

School of Theology & Ministry

Seattle University
Seattle, Washington 98122

Spring Quarter, 2009

Course Information

STMA 550-Preaching the Word: Homiletics
Room: Hunthausen, 100
Meeting Day: Wednesdays
Meeting Time: 9:00-11:50 a.m.
Email: fwb@seattleu.edu

Instructor

Flora Wilson Bridges, Ph.D.
Office: Hunthausen, 214
Phone: 206 296-5337
Wednesdays: 1:30-3:30 p.m.
and by appointment

*Required Texts

Buttrick, David. *Homiletic Moves and Structures*. Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1987.
Childers, Jana. *Birthing the Sermon: Woman Preachers on the Creative Process*. St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2001.
Jones, Illion T. *Principles and Practice of Preaching: A Comprehensive Study of the Art of Sermon Construction*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1956.
LaRue, Cleophus James, Editor. *Power in the Pulpit: How America's Most Effective Black Preachers Prepare Their Sermons*. Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 2002.
*Various articles, sermons and videotapes will also be distributed or viewed during the quarter.

Recommended Texts

Brooks, Phillips. *Lectures on Preaching*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1969.
Buttrick, David. *Preaching the New and Now*. Louisville, KY: WJKP, 1998.
Callahan, Kennon L. *Preaching Grace: Possibilities for Growing Your Preaching and Touching People's Lives*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 1999.
Collier-Thomas, Betty. *Daughters of Thunder: Black Women Preachers and Their Sermons, 1850-1979*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 1998.
Craddock, Fred B. *Preaching*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1985.
Davis, Grady. *Design for Preaching*. Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1958.
Farmer, Herbert H. *The Servant of the Word*. Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1942.
Fichtner, Joseph. *To Stand and Speak for Christ*. New York, NY: Alba House, 1981.
Gonzalez, Justo and Catherine. *Liberation Preaching*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1981.
Grasso, Domenico. *Proclaiming God's Message*. Notre Dame, IN: Notre Dame University, 1965.
Lischer, Richard. *Theories of Preaching*. Durham, NC: Labyrinth Press, 1986.
McMickle, Marvin Andrew. *Preaching to the Black Middle Class: Words of Challenge, Words of Hope*. King of Prussia, PA: Judson Press, 2000.
Ritschl, Dietrich. *A Theology of Proclamation*. Richmond, VA: John Knox, 1960.
Robinson, Haddon W. *Biblical Preaching: The Development and Delivery of Expository Messages*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2001.
Taylor, Barbara Brown. *Bread of Angels*. Cambridge, MA: Cowley Publications, 1997.
Warren, Mervyn A. *King Came Preaching: The Pulpit Power of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.* Downers Grove, IL: Varsity Press, 2001.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Attendance & Class Participation: Students are required to attend all classes. Please note that much that determines your grade is dependent upon mutual discussion and interaction. Grades will be lowered one level (for example, from an “A” to an “A-”) for each absence with the exception of a medical emergency. Please do not ask the instructor for an excused absence. You are required to demonstrate effective group skills by actively contributing to group discussions and by using constructive peer feedback that includes honesty, critical challenge, and mutual respect. In order to engage in this feedback, you must be present.

SERMONS

A General Statement on Sermon Preparation: The nature of this class is essentially experiential or based in the production and delivery of sermons. Sermons are to reflect in both their development and delivery a high level of preparation. Haddon Robinson emphasizes:

How do we evaluate the assortment of approaches or explain the apparent effectiveness of sermons that appear to have behind them no method at all? More to the point, how do we derive procedures from all of this that others may follow?

As Robinson points out, evaluation of the effectiveness of sermons is difficult; but in this class we will evaluate whether sermons are effective. Clear, relevant preaching does not take place Sunday after Sunday by either intuition or accident. Good preachers have methods for their sermonizing. It should be kept in mind throughout the quarter that the effectiveness of your sermons will be evaluated according to their insight, imagination, biblical literacy, and spiritual sensitivity as they are revealed in clear methods of preparation through the strenuous work of thinking. You are encouraged to bring your own mind, spirit, and experience coupled with what you are learning through the course content. Both are equally important.

Preached Sermon: 45% of Grade: Over the course of the quarter, each student will preach one sermon (12-17 minutes in length) in class. We will videotape these sermons. You are to bring in a one page, single-spaced self-reflection on how your sermon could have been more effective after viewing the videotape.

Written Sermon: 20% of Grade: This assignment has two parts that are equally important:

- 1) Using the small essays from *Power in the Pulpit* as your model, write three pages on *how* or by what process you wrote your sermon.
- 2) Write a manuscript sermon. This sermon will be different from the sermon indicated above. The written length of this sermon should equal no more than 20 minutes of oral presentation. Please read or deliver this sermon out loud and time it accordingly.

Written Sermon Evaluations: 25% of Grade: Students are to write a critical review of each sermon that is presented in class by their peers. This feedback will provide preachers with the crucial opportunity for development and growth in preaching. You need not worry about difficult reviews. The value of such feedback is that it is designed to help the preacher become more aware of her or his preaching strengths as well as areas and methods that need improvement. These written evaluations are due the class session after the student preaches.

Sermon Videotape of Other Preachers: 10% of Grade: Each student is required to bring to class one videotape of a sermon someone else has preached that you feel is either poorly or expertly delivered. You will be expected to lead the class in a critically reflective discussion about what you believe are the strengths and/or weaknesses of this sermon. This sermon should be no more than about fifteen minutes in length.

Course Description

The overall goal of this course is to educate students to develop and hone the necessary skills and resources to answer and then address the question, how does one prepare and deliver an effective sermon? In this learning process students should develop greater pastoral sensitivity and theological acumen that will lead to greater efficacy in the whole cycle of communication that is sermon preparation and preaching. Two basic assumptions (as stated by Fred Craddock) underlie this course:

- 1) Learning to preach is difficult, and the difficulty is not greatly relieved by having a skilled instructor or by the discovery that one seems to be a naturally 'good talker.'
- 2) While learning to preach is difficult, it can be done.

Course Objectives

- 1) Help students first to *listen to find their own voice*. This listening will include hearing (again in the analysis of Fred Craddock): the voice of God who calls one to preach, the voice of one's emerging abilities, the voices of one's background (for example, family, friends, and other significant people throughout the fabric of one's life journey), the voice of one's past, the voices of teachers in the disciplines of biblical studies, theology, church history, sociology of religion, spirituality, etc., the voice of one's faith community, the voices of God's people, and, finally, the voice of all of God's world that is crying out in the struggle for liberation and transformation.
- 2) Inspire students to use this listening to empower them to *speak a God word* or preach in the light of what they hear through skilled, passionate, and compassionate sermon delivery.
- 3) Enable students to participate in *benevolent and critical theological reflection* on the sermons of their peers in a way that will richly and sensitively help them to become better preachers and communicators.
- 4) Foster in students a basic respect, gratitude, and humility for the complexity of the preaching task in the humble knowledge that ultimately it is God who must fashion human words into the Word if preaching is to be effective.

Grading Criteria

Class Participation/Group Skills: You are graded on: 1) Use of effective communication skills in class. 2) Punctual and regular attendance. 3) Active participation in the healthy development of the class that includes talking in class about the course material and displaying attitudes of honesty and mutual respect.

Scholastic Performance: You are graded on: 1) Demonstrated ability to think in a rigorously critical and theological manner about the course material. 2) Demonstrated ability to speak and write in a way that shows increased homiletical competence and ability.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

CLASS ONE: Wednesday, April 1

Course Introduction:

1. Opening Prayer
2. Self Introductions
3. Distribution and Discussion of Course Syllabus

Examples of Preaching:

- a. Manuscript sermon
- b. Video sermon

CLASS BREAK

Group Discussion:

- a. Who am I as a preacher?
- b. Who and what informs my preaching?

CLASS TWO: Wednesday, April 8

Reading Assignment: *Principles and Practice of Preaching*

Class Discussion of Jones

Review of Videotapes of Other Preachers: Meredith, Susan, Linda

CLASS THREE: Wednesday, April 15

Reading Assignment: *Homiletic Moves and Structures*

Class Discussion of Buttrick

Review of Videotapes of Other Preachers: Nancy, Karen, Kay

CLASS FOUR: Wednesday, April 22

Reading Assignment: *Power in the Pulpit*

Class Discussion of LaRue

Review of Videotapes of Other Preachers: Margaret, Carmen, Sharon

CLASS FIVE: Wednesday, April 29

Reading Assignment: *Birth of the Sermon*

Class Discussion of Childers

Review of Videotapes of Other Preachers: Brett, Kathryn, Eric

CLASS SIX: Wednesday, May 6

Review of Videotapes of Other Preachers: Jessie, Sian, Rebecca
Discussion of Manuscript Sermons
ALL MANUSCRIPT SERMONS DUE

CLASS SEVEN: Wednesday, May 13

In Class Preachers: Meredith, Susan, Linda, Nancy, Karen

CLASS EIGHT: Wednesday, May 20

In Class Preachers: Kay, Margaret, Carmen, Sharon, Brett

CLASS NINE: Wednesday, May 27

In Class Preachers: Kathryn, Eric, Jessie, Sian, Rebecca
Course Evaluations