During the decades of African/African American enslavement, biblical preaching was often used to justify and maintain the institution of slavery. African American prophetic preaching evolved from the experiences of enslaved Africans who chose to believe in a God of liberation – A God who loved them for who they were and who created them to be a free people.

Black rhetorical traditions will be delineated and identified through study of African American preachers and sermons from the nineteenth through twenty-first centuries. Unique characteristics such as call and response, celebration in preaching, and black hermeneutics will be explored. Each student will be required to preach one sermon using African American preaching traditions as a model.

**By the end of the course (course objectives):**
1) Students will understand how African American Preaching evolved out of the West-African North American slave trade
2) Students will learn and develop black hermeneutics
3) Students will understand the unique characteristics of black preaching such as call and response and celebration.
4) Students will understand and be able to employ rhetorical skills used in black preaching
5) Students will understand the relationship between preaching and culture
6) Students will learn to deliver a sermon in black preaching traditions

**Required Text/Readings:**


All other readings will be posted on LPTS Preach.

**Class Meeting Dates**
- Tuesday, September 9
- Tuesday, October 7
- Tuesday, November 4
- Tuesday, December 2
African American Context
Black preaching evolves out of lived black experiences. Since some students in this course may not have “lived black experiences,” all students are to choose two stories in Henry Louis Gates’ book America Behind the Color Line to provide context for their exegesis. This means that students take the people from the stories with them when they go to the text to do exegesis.

Students must choose two of the following stories to serve as contexts for their preaching:

- The Irvins
- The Pearsons
- Lenora Fulani
- Sergeant Major Kenneth Wilcox
- James H. Bolden
- Deirde and Jerald Wolff
- Clark Clemons
- Elaine Rhodes
- Lura and Chris
- Tammie Cathery
- Kalais Chiron Hunt
- Dr. Emiel Hamberlin
- Jason Smith
- Timuel D. Black

Assignments
1. Students are required to attend every class session and actively participate in class discussions. (12%)
2. Each student will place in their discussion group on LPTS Preach at least one discussion question for each reading assigned during the semester by 6 p.m. the day before the assignment is due. Questions can represent issues or concerns raised by the author that need further clarification or issues and concerns not addressed by the author but which were raised by the reading in the mind of the reader. (18%)
4. Each student will submit one 7-10 page exegetical paper on a scripture passage listed on this syllabus. The passages chosen should be the same passages used to develop the sermons. Guidelines for the exegetical papers are provided by Then the Whisper Put on Flesh by Brian Blount. (30%)
5. Each student will also preach one 15-20 minute sermon. Along with the sermon, each student must submit a transcript or outline of the sermon along with details about the preaching context, occasion, and hearers. (40%)
6. Students are required to bring a video tape (VHS) on the days they preach to record sermons.

Scripture Passages for Exegetical Papers
Each student must choose one of the following scripture passages for exegetical papers. Texts chosen for exegesis are the same text students will use for their sermons.

- Genesis 37:26-36 • (Joseph)
- Exodus 14:21-31 • (Crossing the Red Sea)
- Exodus 32:10 • (The Golden Calf)
- 2 Samuel 11:1-27 • (David and Bathsheba)
- 1 Kings 3:16-28 • (Solomon and the Baby)
- Ezekiel 37:1-14 • (Valley of Dry Bones)
- Luke 15:11-32 • (Prodigal Son)
- Luke 19:1-10 • (Jesus and Zaccheus)
- John 6:1-14 • (Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand)
- Acts 9:1-18 • (Conversion of Saul)
- Acts 16:25-40 • (Paul and Silas in Jail)
- Ephesians 6:10-20 • (The Whole Armor of God)
September 9 – Class Meeting

Introduction to the course and students

What Is Black Preaching?
“The Search for Distinctiveness in Black Preaching” in

Why Black Preaching?

September 16

“Introduction: The Power of Black Women Preachers” and “Julia Foote” in

“Rising Above Adversity: The Struggle to Preach.” in

Review guidelines for exegetical paper

September 23

African American Biblical Hermeneutics

“The Talking Book” 1-20
“The Poison Book” 21-40
“The Good Book” 41-48
“Exile” 49-82

*All above readings in*


“The ‘Joseph Story’ as Slave Narrative: On Genesis and Exodus as Prototypes for Early Black Anglophone Writing.” in


Sermon Review
September 30

African American Biblical Hermeneutics and the Civil Rights Movement


Cheryl J. Sanders “African Americans, the Bible, and Spiritual Formation.” pp. 588-602.

All readings in

Sermon Review

October 7 – Class Meeting

Sermon: “God Uses Weak People” 49-58

“Encountering the Text” 59-66
Sermon: “Encounters with Jesus from Dying to Life” 67-73

All readings in

October 14
Exegetical Papers Due

October 21
“The Basic Dynamics of the African American Sermon” 114-127

Celebration
“Celebrative Design and Emotional Process” 1-18
“A Theology of Celebrative Preaching” 19-30
“The Dynamics of Celebration” 31-50

Sermon Review
October 28
Thomas. “Designing for Celebration” pp. 51-83
“Guidelines for Celebration” pp. 84-106

Sermon Review

November 4 – Class Meeting
Mitchell. Celebration “Genres: General Guidelines” 79-85
“The Narrative” 87-100

Sermon Review

November 11
LaRue
“The Character Sketch” 101-107
“The Group Study” 109-115
“Metaphors, Similes, and Analogues” 117-124
“The Inevitable Combinations” 125-136

Sermon Review

November 18
Project Presentations

November 25
Project Presentations

December 2 – Class Meeting
Project Presentations
Bibliography


