

Wesley Theological Seminary
Course of Study School
Summer 2023

Course: CS-324 Preaching

Asynchronous Work, June 2023

Synchronous Class via Zoom July 17-21, 2023, 8:30 a.m.- 10:45 a.m.

Professor: Rev. Amy P. McCullough, Ph.D., amccullough@wesleyseminary.edu

Course Description

This course aims to provide foundational instruction in the practice of preaching. Students will explore the theological foundations of preaching, hone their exegetical skills, review models for sermon preparation, and practice preaching with a community of peers. This class is a hybrid one, in which the first portion will be taught via online methods and the second portion will be held synchronously via Zoom.

Course Objectives

1. Students will learn the theological underpinnings and models for preaching.
2. Students will gain skills in biblical exegesis and its application to the preaching task.
3. Students will learn multiple approaches to developing a sermon and assessing an effective structure.
4. Students will learn tools for evaluating a sermon in terms of its connection to the biblical text, theological strength, and contextual nature.
5. Students will practice preaching in a classroom setting, gaining skills in preaching performance and evaluation.

Required Texts

LaRue, Cleophas, *The Heart of Black Preaching* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 200).
Schade, Leah, Jerry Sumney, and Emily Askew, *Introduction to Preaching: Scripture, Theology, and Sermon Preparation* (New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2023).

Recommended Texts

Brown, Sally and Luke Powery, *Ways of the Word* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2016).
Taylor, Barbara Brown, *The Preaching Life* (Boston: Cowley, 1993).

Class Instructions

Class will begin with online, asynchronous work during the month of June and conclude with a week of synchronous instruction via Zoom in July. Students are expected to engage the online

instruction conducted in June, complete all assignments, and attend the July synchronous instruction. All three portions must be completed to receive full credit in the class.

June Assignments

1. Read *Introduction to Preaching: Scripture, Theology, and Sermon Preparation*.
2. Read *The Heart of Black Preaching*.
3. View the weekly presentations provided online and participate in the weekly online discussions.
4. Submit the completed written assignment by Friday, June 30 at 11:59 p.m. via Blackboard.

June Written Assignment

This assignment has five (5) sections. While each section is independent of the others, the entire assignment should be submitted together as one document.

Several parts of the assignment require the selection of scriptures. Scripture selections should follow the lectionary guidelines specified. Each section should rely upon its own biblical text.

Your assignment should reflect thoughtful, careful work, utilizing formal grammar, complete sentences, fully-developed paragraphs and inclusive language. When citing a source, use a standard citation format such as MLA, Chicago, or in-text citations. Be sure to proof-read your work before submission.

Your assignment should be typed, double-spaced, in Times New Roman 12-point font with one-inch margins on all sides. The completed assignment should be between twenty (20) and twenty-two (22) pages.

1. Section One: Utilizing the insights of LaRue and Schade, outline the necessary steps for biblical exegesis in sermon preparation. What insights do you gain from these scholars? Then, select ONE scripture lesson from the Advent season, Lectionary Year B. Complete an exegesis for the text by identifying key questions, insights, rhetorical insights, and core theological messages. Identify a central question and central claim for the selected scripture and outline the sermon. (4-5 pages)
2. Section Two: Summarize LaRue's argument for the distinctiveness of black preaching. What characteristics, interpretive strategies and dynamics shape the preaching tradition? Then, select one 19th century sermon and one contemporary sermon from his book. Write a brief analysis (1 – 2 paragraphs) of each sermon using the characteristics LaRue provides. How do these sermons illustrate LaRue's argument? Finally, identify three key insights you have gained from this book. (3-4 pages)

3. Section Three: Construct a sermon using a text from the Epiphany season, Lectionary Year B. Using the insights of chapters 20 and 21 in Schade's *Introduction to Preaching*, identify the central question arising from the scripture, the hoped-for central claim of your sermon, and the form you have chosen for the sermon, with an explanation of why you chose this form for this sermon. (4-5 pages)
4. Section Four: Write a reflection on the topic of sermon performance. What is meant by the argument that a sermon is performed? How do voice, gestures, posture, and one's overall embodiment contribute to a sermon? How do you convey your authentic presence in preaching? How does one best prepare for preaching? (2-3 pages)
5. Section Five: Compose a funeral sermon, based upon a scripture listed in the United Methodist Book of Worship's resources for Services of Death and Resurrection. Do NOT use a funeral sermon you have previously preached. Be sure to include your scripture and sermon title. State your selected text and sermon title at the beginning of the sermon. To guide this sermon, select one of the scenarios below. (3-4 pages)
 - A beloved church leader has died.
 - A person has died by suicide.
 - A newborn has died of SIDS.

Course Outline

Asynchronous/Online – June 1-30, 2023

The online portion of the course will include weekly content via Blackboard presentations and hosted discussions about the readings and presentations. Students will be expected to view the week's presentation during its current week and participate in each week's discussion threads. The discussion questions will be provided at the end of each week's presentation

The Presentation Schedule will be

- The Role of the Preacher and the Purposes of Preaching
- Scriptural Study and Exegesis for Preaching
- The Sermon's Form, Function, and Structure
- Beginnings, Endings, Illustrations, and Embodiment

Synchronous Class - July 17-21, 8:30 a.m. – 10:45 a.m. via Zoom

Students will preach a sermon to the class and participate in evaluation of colleagues' sermons. The sermon may not be one of the sermons submitted in the June assignments. Scriptures for this sermon may be taken from a lectionary text assigned to Ordinary Time, Lectionary Year B. A sign up for sermon slots will be provided on June 1, 2023 via Blackboard.

Technical Requirements

Students need working access to the internet and connection to Blackboard. A high-speed internet connection is highly recommended. Supported browsers for Blackboard include Internet Explorer, Firefox, and Safari.

To access Blackboard, students should go to the MyWesley webpage and use your student username and password to log in. Students are placed into Blackboard approximately two months prior to the start of the course or as they register.

Your computer should have Microsoft Windows 8 or 10, or Mac OS/X 10.14 or newer, as well as current (2007 or later) version of Microsoft Office, Word and Power Point. Students should have a web cam and microphone.

If you have difficulties with educational technology or Blackboard, please contact Wesley Seminary's office of Education Technology or and Blackboard support.

edtech@wesleyseminary.edu or 202-885-6091.

You may also contact the professor if you encounter technical difficulties, but the first avenue of support should be the Wesley Seminary office of Education Technology.

Plagiarism

Students are expected to comply with all standards for academic honesty and integrity, including submitting their own work and refraining from any instances of plagiarism. Plagiarism includes presenting as one's own (i.e., without proper attribution) the composition or ideas of another or copying material from any sources, whether print or online.

All work submitted must be the work of the student submitting. Work from other sources must be thoroughly paraphrased or indicated as a direct quotation. In either case, the source of the material must be cited. Students are referred to the most current edition of Kate Turabian's *Manual for Writers of Research Papers* for instructions on source citations. Plagiarism will not be tolerated in any Course of Study course.

Grading Scale

93 – 100 = A (Excellent/Outstanding)

90 – 92 = A- (Outstanding)

88 – 89 = B+ (Very Good)

83 – 87 = B (Good)

80 – 82 = B- (Adequate)

78 – 79 = C+ (Adequate)

73 – 77 = C (Adequate)

70 – 72 = C- (Substandard)

Grading Breakdown

June Written Assignment 40%

Asynchronous Discussion Participation 20%

In-class Sermon 25%

In-class Participation 15%

