Homiletics

Course Syllabus
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Module: May 2-7, 2011

Introduction

The purpose of the Homiletics course is to introduce you to the theory and practice of preaching. Your development as a preacher will continue during the Internship year where you fulfil the speaking requirements for Preaching Practicum 1 and 2. In your Senior year, Advanced Preaching adds further theory and practice to your homiletical awareness and ability.

Preaching is a vital aspect of Christian ministry. Vocational ministers-in-training need to learn the basic elements of preaching. Some of these elements include homiletical structure as well as the core traditional approaches to preaching (i.e., topical, textual, and expository sermons). These fundamentals are like learning scales at the beginning of piano lessons.

The Homiletics course majors on the fundamentals but also exposes you to the broader range of contemporary approaches to sermons. From the outset it is also important that you begin to perceive your own unique attributes and interests that will lead to a personal combination of effectiveness in presenting the Word of God. This activity may be viewed as similar to the freedom that a trained pianist displays in exploring new avenues of creative expression.


Our class meets on Monday through Friday, May 2-6, 2011, from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. with an hour recess at lunch.
The final exam will be held on Saturday May 7 at 9:00 a.m.

The Registrar’s office creates a course site on Populi. This site will be a center for communication between myself and class members.
Prerequisites: None

Course Objectives

The content, assignments, presentations, and exams in this course are designed to challenge you in the following ways:

* **Cognitive** - what you should know and understand:
  - The meaning and purpose of preaching.
  - Basic homiletical structures and principles that promote clear and effective communication of biblical truth.
  - The relationship between form and content in preaching.
  - The place of homiletics within the larger context of pastoral ethics and responsibilities.

* **Affective** - what you should experience and value:
  - The diverse models that are provided by others who have been effective in sermon preparation and delivery.
  - The role of appropriate homiletical structure in effective preaching.
  - The need to ‘rightly divide the word of truth’ both in the preparation and presentation of biblical sermons.
  - The importance for preachers to continually improve their sermonic skills.

* **Conative** - what you should do with these insights, attitudes, and skills:
  - Apply the principles learned in class to the act of preaching, particularly the expository sermon.
  - Demonstrate personal learning from the examples of experienced practitioners of homiletics.
  - Explain the elements of change that are sought through the act of preaching.
  - Explore the broad range of resources available for the preacher.

Textbooks

**Required:**

   Anderson teaches homiletics at the ACTS Seminaries in Trinity Western University. He is a very concise and articulate student of homiletics. The book first raises four basic options that demand a decision from the reader then presents five different approaches to sermon theory and structure. An accompanying CD provides audio examples of sermons from four of the five approaches.

Miller is a master of figurative language. He captures your imagination with his images and ideas. In this text Miller outlines his model for narrative expositional preaching, the result of his decades of pastoral preaching and teaching of homiletics to seminarians.

Reference:


   Braga’s “clear and logical method combines effective techniques for public speaking with time-tested theories of teaching” (from back cover). Braga has been used in homiletics courses for decades as a basic introduction to the theory and practice of homiletics. He covers the three traditional approaches to preaching (topical, thematic, expository) and thoroughly develops the structure for expository sermons. A bonus feature from Braga is a collection of hundreds of sermon outlines scattered throughout the book as he illustrates his points.


   Andy Stanley is a prominent mega-church pastor, prolific author and engaging conference speaker who has made a strong positive impact on the North American evangelical church scene. This book offers a concise presentation of the essence of Stanley’s approach to preaching.

Background to Textbooks Used

The Anderson book connects psychologist David Kolb’s Experiential Learning Model (p.48) to four different combinations of homiletical structure used by preachers today (p.129) plus a fifth model that Anderson puts together as a cumulative example of what he regards as the best of the other four. Anderson’s book is useful in helping preachers to face the challenge of relating to a postmodern culture.

The Miller book provides an excellent contemporary statement of the essential elements of narrative expositional preaching today. Miller starts with analysis (of the preacher, the audience, the sermon, and the call of the sermon) then moves to the construction and delivery of the sermon. A bonus feature in Miller is the Appendix where he reviews “10 indispensable elements of form and style that will identify and define what the sermon is” (p.230). Miller uses different theorists and preachers to illustrate these 10 elements.

The Braga book has been used extensively in years past as a core text for courses in traditional expository preaching. Although not very exciting reading, Braga has always provided a fine introduction to the fundamentals of homiletical structure. He ‘breaks down’ the expository sermon into its component parts (comparable to doing ‘scales’ in piano lessons) and provides a foundational understanding for those parts. He also excels in giving many examples to illustrate every aspect of his discussion. With the availability of more diverse and contemporary resources for homiletics, Braga has been relegated to the status of a ‘gracious elder’ who stands
in the shadows. You are not required to purchase Braga.

The *Stanley and Jones* book is divided into two parts. In Part I Lane Jones writes “a fascinating parable about a pastor who knew he needed to upgrade his communication skills but didn’t know where to turn for help” (p.12). In Part II Andy Stanley presents his seven imperatives for effective communication as a preacher. He views these imperatives as “most critical to the process of engaging and inspiring an audience with one solitary idea” (pp.12-13). In Stanley’s view, “Every sermon should take the audience somewhere. We are convinced that these seven things are critical to the journey” (p.13).

**Course Content**

The content for this course is organized around the following areas:

1. **Introduction**
   - “preaching at a crossroads” (Anderson, pp.15-17)

2. **Background to preaching**
   - “are you going to preach?” (Anderson, pp.21-32)
   - the need
   - definitions
   - biblical basis
   - methodology
   - forms, models, examples
   - the ‘anointing’ in preaching

3. **Approaches to preaching**
   - “are you going to preach the Bible?” (Anderson, pp.33-46)
   - the ‘foolishness’ of preaching
   - types of sermons: topical, textual, expository
   - other models for preaching
   - types of biblical literature

4. **The elements of traditional homiletical structure (for expository sermons – from Braga)**
   - Scripture text
   - title and introduction
   - proposition/thesis (the ‘big’ idea)
   - the ‘question’
   - transitions
   - main and sub-points
   - illustrations and examples
   - application/conclusion/invitation

5. “How will you discern your message?” (Anderson, pp.47-84)
• deductive approach: text -> listener
• inductive approach: listener -> text

   • cognitive approach: idea (Braga)
   • affective approach: image (Miller)

7. Summary of Anderson’s five structures for preaching models (pp.127-261)
   • declarative Sermon: cognitive-deduction
   • pragmatic Sermon: cognitive-induction
   • visionary Sermon: affective-deduction
   • narrative Sermon: affective-induction
Note: You will not be responsible for reading this section of Anderson’s book during the present course; however, I will summarize the five structures in class (pp.127-132).

8. The art and science of narrative exposition.
   • A closer look at Miller’s concept of narrative exposition as an effective combination of traditional expository preaching and contemporary narrative preaching

9. “Me, We, God, You, We” (from Andy Stanley)
   • facilitating the preacher’s communication journey with their audience

10. Other topics for consideration (as time permits)
    • preaching to children and youth
    • sermons for special occasions
    • the use of sermon series in preaching
    • ethics in preaching
    • preaching in the urban/rural, large/small church
    • alternative approaches to preaching (e.g., dramatic sermons, principle preaching, preaching as counseling, etc.)

11. Practical preaching assignments in class

Course Requirements

Attendance
I assume that you will attend class regularly as defined by the Academic Policies. Class members need each other’s presence and support during the practical preaching assignments.

Assignments and Exams

1. Sermon Analysis and Critiques  (10%)
   • purpose: to practise the technical analysis of sermons.
• assignment: listen to two different Sunday sermons (two different preachers) in church and complete a written critical analysis of each sermon.

2.  Exttemporaneous Mini-Message  (15%)

• purpose: to experience the immediacy of speaking from the Word of God.
• assignment: take an assigned parable and, within 10-15 minutes of preparation time, share a 6-7 minute devotional message from the parable.

3.  Short Sermon  (20%)

• purpose: to practice the preaching of a traditional expository sermon.
• assignment: prepare and present a brief sermon (12-14 minutes) based on traditional expository elements of homiletical structure.
• this preaching practicum includes listening to the sermons of classmates, sharing constructive criticism with each other, reviewing the video of your own sermon and completing a self-evaluation form.
• sermons will be shared on Thursday and Friday in class.

4.  Written Book Review of Miller’s Text  (15%)

• purpose: to explore the world of narrative expository preaching as an extension (or modification) of traditional expository preaching.
• assignment: Read Miller’s book and write a 4-5 page critical review of the book.

5.  Final Exam  (40%)

• purpose: to test the textbook readings and classroom material from the whole course.
• assignment: a final exam on Saturday morning.

Approach to Instruction

Classroom sessions include a combination of lectures, discussion, video and web-based examples of preachers, classroom exercises, and the preaching of sermons by class members.

Preaching in class provides an opportunity to combine theoretical understanding with practical experience. Added benefit comes through constructive feedback from classmates and your own self-examination of the video replay.

The final exam is a means to test your growing awareness and understanding of the material covered in the course.

This approach to instruction is based on the assumption that a course in homiletics needs:
• a solid introduction to homiletical theory and models,
• an exposure to preachers who are actively engaged in the challenge of effective preparation and presentation of sermons, and
• a significant commitment to ‘hands-on’ experience in working with the concepts.

Evaluation

Final grades are calculated from the following items:

10% - Sermon analysis and critiques
15% - Extemporaneous mini-message (6-7 minutes)
20% - Short sermon (12-14 minutes)
15% - Review of Miller book
40% - Final exam
100%

Resources/Bibliography

Every preacher should have a website like Bible Gateway.com at their fingertips. It is a fine resource with many Bible translations available for immediate Bible searches. (http://www.biblegateway.com/)

A number of books related to preaching, published since 2004, that are of interest to me are listed below:


Graves, Mike and Schlafer, David, editors. What’s the shape of narrative preaching? St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2008.


Stone, Dave. Refining your style: Learning from respected communicators. Loveland, Colorado: Group, 2004. (includes CD with audio examples)

Tucker, Austin. The preacher as storyteller: The power of narrative in the pulpit. Nashville:

*Other authors not mentioned above are worthy of note when you look for preaching resources. Several are listed below (in alphabetical order):*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Jay Adams</th>
<th>Donald Demaray</th>
<th>Eugene Lowry</th>
<th>Ed Rowell</th>
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<tr>
<td>Ronald Allen</td>
<td>Clyde Fant</td>
<td>John MacArthur</td>
<td>William Sangster</td>
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<td>Andrew Blackwood</td>
<td>Alfred Gibbs</td>
<td>Frederick Meyer</td>
<td>John Stott</td>
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<td>Stuart Briscoe</td>
<td>Michael Green</td>
<td>Calvin Miller</td>
<td>Warren Wiersbe</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bryan Chapell</td>
<td>Woodrow Kroll</td>
<td>Harold Ockenga</td>
<td>Keith Willhite</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fred Craddock</td>
<td>D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones</td>
<td>Lloyd Perry</td>
<td>William Willimon</td>
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There are many resources for homiletics and preaching available on the internet. The following pages provide some useful links to journal articles that are online. Some of the websites also offer online audio sermons from contemporary as well as old-time preachers.

**Web Resources for Preaching**

*All websites referred to in this syllabus are active as of November 2010.*

For ease of access to the web addresses, go to the course website to use the web version of this syllabus. The web links to all sites will save you the trouble of typing url addresses.

1. **Samples from 'Leadership Journal'**

The Christianity Today organization has changed their approach to archival material. To have access to the full text of journal articles, paid subscriptions are now available at [http://www.ctlibrary.com](http://www.ctlibrary.com).

Archival articles are still listed but only the first few paragraphs of each article are given as a free preview.

At the [http://www.christianitytoday.com](http://www.christianitytoday.com) website, there are still some free full-text journal articles.

For articles related to preaching, go to:
[http://www.ctlibrary.com/topics/leadershippastoralministry/preaching](http://www.ctlibrary.com/topics/leadershippastoralministry/preaching)

Go to [http://www.christianitytoday.com/leaders](http://www.christianitytoday.com/leaders) and browse through the articles that are offered there. You will find that some of the articles still give only a preview of the first few paragraphs for free.
Example of an article of interest – at the site:
http://www.christianitytoday.com/le/preachingworship/preaching/preachingonmyfeet.html,
you will find “Preaching on My Feet: Could I speak for 35 minutes without ever writing notes?”
by Craig Brian Larson.

The college library has many years of Leadership Journal in paper copy. If you see an article on
the website that interests you, it might be available in the college collection.

2. Samples of Preaching Resources from Other Websites

OnePlace.com -Listen for Life
http://www.oneplace.com/ministries/
A portal to many ministry resources

Homiletics Online
http://www.homileticsonline.com/
The online version of ‘Homiletics’ magazine plus other resources, by paid subscription.

The Catholic Encyclopedia – definition of Homiletics
http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/07443a.htm
A detailed study of the definition of preaching, its historical development, etc.

Preaching Online
http://www.preaching.com/
The online version of ‘Preaching’ magazine for print subscribers.
This site also offers a free weekly email newsletter featuring sermon ideas, illustrations, and
insights on preaching the Word.

PreachingToday.Com
http://www.preachingtoday.com/
A paid subscription for “over 8,000 illustrations in a searchable database, preaching workshops,
full sermon outlines, and many more invaluable tools and tips."

PreachingTodaySermons
http://www.preachingtodaysermons.com/preachthatcon.html
An extension of Preaching Today.

PreachingTodayAudio - from Christianity Today
http://www.preachingtodayaudio.com/
A paid subscription – “choose from an extensive list of the top sermons and workshops,
collected over the 20-year history of the popular and trusted ‘Preaching Today Audio’ series.”

Preaching.Org
http://www.preaching.org/
Kent Anderson’s website of preaching resources based mainly on his ‘integrative model’ of preaching.

lensweet’s preachingplus
http://www.preachingplus.com/
A combination of free and paid subscription resources from Leonard Sweet and others who are at the forefront of analysis of what preaching to the ‘postmodern culture’ means.

Dynamic Preaching Online
http://www.sermons.com/
A paid subscription for preaching resources.

Sermon Index
http://www.sermonindex.net/
An awesome collection of audio (and some video) sermons from many old-time, as well as current, preachers.

Online Sermons
http://sermons.christiansunite.com/
A smaller version of Sermon Index.

Sermonaudio.com
http://www.sermonaudio.com/
A large collection of audio sermons by many preachers.

Audio Bible
http://www.audio-bible.com/bible/bible.html
The audio reading of the Bible.
Horizon College Assessment of Student Work
(based on University of Saskatchewan guidelines)

90-100% [Exceptional] – a superior performance with consistent strong evidence of:
• a comprehensive, incisive grasp of the subject matter;
• an ability to make insightful critical evaluation of the material given;
• an exceptional capacity for original, creative and/or logical thinking;
• an excellent ability to organize, to analyze, to synthesize, to integrate ideas, and to express thoughts fluently.

80-89% [Excellent] – an excellent performance with strong evidence of:
• a comprehensive grasp of the subject matter;
• an ability to make sound critical evaluation of the material given;
• a very good capacity for original, creative and/or logical thinking;
• an excellent ability to organize, to analyze, to synthesize to integrate ideas, and to express thoughts fluently.

70-79% [Good] – a good performance with evidence of:
• a substantial knowledge of the subject matter;
• a good understanding of relevant issues and a good familiarity with the relevant literature and techniques;
• some capacity for original, creative and/or logical thinking;
• a good ability to organize, to analyze and to examine the subject material in a critical and constructive manner.

60-69% [Satisfactory] – a generally satisfactory and intellectually adequate performance with evidence of:
• an acceptable basic grasp of the subject material;
• a fair understanding of the relevant issues;
• a general familiarity with the relevant literature and techniques;
• an ability to develop solutions to moderately difficult problems related to the subject material;
• a moderate ability to examine the material in a critical and analytical manner.

50-59% [Minimal Pass] – a barely acceptable performance with evidence of:
• a familiarity with the subject material;
• some evidence that analytical skills have been developed;
• some understanding of relevant issues;
• some familiarity with the relevant literature and techniques;
• attempts to solve moderately difficult problems related to the subject material and to examine the material in a critical and analytical manner, which are only partially successful.

Under 50% [Failure] – an unacceptable performance