

Course #324

The Practice of Preaching

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AIMS: *This course is designed to examine the issues related to the nature and purpose of preaching, to investigate the preaching tradition, to explore implications for preaching in a media saturated society, and to construct models and structures for preaching.*

GOALS: *To enable students to discover and incorporate in their own preaching ministry the traditions and theology of preaching.
To stress the need for movement in sermon structure.
To emphasize the visual in preaching.
To provide models for preaching.
To relate content with delivery.*

TEXTS: Fred B. Craddock - Craddock on the Craft of Preaching
Barbara Brown Taylor - The Preaching Life
Cleophus LaRue - The Heart of Black Preaching

COURSE SUBJECTS:

I. DEFINING PREACHING

In this introductory session the class will explore their own models and understandings of preaching. This discussion will lay the groundwork for the remainder of the course where our personal models of preaching will be examined in the light of the traditional teaching of the Church.

II. THEOLOGY OF PREACHING

How does theology inform our preaching and how does preaching inform our theology?

III. USING THE BIBLE IN PREACHING

Exercises in the proper use of biblical texts for preaching. Analyzing the shape of scripture and finding context and patterns for a personal preaching ministry.

IV. STRUCTURE – IMAGE AND LANGUAGE

How to move from sermon idea to sermon. Searching for the framework for effective communication. Finding ways to enable the message to be heard.

V. DELIVERY – EVALUATION

Focus on the tools and techniques of oral communication. How to provide not just class evaluation, but an on-going self-assessment of preaching.

Additional discussion on issues such as: Preaching and Worship, Preaching and Children, Contexts for Preaching, Preaching Ethics and the Preaching Tradition. Course work will give an equal balance between discussion on issues of preaching and on preaching practice. Students will be asked to write both reflection papers assigned and sermons to be presented in class.

All sessions held at the University of Indianapolis

Class Assignments

For Session One:

1. To introduce yourself to the instructor, write a brief summary of your preaching experience. How long and often have you preached? In what settings? What do you enjoy about preaching? What do you find most difficult? What are you aiming to do when you preach? Are there any specific areas that you hope this course will address?

Write a paper of no more than 300 words due Saturday of Opening Session.

2. How do you define the preaching task? How does Craddock's definition of preaching as storytelling relate to your own understandings and practices? Where does human proclamation *intersect* with the Word of God? Also reflect on the seventh chapter of Taylor's book (titled *Preaching*) for an introduction to the task of preaching. Which image seems most apt in describing you as a preacher?

Write a reflection paper of 500-700 words on the preaching task. Due Opening Session

For Session Two:

1. Create a preaching plan for a series of sermons on the Parables. What questions do you ask of the text in order to preach from these narratives? How do we identify the pericope for the sermon? What structural concerns inform our preaching of these texts?

Write a schedule for a sermon series on Parables, including texts chosen and outline one sermon from the series in terms of format and theme and illustrative material.

2. **Come prepared to preach a sermon on one of the Parables of Jesus.** Bring manuscript to hand in. While not required for the preaching act, a manuscript will help in evaluation and in your preparation.
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For Session Three:

1. Compile a list of illustrations you have used in preaching. Examine them for the language used and the images communicated. Read Craddock and LaRue for conversation about image in preaching.

Write a 400 word paper on the role of image in preaching.

2. Record a few of your sermons and listen to them a day or so after you have preached them. What habits do you hear in your preaching? Who clearly do you speak? Are you easy to listen to? Exciting or boring? Where does Celebration, as discussed in Mitchell's chapter 4 enter into your preaching?

Write a brief assessment of your delivery style.

3. **Come prepared to preach in class on a text of your own choosing.** Bring manuscript to hand in. While not required for the preaching act, a manuscript will help in evaluation and in your preparation.