

HOM 500 Syllabus
Fall 2019

Vancouver School of Theology

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Class meets: Tuesday eve (6-9): Homiletics *Fix dates for blog*

“Grandfather was a fire and brimstone preacher
But there are things the homilies and hymns can’t teach ya”
--Aaron Burr in Lin Manuel Miranda’s *Hamilton*

“The preached word of God is the word of God”—Huldrych Zwingli

Purpose

At least once a week the preacher stands to address the congregation. What does the preacher say? How? On what sources do they draw—whether ancient or contemporary, sacred or secular, communal or personal? What’s the goal here? How do we tell if the preacher has done well and how we might improve?

Once in parish or other leadership positions, these questions are difficult to answer. The Sabbath seems to come back around every three days. There is little time or space for critical reflection. This course and seminary in general are gifts. They provide the critical space and time necessary to reflect on the task and practice and internal goods of preaching. Some academic courses are narrow: you dive deeply into a very specific set of tasks and materials. Homiletics is broader than that. Here you draw on all you have learned in your seminary education and set a trajectory for yourself—a learning agenda—for years to come. The goal is not just one’s own erudition. It is the church’s edification.

Competence Objectives

1-To seed a lifelong love of preaching. The value of this course can only rightly be assessed as you look back on decades of preaching at the end of your life. This one will be hard to evaluate this fall!

2-To engage the church’s historical wisdom on preaching. The sermon completes the hermeneutical hand-off: we heed God’s voice from the scriptures, we listen to the wisdom of tradition, we discern a specific word for *this* gathered body, and we bless and challenge and love the people God sends. Students will practice preaching from the first inkling of an idea to our leadership of the church’s mission.

3-To grow into your own voice as a preacher. I assume that God has gifted you in unique ways for the church’s edification and the world’s blessing. This course will help you find that unique gifting in the years ahead.

4-To host well. We will receive a number of guests to class who will teach us from their

experience of homiletics. We need to be especially well prepared those days to learn all we can from these folks.

5-To learn the techniques and practices appropriate to your entering into objectives 2-4. Technique is not of primary importance, but it is important, and we each have to find our own rhythm as preachers.

Required Reading: Books to buy (Available at UBC Bookstore)

Ellen Davis, with Austin McIver Dennis, *The Luminous Word* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016). 9780802874238

Douglas A. Campbell *Paul: An Apostle's Journey* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2018). 0802873472

Fleming Rutledge *Three Hours: Sermons for Good Friday* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2019). 0802877192