

CL650 THE CHRISTIAN LEADER AS PREACHER AND COMMUNICATOR

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.

Beyond drafting sermon outlines and delivering moving sermons, pastoral preaching is a key vehicle for leading the church. Therefore, a Christian leader must learn how to cast vision through preaching, helping the congregation to comprehend its mission and to engage the future with purpose and hope.

This course offers an introduction to the practice of preparing and delivering expository sermons, in dialogue with pertinent leadership principles. It is our objective to provide the necessary tools and processes to prepare biblical, edifying, and creative sermons. The course will also explore the use of social media in preaching, particularly through podcasting and video streaming. Learning experiences include reading, discussion, lecture, exegesis, practice preaching, watching sermons, and self-critique.

Course Objectives

The aim of the course is to empower students in leading the congregation through preaching. 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. **Articulate** the connection between preaching and leadership.
4. **Employ** contextual hermeneutic perspectives in the preparation of their sermons.
5. **Design** effective sermons.
6. **Evaluate** the impact of the postmodern and postcolonial condition on contemporary homiletics.
7. **Present** effectively their sermons.
8. **Use** social media to share their sermons.

Course Textbooks (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

*Choose one of the books listed in the "For Further Reading" section to read and write a book review.

Required Readings (To be distributed)

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.

For Further Reading

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

Methodology

This intensive course will develop in **three** stages:

- **Phase 1:** Readings and assignments to be fulfilled before the on-site intensive meeting.
- **Phase 2:** On-site intensive meeting
- **Phase 3:** Assignments to be fulfilled immediately after the on-site intensive meeting.

Phase 1:

1. **Read** Robinson's **Biblical Preaching** in its entirety.
2. **Read** Stanley's **Communicating for a Change** in its entirety.
3. **Read** an additional book from the "For Further Reading" list & **write** a book report using the guidelines for Assignment #2.

4. **Study** at home one of the Biblical texts from the suggested list for Assignment #3.

Phase 2:

1. **Active participation** in the on-site intensive course (Assignment #1)
2. **Finish** the Biblical Interpretation Assignment using the Three-Steps methodology (Assignment #3, see enclosed handout).
3. **Present** in-class a summary of your interpretation of the text (Assignment #3).
4. **Write** a sermon outline or manuscript (Assignment #4)
5. **Preach** an in-class practice sermon (Assignment #4)

Phase 3:

1. **Answer** an online Final Test (Assignment #5)

Assignments

1. **Assignment #1 - Class preparation and participation:** All students must read the textbooks before the first day of class. Students must also participate in class discussions. **Although no paper is required, the Final Exam will include, at least, 10 questions about each of these books.**
2. **Assignment #2 - Book Review:** Choose any book from the list titled "For Further Reading". Read the book and write a review answering the following questions.
DUE: First day of classes.
 - What is the **main topic** of the book?
 - What is the **purpose or aim** of the book?
 - Which is the **main thesis** of the book?
 - Which is the **main outline** of the book? How do the authors develop their ideas? Please answer this question *without summarizing the book*.
 - Do you think that the main thesis of the book is **correct**? Explain your answer.
 - Which are the main biblical and theological **presuppositions** of the book?
 - Can you detect which authors, schools of thought, or theological **tendencies** have influenced the authors?
 - What is **your opinion** of the book? Does it reach its goals? Explain your answers.
3. **Assignment #3 - 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: Second day of classes.**

- **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)**
4. **Assignment #4 - Sermon Outline & Delivery:** Write a sermon outline or manuscript of no less than 1,000 and no more than 2,000 words based on the text studied for Assignment #2 and using the system taught in class. **Outline DUE: Third day of classes. Sermon DUE: Last day of classes.**
5. **Assignment #5 - Final Exam:** Take an exam on the sermon theory taught in class. **DUE: A week after the course ends.**

General Information:

1. All written assignments should be typed, double-spaced and written in a 12-point font such as Arial, Helvetica, or New Times Roman.
2. All papers must be original, citing the references according to the Turabian format. Students who copy, forge, or pay for term papers will be referred to the Judicial Committee for adjudication and may fail the course and even be suspended from the HMP.
3. **Formats:** Send your paper in MS Word (extension doc or docx) or Adobe Acrobat (extension pdf).
4. All assignments will have a maximum value of 100 points.
5. No late work will be accepted. If you experience illness or an emergency, you must request an extension, sending an email to the instructor. Your email on this issue must be an official extension petition and must be filed by 4 pm on the day of the deadline for written work.
6. The HMP does not accept a grade of "I" or Incomplete. Students requesting extensions will receive a grade of "EX", to be removed when the Instructor submits the final grade.
7. Students will receive an extension of no more than 90 days—counted from the first day of the course—to complete all coursework. Any papers or exams not submitted

within 90 days will be graded an automatic “F”, earning no points toward the final grade.

8. In case of medical emergency, the HMP office may grant a longer extension, up to a year from the first day of the course. Proper documentation of the medical emergency must be provided to the HMP office in a timely manner.

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
1. Basic Definitions	Robinson, Chapter 1	
2. Theology for Preaching	Jiménez Essays	Davis, Kuck, Stott
3. Communication Principles	Stanley, Chapters 1 to 10	Wiseman
4. Leadership Principles	Class notes	
5. Interpretation for Preaching	Robinson, Chapters 2 to 4	Willhite & Gibson
6. Sermon Rudiments	Robinson, Chapter 5	
7. The Basic Sermon Outline	Robinson, Chapters 6 to 9	
8. Basic Sermon Forms	Class notes	Graves, Lowry, Schlafer
9. Sermon Delivery	Robinson, Chapter 10, Stanley, Chapters 11 to 17	Mitchell, Thomas
10 Social Media, Podcasting and Video Streaming	Class notes	
11. Evaluation & Planning	Class notes	
12. Closing		

The Three-Step System

Biblical Interpretation for Preaching

By Pablo A. Jiménez

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. Number 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 should we 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. List the possible “sermons-in-a-sentence” suggested by the text. Pick one for your sermon and save the others for future sermons.