

I. Course Description

The course explores the historical, theoretical, and theological practices of preaching with emphases on the interpretation of texts, contexts, social location, traditional core beliefs, and listener engagement. It will also prepare students to prepare and proclaim the good news of the gospel in and beyond the pulpit. Students of every level of experience will learn and sharpen the skills necessary for the preparation and performance of sermons that are reverent, relevant, creative, and transformative. Each student will prepare and preach in this class.

II. Course Objectives

At the end of this course, learners should be able on a beginning or competent level to:

- Explain and model with clarity and accuracy the historical, theoretical, and theological foundations of preaching and rhetoric.
- Exhibit a level of proficiency in the interpretation of the biblical text through the lens of cultural sensitivity for preaching the gospel in, and to an ever-changing world.
- Demonstrate their own systemized hermeneutical and homiletical process, to develop a sermon from a mere idea, through biblical interpretation and sermonic design, ultimately to level of the performed word of God.
- Nurture their inner ear as quality control for effective sermon design and delivery. Students will be able to constructively critique their preaching and the preaching of others.

III. Contribution to MTSO's Educational Mission and Degree Outcomes

This course contributes to MTSO's mission to engage the intersections of church, society, and academy.

Specific Degree Outcomes

MDIV – Students will develop the skills to understand, appreciate and interpret our Christian heritage so it becomes a compelling vision for the present and future.

IV. Textbooks

Required Texts

Lischer, Richard, ed., *The Company of Preachers: Wisdom on Preaching, Augustine to the Present*, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2002)

Assigned Texts-

Brueggemann, Walter *Preaching from the Old Testament* (Fortress Press, 2019)

Buechner, Frederick *Telling the Truth: The Gospel as Tragedy, Comedy, and Fairy Tale*, (Harper's Row, 1st Edition, 1977)

De LaTorre, Miguel D. *Reading the Bible from the Margins* (Maryknoll NY: Orbis Books, 2002)

Jacobsen, David Schnasa, *Homiletical Theology in Action: The Unfinished Theological Task of Preaching* (Wipf and Stock Publishers: Eugene, OR 2015)



HM 600 Introduction to Homiletics

Fall 2023, Tuesday 8:30am-10am, Rm TBA

Dr. Eugene Gibson, Jr. (he/him/his), egibson@mtso.edu

Johnson, Kimberly P. *The Womanist Preacher: Proclaiming Womanist Rhetoric from the Pulpit* (Rhetoric, Race, and Religion) (Lexington, KY 2019)

Kim, Yung Suk, *Preaching the New Testament Again: Faith, Freedom, and Transformation* (Cascade Books)

Thomas, Frank A., *Introduction to the Practice of African American Preaching*, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2016)

Thompson, Lisa L. *Preaching the Headlines: Possibilities and Pitfalls*. (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2021)

Sermons

Valerie Bridgeman

Teresa Fry-Brown

Fred Craddock, "Can I Be Included"

Minister Louis Farrakhan, "Eulogy of Rev. Clay Evans"

Eugene Gibson, "The United States vs. Hagar and the Right to Choose"

Melva L. Sampson, "Hell No"

Frank Thomas, "A Pitcher a Water Basin and a Towel"

V. Course Requirements and Assessment of Student Learning

Teaching Methods

The class will consist of lectures (in person and by Zoom); online and classroom discussions; book reviews; textual and audiovisual sermon analysis; the preparing and preaching of student sermons and peer evaluations.

Communication and Office Hours

Office hours will be by appointment in person and by Zoom. Please allow me 24 hours to respond to both emails and calls. Please note that I will be accessibility will be limited by from Fridays at 5pm to Mondays at 9am. During those hours my response time will most likely exceed 24 hours.

Grading Rubric

Letter Grade	4.0 scale) Upper/Lower Limit	(100% Scale) Upper/Lower Limit
A+	4.0/4.0	97%/100%
A	3.8/4.0	93%/96%
A-	3.4/3.7	90%/92%
B+	3.1/3.3	87%/89%
B	2.8/3.0	83%/86%
B-	2.4/2.7	80%/82%
C+	2.1/2.3	77%/79%
C	1.8/2.0	73%/76%
C-	1.4/1.7	70%/72%
D+	1.1/1.3	67%/69%
D	0.8/1.0	63%-66%

F 0.0/0.7 0%-62%

Weight Assigned Each Assignment

Book Review - 10%
Sermon Reviews - 10%
2 New Testament Sermon Packets - 30%
2 Hebrew Bible Sermon Packets – 30%
Class Participation and Peer Sermon Evaluation – 20%

Note about Late Assignments

Assignments are expected to be turned in on time. Late assignments under acceptable circumstances will be accepted, however, they will be penalized by 10%.

Class Participation and Peer Sermon Evaluation

The goal of this class is to create a community conversation of learning around preaching where every student participates actively, authoritatively, and equally. Your participation grade is determined by your regular and sustained engagement in class discussions, Populi discussions of course material, your feedback and conversation with your classmates in the evaluation of one another's sermons. The community can only be at its best, when everyone is equally challenged by everyone, while honoring the authenticity of every student.

Book Reviews

Each student will write a 3-5-page book review on the required text. The book review should demonstrate the students' understanding of the key themes of the book assigned, their historical and current theological relevance to the interpretation of Scripture and preaching task and why such themes can be integrated into or not applicable to their own preaching. This book review will be due at the midpoint of the semester.

Sermon/Speech Responses

The syllabus provides students with 10 sermons and speeches from preachers and speakers representing a wide range of cultural, denominational, and contextual perspectives. Students will choose 5 of the sermon/speech to engage carefully and critically and write a 1-2-page response reflecting the students understanding of how the sermon intersects with the lectures and readings.

Assessment for this assignment will take into account the following: thoughtfulness; awareness of cultural/theological/contextual factors impacting the preacher/proclaimer's message; generous and critical engagement with the preacher/proclaimer's work; and the quality and depth of student reflection concerning how these sermons/speeches shape the student's self-understanding and approach to preaching/proclamation in light of his/her/their particular racial, ethnic, sexual, and gender perspective.

(2) New Testament and (2) Hebrew Bible Sermon Packets

Students will prepare two sermon packets from the Old Testament and two sermon packets from the New Testament canon. Sermon packets will include the selection of a text, a 1-2-page exegetical paper explaining the student's interpretative process, an outline of the sermon and/or manuscript. The student will have the opportunity to preach one 5-minute and one minute and 10-minute sermon. The student can elect which sermon comes from which canon. Each sermon preached or not will be expected to draw upon the

appropriate interpretation of the Biblical text and should incorporate the insights offered in the readings and course lectures pertaining to proclamation from the Hebrew Bible and New Testament canons.

VI. Course Schedule and Format

Week 1 (Aug. 29th) - Asynchronous

Introduction to the Community and Overview of Content and Discussion

What is Preaching?

Read:

Brooks and Brown Taylor, *Company of Preachers*

Week 2 (Sept. 5th)

Proclamation of the Word

Who and What is Happening in Preaching?

Read:

Mitchell and Bruggerman, *Company of Preachers*

Week 3 (Sept. 12th)

How Cultural Contexts Shape Biblical Interpretation?

Read:

Augustine and Bultmann, *Company of Preachers*

De La Torre, *Reading the Bible from the Margins* Intro, Chap. 1

Select your text for your 5 min sermon.

Week 4 (Sept. 19th)

Biblical Interpretation (cont'd)

Read:

Brueggemann, *Preaching from the Old Testament*, pp. 41-69

Kim, *Preaching the New Testament Again: Faith, Freedom, and Transformation*, pp.8-67

Week 5 (Sept. 26th)

5 min sermonic packet due by Sept. 29th

Interpretation (cont'd) and Where Do I Begin to Write a Sermon?

Read:

De La Torre, *Reading Bible...Margins* Chap. 3-4

Thompson, *Preaching the Headlines* Intro Chap.1- 2

Video: "How to Prepare a Sermon" <https://youtu.be/JK2HtSTerGI>

Week 6 (Oct. 3rd)

How much do I consider the audience in proclamation?

Read:

Craddock, *Company of Preachers*

Week 7 (Oct. 10th)

Book Review Due by Midnight Oct 13th

5 Minute Sermon Presentations and Evaluations

Week 8 (Oct. 17th No Classes Fall Break)

Week 9 (Oct. 24th) *Asynchronous*

What Is My Theological Perspective and What Claim do I Make on the Gospel?

Jacobsen, *Homiletical Theology*

Week 10 (Oct. 31st)

Select 10min sermon text

Investigating Different Theologies About Preaching Christ

Read:

De La Torre, *Bible from the Margins* chap. 5

Johnson, *The Womanist Preacher*, chs. 1 and 4

Thomas, *Intro to the Practice of African American Preaching*, Intro and ch. 1

Week 11 (Nov. 7th)

Third Book Review Due by Midnight Nov. 10

How Do I Prepare for Special Services (Weddings, Funerals, and More)?

Read:

Craddock, "Preaching on Death and Dying," pp. 129-38.

Noren, "Crisis Preaching and Corporate Worship"

Week 12 (Nov. 14th)

10 Min. sermon packets due

Structures and Formats for Writing Sermons Preaching Challenges – Bodies, Identities, and Taboos

Read:

Thompson, *Preaching the Headlines*, chs. 2 - 3

Week 13 (Nov. 21st) No Classes Thanksgiving Week

Week 14 (Nov. 28th)

10 Minute Sermon Presentations and Evaluations

Week 15th (Dec. 5th)

Second Book Review Due by Midnight Dec 8th.

10 Minute Sermon Presentations and Evaluations

Concluding Conversations – Shaping Your Preaching Voice Read:

Wrapping Up and Sermon Discussion

VII. MTSO Standard Syllabus Statements

Carefully review these policies and refer to the MTSO Academic Catalog / Student Handbook for additional details.

All students in every degree program are expected to become familiar with MTSO policies as listed in the most current MTSO Academic Catalog and Student Handbook, connected here. The policies listed below are in the handbook and are highlighted here because of their importance to our academic lives together.

https://www.mtso.edu/site/assets/files/2103/academic_catalog_-_student_handbook_20-21.pdf.

Class Attendance

Regular attendance is expected in all classes. In campus extend (online and hyflex), you are REQUIRED to show your face the entire class time, otherwise you will be considered "absent". You are expected to attend class as you would in a face-to-face classroom (not driving, cooking, folding clothes etc.). During

asynchronous class time, faculty will monitor time used in the posting and responding to colleagues to track your participation. During unavoidable absences, students are responsible for missed work. An excessive number of absences may result in grade reduction or course failure, despite successful completion of all assigned work. In most cases, a student will fail a course if they are absent for 25% of the class sessions (including online meetings).

Electronic Devices

As an institution dedicated to the advancement of learning, MTSO is firmly committed to a philosophy of mutual respect. When your use of electronic devices violates that respect instructors have the right to impose appropriate grading penalties. **Because of MTSO Campus Extend, a hyflex model, electronic devices are integral to learning.** However, the use of such devices should be restricted to course-related purposes. General browsing of the Internet or engaging in email or social networks during class time is inappropriate. Unless there is an emergency requiring immediate attention, phone calls should be returned during classroom breaks (even if you're at your home) in an area that is not disruptive to others.

Title IX/504 ADA Statement

MTSO is committed to providing a workplace and educational environment that are free from discrimination, harassment, and retaliation. To ensure compliance with federal and state civil rights laws and regulations, and to affirm its commitment to promoting the goals of fairness and equity, MTSO has developed internal policies and procedures that provide a prompt, fair, and impartial process for those involved in an allegation of discrimination or harassment on the basis of protected class status, and for allegations of retaliation. More information about the University's policy and grievance processes can be found at <https://www.mtso.edu/about-mtso/notice-nondiscrimination/>. Reports of misconduct can be made to the Title IX/504/ADA Coordinator, Kathy Dickson, kdickson@mtso.edu.

ADA/ Disability Services

MTSO supports all students by encouraging self-advocacy and empowering students to help themselves, while providing a safe environment in which to do so. We commit to an inclusive learning environment and will support reasonable, documented requests for accommodations and learning adaptations. To request a reasonable accommodation, contact the director of student services, Dr. Jeremy Garber at jgarber@mtso.edu.

Documenting written work at MTSO

All written work submitted for courses at MTSO must conform to the Note-Bibliography style in the Chicago Manual of Style (17th edition). For a helpful discussion of how to avoid academic misconduct, see the Purdue University Online Writing Lab (OWL) website at <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/589/02>. Students who commit academic misconduct will be subject to penalties up to and including expulsion from the Institution.

VIII. Supporting Materials

If you do not already have one, you are required to obtain a personal library card in your local library system and to create your own accounts for free digital media services like [Libby](#), [Kanopy](#), and [Hoopla](#) in order to access various free resources that may be assigned for your coursework.