

**Wesley Theological Seminary // COS 324 – Practice of Preaching
Brunswick UMC, Brunswick, ME**

Fall Term: September 8-9, October 13-14, 2017

Faculty: Rev. Nelson Cowan, ncowan@bu.edu

Course Description: This course focuses on the preaching of the gospel, stressing biblical exegesis, responsible sermon preparation, and embodiment. An evaluation of the pastor's preaching is the central concern.

Objectives: The GBHEM lists the following objectives for the course:

1. Articulate a theology of proclamation
2. Exegete a variety of biblical passages for preaching
3. Evaluate sermons for biblical integrity, theological soundness, internal logic, and delivery, and appropriate insights gained from the evaluation of their own sermons
4. Develop plans for ordering and delivering sermons in their congregational and communal context

Required Texts:

Fred Craddock. *Craddock on the Craft of Preaching* (Chalice, 2011)
Cleophus J. LaRue. *The Heart of Black Preaching* (WJK, 2000)
Barbara Brown Taylor. *The Preaching Life* (Cowley, 1993)

Reference Texts:

Paul Scott Wilson, Editor. *The New Interpreter's Handbook of Preaching*

Supplemental Texts:

Adam Hamilton. *Unleashing the Word* (Abingdon, 2009)
Joseph Webb. *Preaching Without Notes* (Abingdon, 2001)

Assignment Instructions:

As this is a hybrid course, the instruction and assignments will be divided into two parts: an online pre-class written assignment and an "in class" sermon. This pre-class written assignment is **due via Blackboard submission by 11:59pm ET, Friday, September 8, 2017**. If you have difficulty with Blackboard, please contact Blackboard support (see Technical Support below). Only with permission will emailed papers be accepted. The residency portion of the class includes students preaching one sermon (see details below). You should be prepared to preach at any time during the residency

time onsite.

Formatting & Writing Information:

- Do not use any scripture readings or texts twice in the following questions. All responses should be to different passages and texts from those used in previous answers.
- Read each question carefully, 2-3 times, before answering it.
- Do not copy the question itself at the top of your answer. However, begin each new answer with a significant space and the answer number in bold type.
- Please write in full sentences and paragraphs. Have a spelling and grammar-savvy person proofread your work before submitting it.
- All answers are to be submitted together. Do not submit answers in individual submissions.
- All answers should be typed double-spaced in Times New Roman 12-point font with one-inch margins on all sides of the page. The total will be 20 pages or fewer. Longer papers do not result in higher grades. (2 - 10 page papers)
- When citing sources, there is no required citation style, but consistency is key. If you do wish to use citation, please use parenthetical, that is cite sources within the text. You can use MLA formatting as a guide.

Pre-Class Assignment (50% of Total Grade):

1. Write a brief essay discussing your points of affirmation and/or distance with the Taylor text. Specifically, the book is assigned to help you as the student to connect the importance of your calling and role as a preacher. (3-4 page)
2. Using any single lectionary text appointed for use in **Year A** (*United Methodist Book of Worship*) and examine it in the following manner: List specific questions of the text. Bombard the passage with as many questions as you can in an effort to “open up” the text. Answering the questions is unimportant. What *is* important is the range, depth, and creativity of your questions. (2-3 pages)
3. Read Craddock’s chapter on “Preaching the Same Sermon Every Week.” Identify your scriptural “one distilled truth” out of which every one of your sermons comes (pg. 138) and reflect upon why this text is central to your life of faith and vocation as a preacher. (2 pages)

4. The appendix of LaRue's *The Heart of Black Preaching* includes a variety of sermons from Black preachers. Choose a sermon and discuss how this sermon exemplifies the heart of black preaching, incorporating the insights and "distinctives" from the LaRue text. To conclude your response, reflect for one page on what resonated with you personally from the sermon. (4-5 pages)
5. Write a sermon for one of the following situations, and address the situation theologically in the sermon itself. Indicate the text you have chosen, and the sermon's focus and function. (No more than 6 pages)
 - a. A stewardship appeal to a conflicted or troubled congregation.
 - b. A wedding for a couple with each having prior multiple marriages.
 - c. A funeral for a victim of suicide.

Residency / Onsite Assignment (50% of Total Grade):

You will preach one sermon in class (generally 12-15 minutes in length). This sermon is not to be submitted as a part of the above assignment and is not to be based on any biblical text used above. It should include important elements you have learned from your reading. You will be asked to give the instructor a statement of the sermon's Focus and Function immediately prior to preaching the sermon. (The Focus and Function will be the subject of the first lecture, which is prior to any student preaching). *NOTE: Many students find it helpful to write a sermon that will be delivered on a Sunday upon returning home from this course.*

You will also participate in offering feedback to other preaching students, as they will to you. Come with a teachable spirit!

Notes on Assignments:

1. All written assignments should be submitted in twelve-point font, Times New Roman, double-spaced with one-inch margins.
2. Grammar counts. Your paper is a reflection of your communication skills. In this course, you are learning not simply how to read and think critically, but to communicate your ideas to others in a clear and coherent manner.
3. Support your arguments with specific references to the text on which you are writing and to other texts that support your argument.
4. Avoid contractions for pre-class assignment. For example, words like "can't", "shouldn't", "won't", and "wasn't" should be avoided in your essays.

5. Italicize or underline words that are transliterated into English from other languages. For example, you might write, “*Theos* is the Greek word for ‘God,’ and we would translate the word *huios* as ‘son’”.
6. Use gender-inclusive language.
Consider the following examples:
 Incorrect: “Man is in need of God’s redemption.”
 Correct: “Humankind is in need of God’s redemption.”
 Incorrect: “When asked what he believes about the Bible, a Christian might offer any number of answers.”
 Correct: “When asked what he or she believes about the Bible, a Christian might offer any number of answers.”
7. Produce original work. Properly acknowledging your sources is important, but if the bulk of your paper consists of quoted material, this is still not original work. What is expected is your understanding of the ideas discussed in the reading and in lectures.
8. Proofread! Typos and spelling errors make a paper look as if the writer has put very little effort into it.

A Note on Plagiarism:

There are two kinds of plagiarism, both equally serious. First, there is plagiarism that occurs when a student uses someone else’s work word-for-word without placing the cited material in quotation marks. Even if you cite sources in a bibliography at the end of your paper, if you have used someone else’s words and have not properly placed those words in quotation marks (and cited the course appropriately in a footnote or parentheses), you have plagiarized.

Second, there is plagiarism that occurs when you use someone else’s ideas without acknowledging that you have done so. For example, if you find some really interesting information on the Internet, change the wording a bit, and put that information into your paper without properly acknowledging (in a footnote or parentheses) that you have used this source, you have plagiarized.

In both cases, the work that you have turned in is not your own, original work, but someone else’s work that you have copied. Please note that plagiarism *will not be tolerated in any Course of Study course.*

Technical Support:

Students are responsible for meeting course deadlines. If you experience technical problems, please exercise one or all of the following options:

-Blackboard Support at edtech@wesleyseminary.edu

-By phone at (202) 885-6091

Please let the professor know you are having technical issues as well so accommodation can be made.

In order to access the course Blackboard site students need to go to MyWesley webpage and use the student log on. Students are placed in Blackboard approximately two months before the start of the term.

Any computer capable of running a recently updated web browser should be sufficient to access our Blackboard site. However, bear in mind that processor speed, amount of RAM and Internet connection speed can greatly affect performance. Those using dial-up connections will experience longer page load times and much slower performance.

Course Topics:

The following serve as a thematic guide for our time in each of our classes.
(This outline may be subject to change at the discretion of the professor).

The lectures and in-class workshops will cover, in some form, the following topics:

- Focus & Function Statements
- Best Practices for Sermon Preparation
- The Four Page Model of Preaching
- Writing for the Ear and Writing for the Eye
- Word & Worship

-The Six Deadly Sins of Preaching

-Student Preaching & Peer Evaluation