

Vancouver School of Theology

HOM 500 Introduction to Homiletics Fall 2022

Thursdays, 9 am-11:50 am

“Grandfather was a fire and brimstone preacher
But there are things the homilies and hymns won’t teach ya.”

--Aaron Burr in Lin Manuel Miranda’s *Hamilton*

“The preached word of God is the word of God.”

—Huldrych Zwingli

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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. By what authority do *you* preach? And to what end for this specific gathering of people? Preaching is never context-less—your engagement with yourself and your people must be made plain.

4-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.

5-To do business with the material in *this* course. You don't have to like or agree with the materials we read, but you do have to engage with them and show growth in your work for having done so.

Required Reading: Books to buy

Lisa Bowens, *African American Readings of Paul*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2020. 0802876765

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

Thomas G. Long, *The Witness of Preaching* 3rd ed. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2016. [Make sure you buy this third edition since there are substantial additions since the second]. 0664261426

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

Course Outline

September 15 – Introduction to preaching

Please read Thomas G. Long, *The Witness of Preaching* 3rd ed. pp. 1-57.

Please read Barbara Brown Taylor's *The Preaching Life*, pp. 76-86 (provided online)

September 22 – Encountering the Word for preaching

Please read Lisa Bowens, *African American Readings of Paul*, pp. 1-14, 291-309.

Please read Stephen Farris, *So, Tell Me a Story*, pp. 1-32 (provided online)

Please read Thomas G. Long, *The Witness of Preaching* 3rd ed. pp. 58-112

September 29 – Finding your voice as a preacher

Sermon #1 (Two-minutes on Jonah 1)

Please read Thomas G. Long, *The Witness of Preaching* 3rd ed. pp. 113-195.

Nancy Lammers Gross' *Women's Voices and the Practice of Preaching* pp. 92-117. (provided online)

October 6 - Preaching on High Holidays (Christmas & Easter)

Exegetical Paper due

Please read Fleming Rutledge, *Three Hours: Sermons for Good Friday*

Please read Thomas G. Long, *The Witness of Preaching* 3rd ed. pp. 196-253.

October 13 – Preaching for Civic Occasions (Canada Day, National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, Remembrance Day)

Sermon #2 (Four-minutes on Jonah 2)

Please read Ellen Davis, with Austin Mclver Dennis, *The Luminous Word*, pp. 1-137.

October 21 – Preaching in times of crisis and pastoral care (local or international crisis, preaching in care home services)

Please read Ellen Davis, with Austin Mclver Dennis, *The Luminous Word*, pp. 138-244.

October 28 (Reading Week)

November 3 – Preaching and the Sacraments (Baptism and The Lord's Supper)

Please note this class is online only

Please read Ellen Davis, with Austin Mclver Dennis, *The Luminous Word*, pp. 245-316.

November 10 – Preaching during rites of passage (Weddings and Funerals)

Sermon #3 (Six-minutes on Jonah 3)

Please read Lisa Bowens, *African American Readings of Paul*, pp. 15-112.

November 17 – Reports from Jericho: Fieldwork presentations the observation of homiletics in local churches.

Please read Lisa Bowens, *African American Readings of Paul*, pp. 113-186.

Sermon #4 Part I (Ten-minute sermon on Jonah 4)

November 24 – Panel discussion on preaching

Please read Lisa Bowens, *African American Readings of Paul*, pp. 187-264.

December 2 – Sunday's coming – next steps in developing your homiletical practice

Sermon #4 Part 2 (Ten-minute sermon on Jonah 4)

Please read Lisa Bowens, *African American Readings of Paul*, pp. 265-290.

Assignments:

Please note:

Audit students will complete:

- All reading as assigned by Professor Lockhart
- Class participation

No letter grades will be given for the completion of courses by audit.

Certificate students will complete:

- All reading as assigned by Professor Lockhart
- Class participation and group work
- A 3-credit course requires 9-12 pages; therefore, Certificate students will complete the assignments 1 to 3 below, as well as the 2- and 4-minute sermons.

Written assignments should demonstrate the ability to thoughtfully engage the material (readings) for class while offering a personal reflection on the material covered.

Certificate courses will be evaluated on an Approved (APP) /Not Approved (NAPP) system. No letter grades will be given for the completion of certificate courses.

***Asynchronous Students** in *Certificate and Basic degree* programs will also be required to submit to Professor Lockhart a 500-word summary after watching the recording providing their top three insights from the class. Please email summary to rlockhart@standrews.edu before the next week's class.

Basic Degree students will complete:

- All of the assignments below numbered 1 through 4.

1. Class Participation and Expectations

Consistent and timely attendance is required according to VST guidelines. This includes the completion of the assigned reading for each class with each student ready to engage in discussion. If a student is unable to attend a class, Professor Lockhart is to be informed by email. Smart Phones can be disruptive to the learning experience of other students. Please set all phones to silent or turn them off during class. Exceptions can always be made for medical or family issues that require being in constant contact. Laptops may be used during class but for note taking only. Surfing the internet is not permitted while class is in session unless it is part of a small group activity. Sending texts and emails will be limited to break time.

2. Exegetical Paper (*Due at the start of class on October 6 by email to rlockhart@standrews.edu*)

This assignment will provide the exegetical basis for the sermon you will preach at the end of the course and is based on Jonah 4: 1-11. The form of this paper is **to follow Long's Exegetical Method for Preachers (Chapter 3)**. This means that your paper describes your experience with the process of exegesis outlined by Long. You must cite at least **five sources**. At the end of your paper, add a summary of how you might preach this passage (no more than a paragraph).

3. Homiletical field work (*Due at the start of class on November 10 to be presented in class November 17 by emailing rlockhart@standrews.edu*)

Select a place of worship (in person if possible) to attend (preferably one that is not familiar to you) that includes a sermon or homily preached in the service.

THE WHAT: Write a 500-word summary of the worship service (who was in attendance, the style of worship, the scriptures read)

SO WHAT: Write a 500-word summary of the sermon or homily preached (assess the message based on your learnings thus far in HOM500)

NOW WHAT: Write a 500-word blog post/review of the sermon indicating the impact of the message on you (positive and negative aspects) and how the teaching might shape your practice of faith.

4. Preaching in Class (2, 4, 6 and 10 mins)

In this class we will begin (or for many, continue) a lifelong journey of learning to preach. As a result, the preaching tasks in this class are designed to evolve throughout the term in order to give students the opportunity to hear and analyze their preaching voice, style and delivery.

Students will preach four short sermons throughout the course – 2 mins, 4 mins, 6 mins and 10 mins in length. (Time limits will be observed in order to permit each student the opportunity to preach).

All preaching assignments will be presented in full script (no bullet points) to the professor by email (rlockhart@standrews.edu) before the start of class on the day of presentation.

In the week that follows each preaching assignment students will:

- watch the class recording of their preaching to review and reflect upon their own style and content of preaching
- will complete a brief, 250-word self-assessment of their preaching (based on the recording) sharing their perceived strengths, weaknesses and how to improve for the next preaching opportunity
- students will email that self-assessment to Professor Lockhart (rlockhart@standrews.edu) before the start of the following week's class.

Deadlines:

Submission of assignments on time is a part of academic, professional, and pastoral competence and a part of every course at VST. All assignments in courses are due on the dates specified in the syllabus for each course. Failure to submit an assignment on time will be noted in the narrative evaluation of an assignment. Repeated failure to submit assignments on time may affect the final grade for the course.