immature believer (e.g. not growing, undisciplined, contentious, proud)
   - Mature believer (e.g. progressing in faith, able to teach others, responsive to Word)

6. Communication strategies and adaptations you will make. Describe briefly on other side.
Is there evidence of audience adaptation?

______________________________________________________________________________

Is the teaching clear?

______________________________________________________________________________

Does the delivery reinforce the content?

______________________________________________________________________________
Evaluation Sheet: Sermon 1
PR 602, Arthurs

Name: ________________________________     Time: ______
Box: _____________         Grade: ______

Intro
Gain Attention
Surface Need
Introduce Idea

Exegesis

Relevance
Adapted to the audience
Application

Central Idea
Clear
Repeated

Arrangement
Clear/logical
Transitions

Support Material

Conclusion
Summarize
Reinforce

Language and Delivery
Evaluation Sheet: Sermon 2  
PR 602, Arthurs

Name: ________________________________     Time: ______  
Box: _____________         Grade: ______

Intro  
Gain Attention  
Surface Need  
Introduce Idea

______________________________________________________________________________

Exegesis

______________________________________________________________________________

Relevance

Adapted to the audience  
Application

______________________________________________________________________________

Central Idea  
Clear  
Repeated

______________________________________________________________________________

Arrangement  
Clear/logical  
Transitions

______________________________________________________________________________

Support Material, Preaching with Variety

______________________________________________________________________________

Conclusion  
Summarize  
Reinforce

______________________________________________________________________________

Language and Delivery