

## *Basic Preaching*

Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary

Fall 2021

Online/Zoom

Tuesday 6:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

**Instructor: Debra J. Mumford**

Email: dmumford@lpts.edu

Office: 101 B Nelson Hall

**Small Group Facilitators:**

Toni Hawkins - dr.tonihawkins@gmail.com

Annettra Jones Stephens - annettra.stephens@inumc.org

Carol Harston - ccharston@gmail.com

This course provides tools, approaches and strategies for the development and delivery of relevant and engaging preaching. In plenary sessions, students will be provided tools to accomplish the weekly tasks of preaching including: exegesis, hermeneutics, theological and cultural analysis, sermon structuring/formation and delivery/performance. In practicums students will learn to give and receive constructive, critical feedback on sermon structuring/formation and delivery to improve their sermon performance/delivery.

*Note: Biblical exegesis is a prerequisite for this course.*

By the end of the course (course objectives):

1. Students will be able to interpret scripture critically and imaginatively (SLO 1)
2. Students will develop an understanding of multiple theological perspectives (SLO 6)
3. Students will give evidence that they are conscious of multiple forms of oppression and injustice (SLO 4)
4. Students will be able to preach (SLO 5)
5. Students will be able to talk intelligently and articulately to others about what they believe SLO 6)
6. Students will learn several different sermon forms/structures (SLO 5)
7. Students will learn oral communication skills for effective sermon delivery (SLO 5)

### **Required Readings:**

Brooks, Jennifer Benjamin. *Good News Preaching*. Cleveland, Ohio: Pilgrim Press, 2009.

Childers, Jana, and Clayton Schmit, eds. 2008. *Performance in Preaching: Bringing the Sermon to Life*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.

Edwards, J. Kent. 2005. *Effective First-Person Biblical Preaching: The Steps from Text to Narrative Sermon*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

Thompson, Lisa. *Ingenuity: Preaching as an Outsider*, Nashville, Tennessee, Abingdon Press, 2018.

**Note: All assignments must be submitted through Canvas by midnight of their due date**

### **Course Requirements:**

1. Students are required to attend every class session and actively participate in class discussions.
2. Each student will submit two 5-7page exegetical papers on a **scripture passage chosen from group assigned texts** (one in the Hebrew bible **due October 5<sup>th</sup>** and one in the New Testament **due**

- November 9th**). The passages chosen must be the same passages used to develop the sermons. Guidelines for the exegetical papers are included with this syllabus. **(20%)**
3. Each student will develop and present in class a story based on an in-class workshop on constructing story. **Submit stories in Canvas. Due October 5<sup>th</sup> (10%)**
  4. Students will write a **sermon self-evaluation** on their Hebrew Bible and New Testament sermons by watching the video of their sermon presentation. Details are on syllabus. The self-evaluations are **due on November 9<sup>th</sup> and December 7<sup>th</sup>. (20%)**
  5. Each student will submit a manuscript of their sermons to instructor on **October 19<sup>th</sup>** (Hebrew Bible) and **November 16<sup>th</sup>** (New Testament). Students should **also** submit copies of manuscripts to their preaching facilitator. **(5%)**
  6. **Story/Sermon review** is an in-class discussion of a sermon that all students must watch prior to class. One week before the class discussions, the instructor will provide a link to a sermon that can be accessed on-line. Students are to watch the entire story or sermon and complete an evaluation form (both the content and delivery portions) in preparation for the discussion. Students must complete details for every aspect of the sermon or story. **10% Due dates 9/28 and 10/12.**
  7. Each student will preach two 12-15 minute sermons. Each student **must submit a manuscript or outline of the sermon along with details about the preaching context, occasion, and hearers.** Students can present their sermons in person or submit a video of their sermon by **(35%)**. Midnight on the day before their sermons are due.

## Fall Semester 2021 Class Schedule

|              |  |
|--------------|--|
| September 14 | <p><b>Introduction to the course and students</b><br/>Defining preaching</p> <p><b>Preaching Traditions</b><br/>Thompson, Lisa, <i>Preaching as an Outsider</i>, Nashville, Tennessee, Abingdon Press, 2018, Chapters 1 &amp; 2.</p> <p><b>“The Sermon is Good News”</b><br/>Brooks, Gennifer Benjamin. <i>Good News Preaching</i>. Cleveland, Ohio: Pilgrim Press, 2009. 1-23</p>   |
| September 21 | <p><b>“Biblical Exegesis for Preaching”</b><br/>Long, Thomas G. <i>The Witness of Preaching</i>. 2nd ed. Louisville, KY: Westminster/J. Knox Press, 2005. 69-98</p> <p><b><u>Sermon Structures</u></b><br/>Four Pages of the Sermon (Paul Scott Wilson)<br/>Wilson, Paul Scott. <i>The Four Pages of the Sermon : A Guide to Biblical Preaching</i>. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1999, 9-29.</p> <p>Homiletical Loop (Eugene Lowry)<br/>Lowry, Eugene L. <i>The Sermon : Dancing the Edge of Mystery</i>. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1997, 54-89.</p> |

- September 28 Childers, Jana, and Clayton Schmit, eds. 2008. *Performance in Preaching: Bringing the Sermon to Life*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, Chapter 1 & 7.
- Watch Todd Farley's reading and video**  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ndKW0tnZtig>
- In-class workshop: How to write a first-person story**  
**Chapters 4, 5, & 6**  
 Edwards, J. Kent. 2005. *Effective First-Person Biblical Preaching: The Steps from Text to Narrative Sermon*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.  
 Story Review
- October 5 Exegetical papers due  
 Scripture Reading  
 Stories Due in Class
- October 12 **Introductions**  
 Wilson, Paul Scott. *The Four Pages of the Sermon : A Guide to Biblical Preaching* Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1999. Chapter 3.
- Conclusions**  
 Thomas, Frank A. *They Like to Never Quit Praisin' God: The Role of Celebration in Preaching*. Cleveland, OH: United Church Press, 2013. Chapter 6.
- Womanist Vision - Theology/Eschatology**  
 Mumford, Debra J. *Envisioning the Reign of God: Preaching for Tomorrow*. Valley Forge: Judson Press, 2019, Chapter 8.
- October 19 Research and Study Week  
 Sermon manuscripts due
- October 26 Sermon Presentations
- November 2 Sermon Presentations
- November 9 Sermon Feedback Conversations **(with small group facilitators)**  
**Sermon Self-evaluations Due**  
**Exegetical papers due**
- November 16 **Personal Story in Preaching**  
 "Personal Illustrations" 141-143  
 Buttrick, David. *Homiletic: Moves and Structures*. Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1987).

“What Not to Say (and What to Say) About Yourself, Chapter 6

**Prophetic Preaching**

“Handicappism” 15-37, “Ageism” 38-61

Smith, Christine. *Preaching as Weeping, Confession, and Resistance: Responses to Radical Evil*. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992.

**Sermon Manuscripts Due**

|             |   |
|-------------|---|
| November 23 | Sermon Presentations  |
| November 30 | Sermon Presentations  |
| December 7  | NT Sermon Self-evaluations due<br>Did you reach your preaching goals?<br>Review of preaching topics requested by students |

# Sermon Self-Evaluation (10%)

(Due Tuesday, November 9<sup>th</sup> )

- Watch the video of your Hebrew Bible sermon from Basic Preaching class
- Use the same sermon evaluation form that was used to evaluate your sermon, to evaluate yourself (complete every section of the form)

**In addition, write a 1-2 page single-spaced narrative that responds to the following questions:**

- What did you like most about your sermon?
- What did you like least about your sermon?
- If you were to preach this sermon again, what would you change and why?
- What difference would changing aspects of the sermon make to the delivery and/or reception of the message?
  - Possible changes can include (but are not limited to):
    - Make more eye contact, be more passionate, use more hand and/or body movement, structure sermon different, use more/fewer illustrations, use an outline versus a manuscript (or vice versa), vary rate of speech/volume/tone of voice more, use more/less exegetical material.

Though feedback you received about your sermon will be helpful in this, it is important for you to learn to critically reflect upon your own sermons.

# Good Story Checklist

*Good story means something worth telling that the world wants to hear.<sup>1</sup>*

| Storytelling Element  | Present?<br>Yes or No |
|---|-----------------------|
| <b>Plot</b><br>A series of events and character actions that relate to the central conflict.  |                       |
| <b>Character</b><br>A person, or sometimes even an animal, who takes part in the action.<br><br>Or sum of a person's values often revealed in choices made under pressure.  |                       |
| <b>Setting</b><br>The time and place in which the story happens. Has four dimensions:   |                       |
| <b>Period</b> – a story's place in time   |                       |
| <b>Location</b> – a story's place in space  |                       |
| <b>Duration</b> – a story's length through time   |                       |
| <b>Level of conflict</b> – a story's position on the hierarchy of human struggles   |                       |
| <b>Conflict</b><br>The conflict is a struggle between two people or things in a short story. The main character is usually on one side of the central conflict. On the other side, the main character may struggle against another important character, against the forces of nature, against society, or even against something inside himself or herself (feelings, emotions, illness). |                       |
| <b>Inner conflict</b><br>Conflicts within the character herself or himself that arise from her or his own nature such as mind, body, and emotion.   |                       |
| <b>Personal conflict</b><br>Conflicts within personal relationships such as parent/child, teacher/student, among family, friends, spouses or lovers.  |                       |
| <b>Extra-personal conflict</b><br>Sources of antagonism outside of the personal. Includes conflict with social institutions, individuals, government, church, corporations, cops, bosses, customers, doctors, etc.  |                       |
| <b>Resolution</b><br>The solution to the problem is the way the action is resolved.   |                       |

<sup>1</sup> Robert McKee, *Story, Structure, Style, and Principles of Screenwriting* (New York, NY: ReganBooks, 1997). Most of the definitions included here are from this text.

# Storytelling Feedback Evaluation (10%) (Due October 5th)

|                  |           |      |      |      |
|------------------|-----------|------|------|------|
| Plot             | Excellent | Good | Fair | Poor |
| Characterization | Excellent | Good | Fair | Poor |
| Setting          | Excellent | Good | Fair | Poor |
| Conflict         | Excellent | Good | Fair | Poor |
| Sequence         | Excellent | Good | Fair | Poor |
| Resolution       | Excellent | Good | Fair | Poor |

Provide more details about how he/she used some or all of the elements above:

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Did story follow Lowry's Homiletical Plot?      Yes      No

What are the strengths of the story?

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How can story be improved?

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How well did she/he use her/his body (Eye Contact, Facial Expressions, Movement around space, Rate of Speech, Emphasis, Phrasing)

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Were the introduction and ending of the story effective? Why or why not?

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Other Comments:

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## Guidelines for the Exegetical Papers (20%)

(Due October 5<sup>th</sup> and November 9<sup>th</sup>)

Each student must submit two 5-7page exegetical paper on one of text options offered (see small group assignment sheet). **These papers are due on October 5<sup>th</sup> (Hebrew bible) and November 9<sup>th</sup> (New Testament).** Students will select text from options provided by instructor. In *The Witness of Preaching*, Thomas Long presents a brief method of exegesis for preaching. Details about what is required in each section are contained in the reading. The reading is posted on the course website. The paper must include each of the following sections:

- I. Getting the Text in View
  - a. **Selecting the text (clearly indicate how you determined which text to use)**
    - i. Why did you select your particular text from among the texts you were given?
  - b. Consider where the text begins and ends (**indicate chapter and verses that will be used for the paper**)
  - c. Establish a reliable translation of the text (indicate which translation of the biblical text you will use, **compare at least three translations of the text to help make your decision or make your own translation. Indicate which translations you used for comparison and why you made your particular choice by citing examples from the three translations you compared**)
- II. Getting Introduced to the Text
  - a. Read the text for basic understanding (**look up important terms and phrases in bible dictionaries, bible encyclopedias, or lexicons**)
  - b. Place the text in its larger context (**determine what is happening in the text surrounding the passage selected for exegetical work and how the selected passage fits within it**)
- III. Attending to the Text
  - a. Listen attentively to the text
    - i. Ask penetrating questions of the text (write in paragraph form rather than list)
    - ii. Examine the text using number 3, 4, 5 or 6 of Long's proposed approaches)  
(section III of the paper should be at least 2 pages in length)
- IV. Testing What is Heard in the Text (**pursue at least two of the questions you raised in "Attending to the Text" using extra biblical sources and biblical commentaries**).
  - a. Explore question by the socio-historical/cultural, literary or theological (God in relation to humanity) character of the text
  - b. Explore text in commentaries. (ex. Do commentators address your questions? Are there issues or concerns raised by commentators you did not consider but find intriguing? Are there issues and concerns that commentators ignored that you need to explore elsewhere?)
  - c. "Moving Toward the Sermon:" State the claim of the text upon the hearers and preacher
- V. Sermon Theme
 

**Write a sermon theme that is twelve words or less**  
(should be a declarative statement)



## Sermon Content Evaluation

Preacher \_\_\_\_\_

**Reach/Trim**

Amount of biblical/exegetical material need to make the sermon understandable to hearers. Just enough exegetical material to illuminate the point/theme of the message. Interprets scripture critically and imaginatively. **List specifics of exegetical material.**

**Introduction** Arouses interest of the listeners and is related directly to the theme. **List specifics about the introduction.****Transitions**

Are transitions from one part of the sermon to the next smooth and easy for hearers to follow

- Introduction to the main body
- Between parts of the main body
- Main body to the conclusion. **List examples of transitions.**

**Theology**

Is the theology consistent throughout sermon and easy to understand? Does it reflect the views of faith community being addressed? Does preacher demonstrate understanding of multiple theological perspectives (historical and contemporary)? Is preacher able to clearly articulate what she/he believes? **List examples of theology.**

**Language Appropriateness**

Uses language that lay people can understand and is appropriate for the occasion. Sermon given color and life by descriptive speech. **List examples of appropriate language.**

**Application**

How is main theme of sermon relevant to lives of hearers? Use concrete examples of how the main theme of sermon makes a difference to the listeners. Does student demonstrate consciousness of multiple forms of oppression and injustice? **List concrete examples used in sermon.**

**Conclusion**

End sermon by issuing a challenge, posing questions, or encouraging celebration all related to the sermons central theme. **List specifics of how the sermon was concluded.**

**Theme**

There is one theme only and it is easy for listeners to follow. Write what you believe the theme is.

Sermon Delivery Evaluation

Preacher \_\_\_\_\_

Body (hands, feet, posture)

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Movemen

t in/around designated preaching space

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Eye Contact and Facial Expressions

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How did preacher use elements of speech (rate variance, use of pause, inflection, stress and arrangement of words)

**Circle One)**

Excellent      Good      Fair      Poor

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What was the general Sermon Flow/Structure? Did student demonstrate ability to reason, read, write and speak clearly (Expository, Homiletical Loop, Four Pages, etc.)

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Other Comments

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## Other Expectations

### Mutual Purpose

1. We need to understand about our conversations in class is that we have a mutual purpose. Our mutual purpose is open dialog about our understandings of God and how our various understandings of God shape the ways we all live and believe. We want to make sure all voices are heard rather than proving ourselves rights or someone else wrong.
2. Open dialog does not mean that people can say anything. We must never use language that disparages or demeans other people in any way.

### Mutual Respect

1. The key to true open dialog is Mutual Respect. If people perceive that others people do not respect them, the conversation disintegrates. Disrespect can be experienced through words and actions (body language). Signs that mutual respect has been violated include name-calling, loud speech/yelling, threats and negative body language (i.e. eye rolling, finger pointing, back turning, etc.).
2. Mutual respectful actions are difficult to perform when we don't respect people because of their opinions or behavior. To actually achieve a level of mutual respect with people whose opinions we view as radical or extreme, we should try to sympathize and even empathize with their points of view.
3. Mutual respect means we don't just appear to be listening to what someone is saying. We are actually listening.

### Written Assignments (points will be deducted to improper formatting)

1. All written assignments should be doubled-spaced.
2. All margins should be **1-inch (left, right, top, bottom)**.
3. All ideas and thoughts that are not original should be footnoted. Each footnote should begin a new line, indented the same as amount as paragraphs. Examples:

#### (Book)

Milmon F. Harrison, *Righteous Riches: The Word of Faith Movement in Contemporary African American Religion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 6.

#### (Journal Article)

<sup>2</sup>Audrey Smedley and Brian Smedley, "Race as Biology Is Fiction: Racism as a Social Problem Is Real." *American Psychologist* 60, no. 1 (2005): 17.

#### (Website)

<sup>3</sup>Oral Roberts: Celebrating the Life of Oral Roberts: The Man Who Obeyed God.  
<http://www.oralroberts.com/oralroberts/> (accessed March 22, 2010).

4. 12 point font.
5. Spell check all assignments before submitting.
6. Do not include a cover page or place papers in folders.
7. Staple pages of exegetical papers together.
8. Include a header or footer with student name, submission date, and page numbers on each page.

Questions are to be posted on LPTS Preach on the Sunday before the class in which the readings will be discussed. All other assignments are due at the beginning of class. **Assignments submitted late will be penalized twenty five percent per day.** The only exceptions for late work being penalized are in cases of medical emergency or death in the family. Preaching dates are pre-assigned. If there is a conflict with the preaching date, see instructor at least two weeks prior to preaching date. Except in the event of a catastrophe or emergency, failure to preach on the assigned date will result in a grade of “zero” for that sermon.

### **Inclusive Language (Adapted from LPTS Student Handbook)**

In accordance with seminary policy, students are to use inclusive language in class discussions and in written and oral communication by using language representative of the whole human community in respect to gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, age, and physical and intellectual capacities.

The way you phrase a message is often as important as the message itself. The practice of using inclusive language is something more than remembering a list of grammatical and stylistic "things to avoid" - it is a commitment thoughtfully to choose words that will make all people feel welcomed. We want to include not exclude. This is particularly important in preaching when we are communicating the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Why bother to avoid gender-specific language?

Traditionally, writers have used masculine identifiers and pronouns to address the idea of the "Universal Singular" - terms like "mankind," "men of faith" "Master" - and so on. For centuries, the patriarchal systems of many societies were reinforced by the use of the masculine pronoun referent "he." Because of the use of masculine language, women were, in the main, considered less than men or simply not considered at all. **If we believe that all people are equal in the eyes of God, our language must reflect this belief.** Our language shapes our culture-and to be systematically denied recognition has a rather disenfranchising effect on all people affected.

### **Plagiarism (Adapted from LPTS Student Handbook)**

Whether you summarize the ideas of others or use direct quotes, you must document the source. Where citations are required, they shall follow the form of the latest edition of Turabian/ Chicago Manual of Style.

In your research papers, you must document any information that is not “universally known” or that you did not know before your investigation of the subject. Any use of information without proper documentation is considered plagiarism. Plagiarism is not only unethical but also illegal. Ignorance is not an excuse.

**When a professor judges a student’s work to have been plagiarized, or to be subject to academic dishonesty, the following steps will be taken:**

1. The professor and the student will have a consultation in which the exercise in question and the issue of plagiarism or academic dishonesty will be discussed.
2. If it is clearly determined that a student has plagiarized or used dishonest academic methods in preparing an exercise, **the grade for that particular piece will be judged an “F” or numerical grade of zero. Any opportunity to redo the exercise is left to the discretion of the professor.**
3. The professor will promptly notify the Dean about the incident of plagiarism or academic dishonesty. Such notification will be confidential communication among the professor, the Dean, and the student.
4. **Two incidents of plagiarism or academic dishonesty by the same student will be grounds for dismissal from the Seminary.**
5. A Student wishing to appeal the judgment of plagiarism or academic dishonesty may use the established procedures for appealing grades.

Lowry, Eugene L. *The Sermon : Dancing the Edge of Mystery*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1997.

Mumford, Debra J. *Envisioning the Reign of God: Preaching for Tomorrow*. Valley Forge: Judson Press, 2019.