

Preaching the Word: Advanced - STMA 551

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Winter, 2011 -Tuesdays, 9:00 am – 11:50 am - HUNT 110/Chapel

SCOPE: This course explores the theology of preaching in the Christian tradition and investigates the ways that different theological perspectives intersect with the preaching event. It gives primary place and focus to preaching as a *liturgical* event and seeks to integrate Word and Sacrament as a unitive proclamation of God’s saving acts in Jesus. In addition, the relationship between shared literary texts and the community’s reception, the cultural and social contexts of communities (their “social location”), and the role of the preacher as “one who proclaims” in the name of Christ and the Church will help shape our discussion. Opportunities for shared preparation and actual preaching integrate the practical ministry of the preacher with the theological investigation. In order to have Hunt 110, we need to have three classes in St. Ignatius Chapel (noted below) on Jan. 11, Feb. 8, and Mar. 1)

TEXTS:

1. ***When God Is Silent***, Barbara Brown Taylor (Cambridge: Cowley Publications, 1998) These are the 1997 Lyman Beecher Lectures in Preaching.
2. ***Fulfilled in Your Hearing: the Homily in the Sunday Assembly***, the National Conference of Catholic Bishops (Washington, D.C.: USCC, 1982) This Roman Catholic document is a wonderful, practical, and theologically rich piece.
3. ***The Holy Preaching: the Sacramentality of the Word in the Liturgical Assembly***, Paul Janowiak S.J. (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 2000) I am interested in your critique of my work on the dynamism of the Word as a liturgical event, with insights from contemporary sacramental theology and literary/critical theory on the community of readers that helps to shape the text.
4. ***Saved from Silence: Finding Women’s Voice in Preaching***, Mary Donovan Turner and Mary Lin Hudson (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 1999) A contemporary Protestant and feminist look at the particular role of “voice” and “hearing each other into speech” in women preachers.
5. ***The Renewed Homiletic***, O. Wesley Allen Jr., Ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2010)
6. **Various Readings on Angel** - Passages from selected texts from both the sacramental and dialectical traditions. Authors include Mary Catherine Hilker O.P., Karl Barth, William Hill, and other authors.

STRUCTURE of the COURSE: This is an advanced course and its structure will be seminar-like in nature with a strong praxis component, i.e. we will **read carefully and closely** the week’s offerings and prepare to engage each other, our colleagues in ministry and study, in fruitful discussion on the content of the texts and the relationship to our life and ministry as preachers of the Word.

In addition, we will regularly engage in **shared exegesis and preparation**. We will use the Lectionary readings from **the Revised Common Lectionary at** <http://lectionary.library.vanderbilt.edu/> or from the **Roman Lectionary** (roughly the same as the Common Lectionary) at <http://www.usccb.org/nab/today.shtml>. The differences are minor. Some traditions may not use these, but this provides a source of common texts to prepare together. Exegesis involves preparing everything before class, just as if you were shaping an actual homily, **including secondary texts**. We will hear the Word together and then begin talking and opening up the scriptures, their images and theological interpretation,

and the issues in communities that bear upon these texts and the sacramental celebrations and seasonal feasts in which they are embedded. The following week, these will be the scriptural texts for the preaching.

Finally, we will **preach the Word** to our colleagues and, if possible, in outside worship settings. We will try as much as possible to support and encourage one another by **critiquing our preaching and visiting one another** in any possible preaching situations in which we are currently ministering. This provides us ways to give feedback that is meaningful and life-giving. As we well know, preaching is a vulnerable act; we need to find ways together that will sustain us in our ministry for years to come. **The sign-up sheet is at the end of the syllabus, so we will all know who is going to break open the Word for us.**

ONGOING LITERARY PROJECT: I am asking that you think about **a classic piece of literature that you would like to accompany you during this quarter.** Think BIG and COSMIC, e.g. The Russians, some Dickens or de Balzac or Proust, García-Márquez or Allende, Dante or The Iliad, The Odyssey, or The Epic of Gilgamesh; perhaps a collection of Greek myths or plays; classics from other cultural traditions, even some contemporary novels may help (Mercier's *Night Train to Lisbon*, McCann's *Let the Great World Spin*, Mantel's *Wolf Hall*). Books like these require that we surrender ourselves to a world, often unfamiliar and foreign, interpreted through the words and eyes of another person. Enter into that world and allow the characters and situations to give you a new lens on "the way things are." Preachers who are so sure that they know what is going on in people's lives often miss the complex and circuitous mystery unfolding there. The purpose is **to crawl into another world and hang around there for awhile!** In addition, this is an exercise in reading literature that every serious preacher must develop if s/he wants to plumb the poetic depths of proclamatory speech.

EVALUATION: Seminars require **participation**; there is no way around this. I will evaluate how you enter into the discussion, showing that you have **read the texts** and **prepared** the scriptures for the day. Grading "preaching" is a tougher nut to crack. We will evaluate one another, and I will take those evaluations into consideration. In addition, I would like you to prepare **two short writing pieces** for me; **the due dates will be discussed.** The assignments are:

- In **five** pages, outline the **theological foundation** for your preaching and how you imagine your life as a preacher shaped by this theological vision. (I suggest Feb. 15)
- In **five** pages, address **a human question that surfaces** in your reading of the classic, e.g. suffering, fidelity, commitment, doubt, or faith. How might the theology you embrace address these important human questions? (I suggest Mar. 11)

CLASS #1 –Jan. 4: **Guest Professor: Fr. James Eblen**, Professor Emeritus and Hebrew Scriptures Professor and skilled preacher. Introductions; syllabus; reflections on the preaching life and the questions they raise for you theologically and ministerially; some opening reflections "Famine" and "Silence" in *When God Is Silent* (you may wish to read these two essays beforehand); I will offer you some poems to prepare for oral recitation. **With Fr. Eblen, go through preaching dates and sign up; there are 15 places.**

CLASS #2 –Jan. 11: **Class will be held in St. Ignatius Chapel - The Sacramental Imagination: Preaching as a Liturgical Act** - Discuss: *Fulfilled in Your Hearing*, Hilker's "The

Sacramental Imagination: Grace Enfleshed in Word and Action” and “Preaching as the Art of Naming Grace,” Pastro’s “What Does the Sacred Preaching Say to Preachers?” (all on Angel) and Allen’s “Introduction: The Pillars of the New Homiletic,” in *The Renewed Homiletic*; Exegize and prepare the scriptures for Jan. 23, the **3rd Sunday in Ordinary Time (after the Epiphany – RCL) <Year ‘A’>** (Is. 8.23-9.3-1; Ps.27;1Cor. 1.10-13, 17; Mt. 4.12-23)

3 Preachers assigned for these readings: _____;

CLASS #3 –Jan. 18: The Dialectical Imagination: Where God is Subject, Object, and Middle Term – Discuss: Hilbert’s “The Dialectical Imagination: the Power of the Word,” Karl Barth, “The Strange New World Within the Bible” and “The Need and Promise of Christian Preaching,” Martin Luther, from *A Brief Instruction . . .*, John Calvin, on the internal testimony of the Spirit in *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, and John Wesley, “Letter on Preaching Christ” (Angel). **Preaching and evaluation**

CLASS#4 –Jan. 25: Preaching as Kerygmatic Re-interpretation – Discuss: William Hill O.P., “Preaching and the Search for God” (3 chapters in *Search for the Absent God*), W.E.B. DuBois, from *The Souls of Black Folk*, Harry Emerson Fosdick, “Personal Counseling and Preaching,” and Rudolf Bultmann, “Is Exegesis Without Presuppositions Possible?” (Angel); and Ch. 2 (Craddock)and Ch.4 (Mitchell) in *The Renewed Homiletic*. Exegize and prepare for Feb. 6, the **5th Sunday in Ordinary Time (after the Epiphany – RCL)** (Is.58.7-10; Ps. 112; 1Cor. 2.1-5; Mt.5.13-16) *Assign 2 2 Preachers assigned for these readings: _____*

_____ ; plus one Preacher for a 5-7 min. **Funeral Homily**

_____.

CLASS #5 –Feb. 1: A Renewal of Sacramentality and Proclamation – Discuss: Part I of *The Holy Preaching*, Pastro’s “Jesus Christ the Sacramental Word of the God of the Poor” (Angel), and Ch. 1 (Rice) in *The Renewed Homiletic*. **Preaching and Evaluation; update on novel reading** (What is going on in you? How are you settling in to a rhythm of reading? Are you entering the world of the text?)

CLASS #6 –Feb. 8: Class will be held in St. Ignatius Chapel - Liturgical Proclamation of Sacred Texts: a Complex Interchange of Grace – Discuss Part II of *The Holy Preaching*; and (optional) Stephen Greenblatt, “Resonance and Wonder” (Angel) - Exegize and prepare for the readings for Feb. 20, the **7th Sunday in Ordinary Time (after the Epiphany – RCL)** (Lv. 19.1-2, 17-18; Ps103; 1 Cor 3:16-23; Mt. 5.38-48 . *3 Preachers assigned for these readings:*

CLASS #7 –Feb. 15: The Preacher’s Voice as a Metaphor in the Preaching Act – Discuss Chapters 1-4 in *Saved from Silence*; and Ch. 4 (Lowry) and Ch. 4 (Buttrick) in *The Renewed Homiletic*.

Preaching and Evaluation; First Five Page Paper due on Theological Foundation

CLASS #8 –Feb. 22: The Silenced Voices: Women’s Experience as a Metaphor for a Redemptive Word – Discuss Chapters 5-8, plus Coda, and Eslinger’s “Afterward” in *The Renewed Homiletic* – Exegize and prepare for Mar. 6, the **9th Sunday in Ordinary Time (after the Epiphany – RCL)** (Dt. 11.18, 26-28, 32; Ps31;Rm. 3.21-25, 28; Mt. 7.21-27 and for Mar. 9 **Ash Wednesday** (Joel 2.12-18; Ps. 51; 2Cor. 5.20-6.2; Mt. 6.1-6, 16-18). *3 Preachers assigned for these readings: _____*

CLASS #9 –Mar. 1: Class will be held in St. Ignatius Chapel -**Metaphorical Speaking and the “YES-NO-YES” of Biblical Preaching** – Discuss Kathleen Norris, “Jeremiah and Revelation” in *Communion: Contemporary Writers Reveal the Bible in Their Lives* (pp. 281-297); Gail Ramshaw, “The Paradox of ‘Sacred Speech’” (pp. 167-177) and Gordon W. Lathrop, “A Re-birth of Images: On the Use of the Bible in the Liturgy” (pp. 215-224) in *Primary Sources of Liturgical Theology*, Dwight W. Vogel, ed. (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 2000); Barbara Brown Taylor, “The Lost Language of Salvation,” in *Speaking of Sin* (pp. 9-39) (Angel); Barbara Brown Taylor’s last chapter, “Restraint.” **Preaching and Evaluation; final 2 Preachers:** for the **1st Sunday of Lent** (Gn. 2.7-9; Ps51; Rm. 5.12-19; Mt. 4.1-11) _____ and a Preacher for a **Wedding** _____.

Class #10 –Mar. 8: Odds and Ends; Preaching about “Moral Values”; Come prepared to state how you would engage issues of war, abortion, the death penalty, family values and gay marriage in a way that respects the scriptures and the tradition. **Preaching and Evaluation**

Thanks for your willingness to engage in this important ministerial preparation together. I would like to add that I may add timely articles that surface during the time of our class meetings. These will be optional, but helpful updates. **Final Paper on a Human Question that might be addressed through the theological foundation you are building due no later than Mar. 11.**

Summary of Preachers

Three Preachers for January 18:

Three Preachers for February 1:

Three Preachers for February 15:

Three Preachers for March 1:

Three Preachers for March 8:
