

Prophetic Preaching and Social Ethics
TH 403-3 or PW 316-3
Spring 2016
1:30 – 4:30 p.m.

Instructors:

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Course Description

This course wrestles with the moral quandaries that church leaders and preachers often face in contemporary social issues or conflicts. For example, what moral principles compete for our allegiance in social conflicts? What questions do we ask to clarify these conflicts, and can we answer them competently? What is the role of ethics methodology in preaching? How do we shape moral argument in preaching? What is the role of the pastor-prophet in our society? We will utilize ethical theory and methods of argument in exploring these questions. Ultimately, students will learn to identify and shape moral argument in their engagement with the public on difficult social issues. We will examine hermeneutical and theological approaches that can help interpret prophetic responsibility.

Course Objectives - by the end of the course:

1. Students will be able to interpret scripture critically and imaginatively (SLO1)
2. Students will develop an understanding of multiple theological perspectives, historical and contemporary (SLO3)
3. Students will learn and be able to apply ethical analysis to contemporary social and political situations/circumstances
4. Students will give evidence that they are conscious of multiple forms of oppression and injustice (SLO7)
5. Students will be able to talk intelligently and articulately to others about what they believe (SLO15)
6. Students will be able reason, write, read, and speak clearly (SLO16)

Course Requirements and Evaluation

1. Preparation and Participation (20%)

Daily attendance, reading and participation are mandatory. Your participation should be thoughtful and informed, reflecting your engagement of the materials under review.

2. Public Square Engagement (10%)

Submit a 1-2 page summary of a Louisville-based ethical issue or concern you will explore in this class. Summary will include:

- a. overview of issue or concern
- b. reason issue is important to you
- c. how issue speaks to biblical/Godly justice

3. Three Ethical Methodology papers (45%)

Students will apply ethical analysis to the Louisville-based concern that they identified above. Utilizing the document “*Three Tasks of Theological Ethics*,” students will write a 3-5 page paper that applies each task to the concern. Papers are required on the following due dates:

- a. Submit a 3-5 page paper that describes what is really going on. Due March 9th. (15%)
- b. Submit a 3-5 page paper that evaluates what should and should not be going on. Due April 6th. (15%)
- c. Submit a 3-5 page paper that provides guidelines or norms for becoming a more just city. Due April 20th. (15%)
- d. Integrate the three papers into a comprehensive opinion piece and submit the piece to a local and/or national newspaper, journal, magazine, or online public forum.

3. Prophetic Proclamation Project (25%)

Sermons consists of two parts: what to say and how to say it. This project enables students to develop the “what to say” or content part of a sermon.

Each student will make a 20 minute presentation in class. Students are required to share with the class:

- The theme for the sermon
- Summary of the aspects of the ethical issue they would like to include in a sermon
- Summary of chosen biblical text with explanation of why they chose that particular text
- Explanation of how the text relates to the chosen ethical issue
- Contemporary story or stories they will use in the sermon that will illuminate the theme
- Ideas to introduce and conclude the sermon
- Overview of context in which sermon will be preached

Texts

Andrews, Dale P., and Robert London Smith, Jr., editors. *Black Practical Theology*
Arno, C. Anneta, and Peter Rock. *Louisville Metro Health Equity Report*.

Louisville, KY: Center for Health Equity, 2014.

Burtness, James *Consequences: Morality, Ethics, and the Future*

Lischer, Richard *The Preacher King: Martin Luther King Jr. and the Word
That Moved America*

McMickle, Marvin. *Where Have All the Prophets Gone?* Cleveland, Ohio: Pilgrim
Press, 2006.

Resner Jr., Andre *Just Preaching: Prophetic Voices for Economic Justice*

Tisdale, Leonora Tubbs. *Prophetic Preaching: A Pastoral Approach*. Louisville,
KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2010.

“The West End” Louisville Magazine

<http://loumag.epubxp.com/i/111400-mar-2013/32>

“Race the Power of an Illusion”

February 10	Introduction to the course and students Defining preaching What is happening in Louisville? Why do good ethics? What is the use of prophetic proclamation? Chapters 1 and 2 Marvin McMickle. <i>Where Have All the Prophets Gone?</i>
February 17	Descriptive aspects of ethics Arno, C. Anneta, and Peter Rock. <i>Louisville Metro Health Equity Report</i> . Louisville, KY: Center for Health Equity, 2014. https://louisvilleky.gov/sites/default/files/health_and_wellness/che/health_equity_report/her2014_7_31_14.pdf
February 24	Descriptive aspects of ethics “The West End” Louisville Magazine http://loumag.epubxp.com/i/111400-mar-2013/32
March 2	Descriptive aspect of ethics Submit summary of Louisville-based ethical concern
March 9	analytical aspect of ethics Assignment Due: Descriptive Analysis Paper
March 16	Research and Study Week
March 23	Analytical aspect of ethics McMickle Chapters 3 & 4
March 30	Analytical aspects of ethics Tisdale Chapters 3 & 4
April 6	Normative aspects of ethics Assignment Due: Analytical Analysis Paper Introduction to Sermon Development
April 13	Normative aspects of ethics Andre Resner Chapters 4 & 6
April 20	Writing workshop Assignment Due: Normative Analysis Paper
April 27	Prophetic Proclamation Project Presentations
May 4	Prophetic Proclamation Project Presentations