

**School of Theology and Ministry**  
Seattle University  
901 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Seattle, Washington 98122  
**Winter Quarter, 2007**

**Course Information**

STMA 551- Preaching the Word: Advanced  
Room: Hunthausen , 150  
Meeting Day: Tuesdays  
Meeting Time: 1:30-4:20 p.m.

**Instructor**

Flora Wilson Bridges, Ph.D.  
Office: Hunthausen, 214  
Phone: 206 296-5337  
Tuesdays: 2:00-4:30 p.m.  
or by appointment  
Email: [fwb@seattleu.edu](mailto:fwb@seattleu.edu)

**\*Required Texts:**

Blount, Brian K. and Gary W. Charles. *Preaching Mark in Two Voices*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002.  
Jacks, Robert G. *Getting the Word Across: Speech Communication for Pastors and Lay Leaders*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1995.  
LaRue, Cleophus J., Editor. *Power in the Pulpit: How America's Most Effective Preachers Prepare Their Sermons*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002.  
Lloyd-Jones, D. Martyn. *Preaching & Preachers*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1971.  
Mathews, Alice P. *Preaching That Speaks to Women*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2003.

**Recommended Texts:**

Buttrick, David. *Preaching the New and Now*. Louisville, KY: WJKP, 1998.  
Craddock, Fred B. *Preaching*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1985.  
Davis, H. Grady. *Design for Preaching*. Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1958.  
Farmer, Herbert H. *The Servant of the Word*. Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1942.  
Forbes, James. *The Holy Spirit & Preaching*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1989  
Fosdick, Harry Emerson. *The Power to See It Through: Sermons on Christianity Today*. New York, NY: Harper & Brothers, 1935.  
Jones, Illion T. *Principles and Practice of Preaching: A Comprehensive Study of the Art of Sermon Construction*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1956.  
Lucas, Stephen. E. *The Art of Public Speaking*. New York, NY: Random House, 1989.  
Massey, James Earl. *Designing the Sermon: Order and Movement in Preaching*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1980.  
Smith, Kelly Miller. *Social Crisis Preaching: The Lyman Beecher Lectures, 1983*. Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1984.  
Spurgeon, Charles H. *12 Sermons on The Plan of Salvation*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1976.  
Taylor, Barbara Brown. *The Preaching Life*. Cambridge, MA: Cowley Publications, 1993.  
*Spinning a Sacred Yarn: Women Speak from the Pulpit*. New York, NY: The Pilgrim Press, 1982.

## Course Description

The essential philosophy and theology underlying this course is that skillfully delivered sermons guided by compassion, sincerity, and faith can contribute to the transformation of the human condition and all of Creation for the better. In the light of this, the overall goal of this course is to teach students how to deliver effective sermons. The sermons' efficacy will be judged by how well they potentially serve to influence decisions and instigate actions where congregations are summoned to act as a catalyst for the changes in their lives, the Church, and the society that will transform Creation positively by way of the hearing of the proclamation of the gospel.

The great American preacher Kelly Miller Smith described such preaching in this way: "Preaching is the divine-human event in which words are used to proclaim the Word of God. It is not only the proclamation of what God has said: it is proclamation *of what God continues to say* to the present condition. It is God's communication with the human family through human instrumentality. It is the spirit of God working upon the mind and spirit of the preacher with the directions that he or she proclaim the powerful, critically relevant, uncompromising Word of the living God." Such preaching in this course will teach students to challenge the brokenness of the human family and aim at creating a Church and society governed by love and justice.

## Course Objectives

The course seeks to encourage students to do preaching through a sense of social and personal responsibility that promotes creating a society that embodies, in Martin Luther King's words, the Beloved Community. In order to accomplish this task, students will be guided to competently:

- 1) Do hermeneutics or, simply stated, *interpret the Bible to discover the authors' meaning and to transmit the meaning to modern listeners*. The biblical scholar Professor A. Berkeley Mickelsen states it this way: "The most impelling motive for learning to interpret the scriptures correctly is the necessity to understand clearly for ourselves exactly what we are trying to communicate to others. The need to communicate all of the gospel message is urgent: 'Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel' (I Cor. 9:16); but double is the woe to one who, though he [or she] claims to be preaching the gospel, does in fact not do so because he [or she] has misinterpreted the written record that presents the gospel." Take heed.
- 2) Do *critical theological reflection*. This consists of the following:
  - a. The preacher must relate the Christian faith to the concrete conditions that affect both body and soul.
  - b. The preacher's sermons should demonstrate a commitment to the struggle to change the world in a quest for health, wholeness, peace, and justice.
  - c. The concrete problems of humankind and the created order must provide the content of theological reflection and issues of justice, poverty, and powerlessness must be brought from the edges to the center of theological awareness.

- d. Reconciliation should be the main key upon which theology is posited.
  - e. Faith and praxis should be encouraged to be joined as the gospel is related to the condition of those who suffer, are in need of healing, and who are oppressed.
- 3) *Communicate*—by learning through trial and error—to:
- a. *Organize* your ideas to present them in the most clear and persuasive manner by steadily and progressively building up a case in your sermon.
  - b. *Tailor your message* to your listeners. You must show how the issue or sermonic problem and solution are important to the people in the room, your congregation, and to the entire world.
  - c. Tell the Bible’s story for *maximum impact*. You will also relate your own story through a relevant anecdote, statistics, contemporary crisis, etc. to aid in relating how the gospel teaches “a more excellent way.”
  - d. *Adapt to listener feedback* by being aware of the congregation’s reactions—verbal, facial, and physical. For example, you are preaching. Your listeners begin to look bored and/or confused. You then adjust your preaching to communicate more clearly and effectively.

### **Course Requirements**

***Attendance and Class Participation.*** Students are required to attend all classes. Absences will lower your grade by one half of a letter grade per absence. In other words, if your grade is an “A” in the course, an absence will lower your grade to an “A-.” Please note that much that determines your grade for the course is dependent upon mutual discussion and interaction. Attendance is crucial. Please do not call, email, or ask me in person to excuse any absences during the quarter.

You are required to demonstrate effective group skills by actively, prayerfully, compassionately, and critically contributing to class feedback and discussions. This includes your attendance (see above), punctuality, participation, and using constructive peer feedback that includes honesty, challenge, and mutual respect. Be prepared to both give and receive honest feedback that seeks to challenge you to assess the impact and significance of your preaching.

This course also requires includes relevant discussion and timely reading of the assigned texts that reflect *critical* intellectual assessment that leads to practical applications. We will not spend a great deal of time discussing the assigned readings in class. The demonstration of how well you have read and digested the readings should be reflected in your sermons.

1. **On Site Sermons:** 35% of grade. Each student is to preach and videotape **one** out of class sermon of no more than 15-17 minutes that will *preferably be preached in a church setting*. Please consult with me immediately if you do not have a location. Ask someone to assist you with the videotaping. Show yourself and the congregation clearly and strive for excellent visual and sound quality. These sermons are to be accompanied on the day that we review them in class with the following:

1. The videotape which you will be responsible for setting up and showing;
2. A brief written site description that includes a one paragraph description of the the congregation; your sermon title; the biblical text or texts; the occasion for which you are preaching; three paragraphs on your self-assessment of your preaching effectiveness. Please include your feelings about your own strengths and weaknesses. This assignment should be typed and double-spaced.
3. A double-spaced copy of your manuscript of the sermon.
2. **In Class Sermon:** 30% of grade. Each student is to preach **one** in class sermon. I will assign the subject and biblical texts for these sermons. Each sermon should be no more than 15-17 minutes in length. You will be required to do research for these sermons that will include critical social analysis. These sermons are to be written out manuscript style. The manuscripts are due on the day you preach.
3. **One Minute Essays:** Each student will write (legibly) a two or three sentence statement at the end of each class session that reflects how you felt about the day's class session, questions you might have, comments, concerns, etc.
4. **In Class Viewing of Excellent Sermons:** 5% of grade. Each student will bring in a videotape of what you believe is an excellent sermon (Hint: Select prominent preachers of our day rather than obscure ones. This may include preachers such as James Forbes, Barbara Brown Taylor, Prathia Hall Wynn, Martin Luther King, Jr., etc. Please do not find a tape of a sermon that is too long-winded (more than 20 minutes) or of a preacher whom no one in the class has heard of or will likely never hear of in life. In other words, the preacher's effectiveness must be relevant to more than just you. It is your responsibility to find these videotapes. They will become a valuable resource for your own personal library.
5. **Off Site Listening to Sermons:** 5% of grade. Visit some location each week to hear a preacher preach. The art of sermon delivery comes about not only by speaking but also by learning through listening. It is critical that you listen in person to as many sermons that other preachers deliver as possible. Each week you are to be prepared to bring in a 1 page, single-spaced critical analysis of a sermon you observed. Prepare enough copies of your analysis for the entire class.
6. **Peer Reviews:** 20% of Grade. Each student will write a one-half page, single-spaced review of their peer's sermons. These reviews are due in class the week after students' preach.

## **Grading Criteria**

***Class Participation/Group Skills.*** Students are graded on: 1) Use of effective communication skills in sermonizing and critiquing sermons; 2) Ability to maintain focus on and critical analysis and reflection upon the speaker; 3) Timely attendance; 4) Active participation in the healthy development of the class that includes honest discussion and challenge and displaying mutual respect; 5) Doing all assignments when assigned.

***Scholastic Performance.*** Students are graded on: 1) Demonstrated ability to think and speak in a way that shows excellent communication skills; 2) Demonstrated ability to reflect on peer's presentations in a way that shows skillful theological analysis; 3) Demonstrated use of the assigned texts in the preparation and delivery of sermons.

## \*COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

### **Tuesday, March 27, 2007**

Introductions and Review of Syllabus: 1:30-2:00 p.m.

Lecture and Discussion of *Getting the Word Across*, G. Robert Jacks 2:00-3:00 p.m.

Break: 3:00-3:20 p.m.

Sermon Exercise: 3:20-4:20 p.m.

### **Tuesday, April 3, 2007**

Brief Discussion of One-Minute Essays & Sermons You Attended: 1:30-2:15 p.m.

In Class Sermons Delivered: Kerby Avedovech, Karen Davison: 2:15-2:45 p.m.

Break: 2:45-3:05 p.m.

Lecture and Discussion of *Getting the Word Across*, G. Robert Jacks: 3:05-4:00 p.m.

Showing of Excellent Sermon: Linda Smith: 4:00-4:20 p.m.

### **Tuesday, April 10, 2007**

Brief Discussion of One-Minute Essays & Sermons You Attended: 1:30-2:15 p.m.

In Class Sermons: Linda Fowler, Allan Grazier: 2:15-2:45 p.m.

Break: 2:45-3:05 p.m.

Lecture and Discussion of *Preaching & Preachers*, D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones: 3:05-3:45 p.m.

Showing of Excellent Sermon: Catherine Schneider, Kerby Avedovech: 3:45-4:20 p.m.

### **Tuesday, April 17, 2007**

Brief Discussion of One-Minute Essays & Sermons You Attended: 1:30-2:15 p.m.

In Class Sermons Delivered: Carol Harberg, Paula Harris-White: 2:15-2:45 p.m.

Break: 2:45-3:05 p.m.

Lecture and Discussion of *Preaching & Preachers*, D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones: 3:05-3:45 p.m.

Showing of Excellent Sermon: Tamara Roberts, Karen Davison: 3:45-4:20 p.m.

### **Tuesday, April 24, 2007**

Brief Discussion of One-Minute Essays & Sermons You Attended: 1:30-2:15 p.m.

In Class Sermons Delivered: Ron Harris-White, Lee Hartman: 2:15-2:45 p.m.

Break: 2:45-3:05 p.m.

Lecture and Discussion of *Power in the Pulpit*, Cleophus J. LaRue: 3:05-3:45 p.m.

Showing of Excellent Sermon: Robin Livingston, Linda Fowler: 3:45-4:20 p.m.

### **Tuesday, May 1, 2007**

Brief Discussion of One-Minute Essays & Sermons You Attended: 1:30-2:15 p.m.

In Class Sermons Delivered: Robin Livingston, Catherine Schneider: 2:15-2:45 p.m.

Break: 2:45-3:05 p.m.

Lecture and Discussion of *Power in the Pulpit*, Cleophus J. LaRue: 3:05-3:45 p.m.

Showing of Excellent Sermon: Lee Hartman, Allan Grazier: 3:45-4:20 p.m.

**Tuesday, May 8, 2007**

Brief Discussion of One-Minute Essays & Sermons You Attended: 1:30-2:15 p.m.

In Class Sermons Delivered: Linda Smith, Kevin Raymond: 2:15-2:45 p.m.

Break: 2:45-3:05 p.m.

Lecture & Discussion of *Preaching That Speaks to Women*, Alice Mathews: 3:05-3:45

Showing of Excellent Sermon: Ron Harris-White, Kevin Raymond: 3:45-4:20 p.m.

**Tuesday, May 15, 2007**

Brief Discussion of One-Minute Essays & Sermons You Attended: 1:30-2:00 p.m.

On Site Sermons Viewed: Kerby Anvedovech, Karen Davison, Linda Fowler, Allan Grazier: 2:00-3:00 p.m.

Break: 3:00-3:15 p.m.

Lecture and Discussion of *Preaching That Speaks to Women*, Alice P. Mathews 3:15-4:00 p.m.

Showing of Excellent Sermon: Paula Harris-White: 4:00-4:20 p.m.

**Tuesday, May 22, 2007**

Brief Discussion of One-Minute Essays & Sermons You Attended: 1:30-2:00 p.m.

On Site Sermons Viewed: Carol Harberg, Paula Harris-White, Ron Harris-White, Lee Hartman, Robin Livingston: 2:00-3:00 p.m.

Break: 3:00-3:15 p.m.

Lecture and Discussion of *Preaching Mark in Two Voices*, Brian Blount & Gary Charles: 3:15-4:00 p.m.

Showing of Excellent Sermon: Carol Harberg: 4:00-4:20 p.m.

**Tuesday, May 29, 2007**

Brief Discussion of One-Minute Essays & Sermons You Attended: 1:30-2:00 p.m.

On Site Sermons Viewed: Tamara Roberts, Catherine Schneider, Linda Smith, Kevin Raymond: 2:00-3:00 p.m.

Break: 3:00-3:15 p.m.

Lecture and Discussion of *Preaching Mark in Two Voices*, Brian Blount & Gary Charles: 3:15-4:00 p.m.

Evaluations: 4:00-4:20 p.m.

**\*Please note that you have a manuscript due on the days where your name is listed. Also note that at least half of each book's reading is due on the days they are listed.**