Wesley Theological Seminary

Course of Study School – CS-324 – Preaching

Spring 2024

Asynchronous Work: March 1 – April 11, 2024

Synchronous Class via Zoom April 12-13, 2024\*

\*times for these days to be determined and will depend upon class size

\*Please plan for full day sessions (8:30 – 4:30) for the time being

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, 2000).

Long, Thomas G., *The Witness of Preaching*, 3rd ed. (St. Louis: Westminster John Knox, 2016).

Selected articles on Sermon Performance and Delivery in Blackboard.

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 and conclude with a weekend of synchronous instruction via Zoom. Students are expected to engage the online instruction (videos and class discussions), complete two written assignments, and attend the April 12 – 13 synchronous class in its entirety. The first written assignment is due April 5th. The second written assignment is due April 14th. All portions of the class must be completed to receive full credit.

Course Outline

Asynchronous/Online – March 1 – April 11, 2024

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 in that same week. The discussion questions will be provided at the end of each week’s presentation. **Students are expected to view the videos and participate in the discussion in the week that they are posted.**

The Presentation Schedule will be

* The Role of the Preacher and the Purposes of Preaching - March 4, 2024
* Scriptural Study and Exegesis for Preaching - March 11, 2024
* The Sermon’s Form, Function, and Structure – March 18, 2024
* Beginnings, Endings, Illustrations, and Embodiment – April 2, 2024

Synchronous Class – April 12 – 13, 2024, via Zoom

Students will preach a sermon to the class and participate in evaluation of colleagues’ sermons. Scriptures for this sermon may be taken from a lectionary text assigned to the Easter Season, Lectionary Year B. A sign up for sermon slots will be provided on March 4, 2024 via Blackboard.

Written Synchronous Assignment is due Sunday, April 14.

Asynchronous Assignments for March 1 – April 11

1. Read *The Witness of* Preaching.
2. Read *The Heart of Black Preaching*, chapters 1, 3 & 4.
3. Read Sermon Performance articles available on Blackboard.
4. View the weekly lectures provided online and participate in the subsequent online discussions. Video presentations will be posted on March 4, 11, 18 and April 2. Discussion questions will be posted on the same days and student submissions will be due by the following Friday of the same week.
5. Submit the completed asynchronous assignment by Friday, April 5 at 11:59 p.m. and submit it via Blackboard.

Asynchronous Written Assignment

This assignment has five (3) 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 no more than ten (10) pages.

1. Section One: Utilizing the insights of LaRue and Long, create an outline of the necessary steps for biblical exegesis in sermon preparation. Add a brief description under each step. Then, select ONE scripture lesson from Ordinary Time, Lectionary Year B. Complete an exegesis for the text using your proposed outline. Be sure to identify key questions, insights, rhetorical analysis, and core theological message. Finally, write a focus statement and a function statement for the selected scripture. (3-4 pages)
2. Section Two: Summarize LaRue’s argument for the distinctiveness of black preaching. What characteristics, interpretive strategies and dynamics shape the preaching tradition? What insights have you gained from his work? Then select one contemporary sermon from his book and write a brief analysis (1 – 2 paragraphs) of the sermon using the characteristics LaRue provides. (2-3 pages)
3. Section Three: Select a text from the Advent season, Lectionary Year C. Conduct an exegesis of the scripture and then craft a focus and function statement. Using the insights of Long, chapter 6, identity the form for the sermon and explain why you chose this form for this sermon. Write an outline of your sermon. (2-3 pages)

This assignment is due on Friday, April 5 at 11:59 p.m. and should be submitted via Blackboard.

Synchronous Class – April 12 – 13, 2024, via Zoom

Students will preach a sermon to the class and participate in evaluation of colleagues’ sermons. Scriptures for this sermon may be taken from a lectionary text assigned to the Easter Season, Lectionary Year B. A sign up for sermon slots will be provided on March 4, 2024 via Blackboard.

Synchronous Written Assignment

1. Section One: Students will submit a written manuscript of their sermon along with a reflection paper on the experience of preaching. Reflection questions will be provided. (5-6 pages)
2. Section Two: Write a reflection on the topic of sermon performance, answering the following questions with the support of course readings on sermon performance.
* What is meant by the argument that a sermon is performed? What are the strengths and weakness of thinking about sermon as a performance?
* Reflect upon the impact of voice, gestures, posture, and one’s overall embodiment on preaching. What do these pieces convey or how do they contribute to a sermon?
* Identify three bodily practices you can use to prepare for preaching.
* Lastly, analyze your experience of preaching. What insights, shortcomings, and strengths would you name about your embodied preaching? (4-5 pages)

The written assignment arising from synchronous class is due on Sunday, April 14th by 11:59 p.m.

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

Asynchronous Written Assignment 30%

Asyn. Discussion Participation 15%

In-class Preaching Sermon 25%

Synchronous Written Assignment 30%