

PR 500 INTRODUCTION TO PREACHING

Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary

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Instructor:

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Course Description:

Preaching the Gospel of Jesus is a daunting challenge, particularly in the Hispanic and Caribbean context, which is multilingual and multiethnic, postmodern and postcolonial. This reality shapes preaching, as the main means the Church employs to interpret and communicate the Gospel.

This course will seek to offer the student an introduction to the practice of preparing and delivering expository sermons, taking into consideration our particular context. It is our objective to provide the student the tools and processes necessary to prepare biblical, clear, edifying, and even creative sermons. Learning experiences include reading, discussion, lecture, exegesis, practice preaching, watching sermons, and self-critique.

Course Objectives:

The aim of the course is empowering students to develop their full potential as preachers. At the end of the course the students should be able to:

1. **Present** a coherent theology of preaching.
2. **Understand** preaching as a communicative process.
3. **Employ** contextual hermeneutic perspectives in the preparation of their sermons.
4. **Design** effective sermons.
5. **Evaluate** the impact of the postmodern and postcolonial condition on contemporary homiletics.
6. **Present** effectively their sermons.

Course Textbooks: (All available through Amazon's Kindle Store)

Robinson, Haddon. **Biblical Preaching: The Development and Delivery of Expository Messages.** Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2014.
ASIN: B00IGDKNI2

Stanley, Andy. **Communicating for a Change: Seven Keys to irresistible Communication.** Colorado Springs, CO: Multnomah Press, 2006..
ASIN: B001E2WM54

Required Readings: (To be distributed by the professor)

Jiménez, Pablo A. "And the Word Became Flesh: Homiletics and Evangelical Preaching in Hispanic Churches", In *The Hispanic Evangelical Church in the United States: History, Ministry and Challenges*, edited by Samuel Pagán. Elk Grove, CA: National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference, 2016, pp. 299-326.

_____. "If You Just Close Your Eyes: Postcolonial Perspectives on Preaching from the Caribbean" *Homiletic* Vol. 40 No. 1, (2016): 22-28.

_____. "Toward a Postcolonial Homiletic: Justo L. González Contribution to Homiletics." *In Hispanic Christian Thought At the Dawn of the 21st Century: Apuntes in Honor of Justo L. González*, edited by Alvin Padilla, Roberto Goizueta & Eldin Villafañe. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2006, pp. 159-167, 305-306.

Suggested Readings:

Graves, Mike & David J. Schlafer. *What is the Shape of Narrative Preaching? Essays in Honor of Eugene Lowry.* St. Louis, Abingdon Press, 2008. ASIN: B001NEKAF2

Lowry, Eugene. *The Homiletical Plot: The Sermon as Narrative Art Form.* Westminster John Knox Press, 1980. ASIN: B00SLHGXEQ

Kuck, David W. *Preaching in the Caribbean: Building up a People for Mission.* Kingston" BY the author, 2007. (No ISBN)

Stott, John R. W. *Between Two Worlds: The Art of Preaching in the Twentieth Century.* Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1982. ASIN: B001Y35JB2

Mitchell, Henry H. *Celebration and Experience in Black Preaching.* Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2010 (Revised edition). ASIN: B0052EFW66

- Schlafer, David J. *What Makes this Day Different?: Preaching Grace on Special Occasions*. Cambridge: Cowley Publications, 1998. ASIN: B009D16VH8
- Thomas, Frank. *They Never Like to Quit Praisin' God: The Role of Celebration in Preaching*. Cleveland: Pilgrim Press/United Church Press, 1997.
ASIN: B00DD045UA
- Travis, Sarah. *Decolonizing Preaching: The Pulpit as Postcolonial Space*. Eugene, OR: Cascade Press, 2014.
- Willhite, Keith & Scott M. Gibson. *The Big Idea of Biblical Preaching: Connecting the Bible to People*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 1998.
ASIN: B009M6T1YY
- Wiseman, Karyn L. *I Refuse to Preach a Boring Sermon: Engaging the 21st Century Listener*. Cleveland, OH: The Pilgrim Press, 2013. ISBN-10: 0829819568

Assignments:

All written assignments should be typed, double-spaced and written in a 12-point font such as Arial, Helvetica or New Times Roman. Formats: Send your paper in MS Word (extension doc or docx) or Adobe Acrobat (extension pdf). All assignments will have a maximum value of 100 points. No late work will be accepted. If you experience illness or emergency, you must request an extension, sending an email to the instructor. Your email on this issue must be an official extension petition.

1. **Class preparation and participation:** All students must read the textbooks before the first day of class. Each student must also participate in class discussions.
Although no paper is required, the instructor will grant a grade for this assignment.
2. **Biblical Interpretation:** Study **ONE** biblical text from the list included below, following the key questions listed in **THE THREE STEPS SYSTEM** (enclosed as an appendix). Your paper should have no less than three and no more than five pages.
DUE: SEPTEMBER 8.
 - **Genesis 32:22-32 (Narrative)**
 - **Psalms 130 (Poetic Literature)**
 - **Isaiah 5 (Prophetic Literature)**
 - **Matthew 13.1-9 (Parable)**
 - **Mark 1.21-28 (Miracle Story)**

- Luke 5:1-11 (Discipleship Story)
 - Romans 5.1-11 (Epistle)
 - Revelation 4 (Apocalyptic text)
3. **Sermon Outline:** Write a sermon outline or manuscript based on the text studied for Assignment #2 and using the system taught in class. **DUE: SEPTEMBER 9.**
 4. **Final Exam:** Take an exam on the sermon theory taught in class. **DUE: SEPTEMBER 10.**
 5. **Sermon Manuscript:** Develop your outline into a full sermon manuscript of no less than 1,000 and no more than 2,000 words, using the system taught in class. **DUE: SEPTEMBER 15.**

Grading Scale:*

Grade	Percentage	Points
A	100 - 95 %	500-475
A-	94 - 90 %	474-450
B+	89 - 87 %	449-435
B	86 - 84 %	434-420
B-	83 - 80 %	419-400
C+	79 - 77 %	399-385
C	76 - 74%	384-370
C-	73 - 70%	369-350
D+	69 - 67 %	349-335
D	66 - 64 %	334-320
F	63 - 0 %	319-0

* Master degree level students may request to be graded on a "Pass/Fail" grading basis, using the link below (this option is not available for Diploma students):
<http://www.gordonconwell.edu/hmp/current/documents/PassFailPetition.pdf>

Topics:

Topic	Required Readings	Suggested Readings
Basic Definitions	Robinson, Chapter 1	

Topic	Required Readings	Suggested Readings
Theology for Preaching	Jiménez,	Davis, Kuck, Stott
Communication Principles	Stanley, Chapters 1 to 10	Wiseman
Biblical Interpretation for Preaching	Robinson, Chapters 2 to 4	Willhite & Gibson
Sermon Rudiments	Robinson, Chapter 5	
Sermon Outline	Robinson, Chapters 6 to 9	
Basic Sermon Forms		Graves, Lowry, Schlafer
Sermon Delivery	Robinson, Chapter 10, Stanley, Chapters 11 to 17	Mitchell, Thomas
Evaluation & Planning		

The Three-Step System

Biblical Interpretation for Preaching

I. Point of contact: First Step in the Preparation of Biblical Sermons

Begin with prayer. Ask God to make you sensible to the Word and to speak through your sermon to the congregation. Keep a devotional atmosphere throughout the exercise.

Read the text several times. Work primarily with the translation that has become part of your own being. Compare it with other translations for the purpose of comparing and contrasting emphasis, movement, and structure. Do not use secondary sources for this exercise.

Read the text once more, aloud and with feeling. Only then, proceed to answer the following questions.

1. What are the questions that this text sparks?
2. What feelings surface as you read the text?
3. What memories does the text cause you to recall?
4. Imagine that you are immersed in the world of the text:
 - What do you see?
 - What do you hear?
 - What do you smell?
 - What do you touch?
 - What do you taste?
 - How does it feel to be in that world?
5. Has your perception of the text changed? How?
6. What is this text about? List the topics and ideas suggested by the text.

II. Explanation: Second Step in the Preparation of Biblical Sermons

After a direct interaction with the text, turn to secondary sources such as commentaries, dictionaries, and other homiletic aids. Insofar as possible, identify the historical context in which the text is found. Then, proceed to answer the following questions.

1. What was the situation of the community to whom the text was written?

2. Identify the form, the function and the literary structure of the text.
3. Note the key words of the text. How are they used in this particular document?
4. Have you found answers to your questions about the text?
5. What are the major theological claims of the text?
6. Enumerate the topics suggested by the text.

III. Interpretation: Third Step in the Preparation of Biblical Sermons

Move once again to the present, exploring the message of the text for the contemporary Church. Make the hermeneutic movement self-consciously and critically. Then, proceed to answer the following questions.

1. Establish a correlation between your social location and the social location of the text. What realities function in our world in the same way as in the world of the text?
 - Identify the elements of salvation. Identify the sources of conflict.
 - Who is the powerful? Who are powerless?
 - In order to interpret the text appropriately, with whom do we should identify with in the text?
2. Does the function of the text in its ancient setting suggest a possible function for our sermon in our setting?
3. Does the form or the literary structure of the text suggest a given design for the sermon?
4. Does the text suggest any guidelines for contemporary pastoral action?
5. What are the “good news” for the congregation? For the Church at large? For the world?
6. Enumerate the possible “sermons-in-a-sentence” suggested by the text. Pick one for your sermon and save the others for future sermons.

Sermon Worksheet

Name:

Course:

Sermon Rudiments

Title:

Text:

“Big” Idea or “Sermon-in-a-sentence”:

Area: (Choose only one)

Evangelism Faith Formation Pastoral Care Prophetic Challenge

Aim:

Logic: Inductive Deductive

Form: (Choose only one)

Textual-Expository Narrative Doctrinal-Thematic Special Event

Sermon Outline

Introduction (Connect with the audience)

Sermon Evaluation Form

Name of the preacher:

Title of the sermon:

Place & Occasion

Content

1. Summarize the sermon in a single, complete, indicative sentence. What was the sermon about?

2. Did you hear the Gospel—the “good news” about God in Christ—in this sermon? Please explain.

3. What did the sermon say about God and about God’s relationship with humanity? Do you support such statements?

4. Did the preacher interpreted the text in a responsible way? Please explain.

5. What will you remember from this sermon?

6. What do you suggest for improving the content of this sermon?

Delivery		
Items	Yes	No
1. The preacher was heard properly.		
2. The preacher showed variety in the tone and volume of the voice.		
3. The preacher had good eye contact.		
4. The preacher maintained good posture.		
5. The preacher had good presence in the pulpit.		
6. Gestures and movements were coordinated with the sermon's content.		
7. The preacher had a lively visual expression.		
8. The preacher showed enthusiasm and conviction.		
9. The preacher conveyed a positive attitude.		
10. The preacher sustained my attention.		
11. Suggest one thing that the preacher could do to improve the delivery of the sermon.		
Other comments		
Name of the evaluator:		
Signature:		