

**School of Theology and Ministry**  
Seattle University  
901 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Seattle, Washington 98122  
**Spring Quarter, 2008**

**Course Information**

STMA 550 Preaching the Word: Homiletics  
Room: Hunthausen, 100  
Meeting Day: Mondays  
Meeting Time: 9:00-11:50 a.m.

**Instructor**

Flora Wilson Bridges, Ph.D.  
Office: Hunthausen, 214  
Phone: 206-296-5337  
Tuesdays, 2:00-4:30 p.m.  
and by appointment  
Email: [fwb@seattleu.edu](mailto:fwb@seattleu.edu)

**\*Required Texts:**

Craddock, Fred B. *Preaching*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1985.  
LaRue, Cleophus J. Editor. *Power in the Pulpit: How America's Most Effective Black Preachers Prepare Their Sermons*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002.  
Robinson, Haddon W. *Biblical Preaching: The Development and Delivery of Expository Messages*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2001.  
Taylor, Barbara Brown. *The Preaching Life*. Boston, MA: Cowley Publications, 1993.  
\*Various articles, sermons and videotapes will be shown or distributed for review 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.  
Davis, H. 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.  
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. *The Heart of Black Preaching*. Louisville, KY: John Knox, 2000.  
Lischer, Richard. *A Theology of Preaching: The Dynamics of the Gospel*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1981.  
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.

## Course Requirements

***Attendance and Class Participation. 25% of Grade.*** Students are required to attend all classes and one site visit. Please note that much that determines the grade is dependent upon mutual discussion and interaction. Students are required to demonstrate effective group skills by actively contributing to group discussions and using constructive peer feedback that includes honesty, challenge, and mutual respect. In order to engage in constructive peer feedback, you must be present! Grades will be lowered by one-half letter grade per absence from class. Please do not ask the instructor to excuse absences.

## SERMONS

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

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 indicates, the evaluation of the effectiveness of sermons is difficult; but in this class we will evaluate. Clear, relevant preaching does not take place Sunday after Sunday by either intuition or accident. Good preachers have effective methods for their sermonizing. It should be kept in mind throughout the quarter that the effectiveness of the sermons will be evaluated according to their insight, imagination, biblical exegesis, theological soundness, and spiritual acumen as it is 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 the course content. Both are equally important in our time together.

***Preached Sermons. 40% of Grade.*** Over the course of the quarter, each student will preach one sermon (or a total of two sermons) in each of the following settings:

- 1) One sermon will be preached in class by each student;
- 2) One additional sermon will be preached at an actual preaching location (for example, in a church, at a conference, at a funeral home, etc.). The student must videotape this sermon and bring the tape to class for discussion and review.

Each sermon should be approximately twelve to twenty minutes in duration and accompanied by a well-structured sermon outline that will be given to every one in the class at the time of the delivery or viewing of the sermon.

***Site Visit. 5% of Grade.*** All students are to be present together on site for one additional preaching occasion. This occasion will be selected in class.

**Written Sermon. 10% of Grade.** Write one manuscript sermon. This sermon will be handed in twice during the quarter—first as a working draft in the middle of the quarter and finally upon its revision and completion at the end of the quarter. The written length of this sermon should equal no more than twenty minutes of oral presentation. Please read your sermon out loud and time it accordingly.

**Written Sermon Reviews. 15% 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 the crucial opportunity for growth and improvement in preaching. Students 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.

**Additional Sermon Videotape. 5% of Grade.** Each student is required to bring to class one videotape of a sermon someone else has preached that they feel is either poorly or expertly delivered. The student will be expected to explain what they believe are the strengths and/or weaknesses of these sermons.

## **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 biblical and theological insight 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 B. Craddock in his book *Preaching*) 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 naturally a “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 own emerging abilities; the voices of one’s background (for example: family, friends, and other significant people throughout the fabric of one’s life); the voice of one’s past; the voices of teachers in the disciplines of theology, church history, biblical studies, 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 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 help to fashion human words into the Word if preaching is to be effective.

### **Grading Criteria**

***Class participation/Group skills.*** Students 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.*** Students 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 that they have increased homilectical competence and ability.

## **COURSE ASSIGNMENTS**

### **Monday, March 31, 2008: Session 1**

Course Introduction:

1. Self introductions and distribution of syllabus
2. Review of assignments

Two Examples of Effective Preaching:

Sermons:

- a. Videotape: "I Have a Dream", Martin Luther King, Jr.
- b. Manuscript: "The Sound of the Genuine", Howard Thurman
- c. Some characteristics of effective preaching

### **CLASS BREAK**

1. Small group discussion: What am I as a preacher? Who and what informs my preaching?
2. Large group discussion on findings

### **Monday, April 7, 2008: Session 2**

1. Reading assignment: *Preaching* by Fred B. Craddock
2. Class discussion of Craddock
3. Review 3 videotapes of other preachers (Sheila, Marguerite, John G.)

**Monday, April 14, 2008: Session 3**

1. Reading assignment: *Biblical Preaching* by Haddon W. Robinson
2. Class discussion of Robinson
3. Review 3 videotapes of other preachers (Bruce, Jill, John L.)

**Monday April 21, 2008: Session 4**

1. Reading Assignment: *Power in the Pulpit* edited by Cleophus J. LaRue
2. Class discussion of LaRue
3. Review 2 videotapes of other preachers (Eliana, Susan)
4. Discuss class site visit

**Monday, April 28, 2008: Session 5**

1. Reading Assignment: *The Preaching Life* by Barbara Brown Taylor
2. Class discussion of Taylor
3. Review 3 videotapes of other preachers (Sophia, Lilyan, Brenda)
4. Hand in 1<sup>st</sup> draft of manuscript sermon

**Monday, May 5, 2008: Session 6**

1. 2 students preach in class (Sheila, Marguerite)
2. 2 students present videotapes of their own sermons (Lilyan, Brenda)

**Monday, May 12, 2008: Session 7**

1. 2 students preach in class (John G., Bruce)
2. 2 students present videotapes of their own sermons (Susan, Sophia)

**Monday, May 19, 2008: Session 8**

1. 3 students preach in class (Jill, John L., Eliana)
2. 3 students present videotapes of their own sermons (Jill, John L., Eliana)

**Monday, May 26, 2008 (No class: Memorial Day Observed)**

**Monday, June 2, 2008: Session 9**

1. 2 students preach in class (Susan, Sophia)
2. 2 students present videotapes of their own sermons (John G., Bruce)

**Monday, June 9, 2008: Session 10**

1. 2 students preach in class (Lilyan, Brenda)
2. 2 students present videotapes of their own sermons (Sheila, Marguerite)
3. Hand in final draft of manuscript sermon
4. Evaluations

