

**Wesley Theological Seminary  
Course of Study Spring Term  
COS 324 – Practice of Preaching**

**Faculty:** Rev. Amy Banka, [Amy@HopewellUMC.org](mailto:Amy@HopewellUMC.org)

**Dates and Locations**

- March 13, 2020 (7:00-9:00 PM) to March 14, 2020 (9:00 AM-3:00 PM) at the Comfort Inn in Exton, PA
- April 18, 2020 (9:00 AM-3:00 PM) at West Chester UMC in West Chester, PA
- May 9, 2020 (9:00 AM-3:00 PM) at West Chester UMC in West Chester, PA

**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:

- Articulate a theology of proclamation
- Exegete a variety of biblical passages for preaching
- Evaluate sermons for biblical integrity, theological soundness, internal logic, and delivery
- Develop plans for ordering and delivering sermons in their congregational and communal context

**Required Texts:**

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

**Reference Texts:**

1. Leander E. Keck, Editor. *The New Interpreter's Bible Commentary* (Abingdon, 2003 or 2015)

**Supplemental Texts:**

1. Adam Hamilton. *Unleashing the Word* (Abingdon, 2009)

**Attendance:**

Students are expected to attend all classes in their entirety. Please make this class and schedule a priority on your calendar and in your ministry.

### Assignment Submissions:

As this is a hybrid course, the instruction and assignments will be divided into two parts: online pre-class written assignments and "in class" preaching and participation. **Pre-class written assignments will be due via Blackboard submission by 11:59pm ET on the dates specified below.** 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 student preaching (see details below) and instruction. You should be prepared to preach at any time during the residency time onsite.

### Assignment Schedule:

Pre-Class Written Assignments (50% of Total Grade):

The following assignments must be submitted to **Blackboard by 11:59pm ET on March 1, 2020.**

1. After reading Barbara Brown Taylor's The Preaching Life, write a **3-4 page essay**, highlighting places where the text resonates with *and* challenges you. Conclude with your understanding of how this book helps you to connect the importance of your calling and role as a preacher. (For this essay, please use the title heading "Taylor Essay.")
2. Choose one of the lectionary texts for March 29, 2020 (Ezekiel 37:1-14; Psalm 130; Romans 8:6-11; John 11:1-45) and in a **2-3-page essay**, examine it in the following manner. Find the places of awe and wonder. Bombard the passage with as many questions as you can in an effort to "open up" the text. Explore the relevance of the text to your cultural/ congregational setting. Demonstrate range, depth, and creativity in your essay. (For this essay, please use the title heading "Lectionary Exploration.")
3. Read Fred Craddock's chapter on "Preaching the Same Sermon Every Week" (pages 137-145). In a **2-page essay**, 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. (For this essay, please use the title heading "Craddock Essay.")
4. The appendix of LaRue's *The Heart of Black Preaching* includes a variety of sermons from Black preachers. Choose a sermon and in a **4-5-page essay**, 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. (For this essay, please use the title heading "LaRue Essay.")
5. Submit a sermon you have preached between January 5, 2020 and March 1, 2020. In an additional **3-4 page essay**, write a personal critique of that sermon. Give an honest evaluation of your preparation, writing, connection, and delivery. Discuss the sermon's strengths and growth

areas. Conclude by suggesting where you most need to grow as a preacher. (For this essay, please use the title heading "Sermon Evaluation.")

Mid-Class Written Assignments (15% of Total Grade):

The following assignments must be submitted to **Blackboard by 11:59pm ET on April 1, 2020.**

1. Write a sermon (no longer than **6 pages**) 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.
  - For a stewardship appeal to a conflicted/troubled congregation.
  - After an SPRC announcement of pastoral transition.
  - At a funeral for a victim of suicide.

Residency / Onsite Assignment (35% of Total Grade):

1. You will preach one original sermon in class (generally **12-15 minutes** in length). This sermon must be based on one of the following scripture texts:
  - Genesis 11:1-9
  - Isaiah 6:1-8
  - John 8:48-59
  - Ephesians 3:1-12

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

2. During on-site instruction, students will also be asked to engage and critique the sermons of non-student preachers and create a preaching plan. Details will be shared during class time.

**Formatting and Writing Information:**

1. All written assignments should be submitted in 12-point, Times New Roman font, double-spaced with one-inch margins. Please observe the page requirements. Longer papers do not result in higher grades.
2. Read each question carefully, 2-3 times, before answering it.
3. Rather than restating the essay prompt at the top of your answer, please use the specified title heading to distinguish essays.
4. All answers are to be submitted together. Do not submit answers in individual submissions.
5. Please write in full sentences and paragraphs. Have a spelling and grammar-savvy person proofread your work before submitting it.
6. 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.

7. Support your arguments with specific references to the text on which you are writing and to other texts that support your argument.
8. In written assignments, use formal language. So, for example, avoid contractions like "can't," "shouldn't," "won't," and "wasn't."
9. Use 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."
10. 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. Demonstrate your understanding of the ideas discussed in the reading and in lectures. (See the fuller description of plagiarism below.)
11. When citing sources, there is no required citation style, but consistency is key. If you do wish to use citation, please use parenthetical, (i.e., cite sources within the text). You can use MLA formatting as a guide.

### **A Note on Plagiarism:**

There are two kinds of plagiarism, both equally serious. First, plagiarism 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 source appropriately in a footnote or parentheses), you have plagiarized.

Second, plagiarism 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 *is not tolerated in any Course of Study course*.

### **Grading:**

The Course of Study program provides the following rubric to help students identify strengths and problems.

An "A" means the assignment is well crafted, reveals considerable insight, and moves beyond the range of the student's prior knowledge to begin to construct

new perspectives and meanings for the subject. In other words, it shows the student's imagination at work; it has a creative edge.

An "A-" means that the assignment is not only well crafted, but it also probes the issues with considerable insight.

A "B" means that the basic elements of the assignment have been faithfully included, the argument is internally coherent, and clearly articulated.

A "B+" means the assignment is also well crafted.

A "C+" means that the assignment lacks clarity or focus, tends to reveal more the writer's opinions than the results of the writer's analysis, and lacks reflective insight into the issues being discussed.

A "C" means that the assignment does not move beyond the reporting of information from readings and/or class discussions to engaging them with issues being discussed; it may indicate inappropriate or misuse of data and readings.

A "C-" means that despite some moments of focused discussion and insight, major gaps exist in the development of the argument or discussion.

An "F" means the individual needs to see me immediately.

**Grades will be reduced a step (e.g. from B to a B-) for assignments handed in after the start of class, and a full letter grade for any assignments 24 hours past due.** Assignments over 48 hours past due will be lowered two letter grades.

#### **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](mailto: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.