Syllabus
Sermonic Design – HOM 640
Spring 2006, TTh, 9:30-10:45am

Professor: O. Wesley Allen, Jr.
Office: 209
Phone: 252-0361 x 252 (w)
296-6422 (h)
Email: wallen@lextheo.edu

There is no ideal or standard form which every sermon should take…. Nevertheless, there is a right form for each sermon, namely, the form that is right for this particular sermon.”
—H. Grady Davis

A. PREREQUISITES
Basic Preaching (HOM 531)

B. DESCRIPTION
During the last thirty years or so, homiletical scholarship has revolved, to a great deal, around the question of sermon form, especially since 1) content and form are inseparable and 2) sermon form implies a certain theological understanding concerning the nature of the Good News and of scripture, and vice versa. However, one sermon form does not fit all sermons. Pastors who stand in the pulpit week in and week out need to have a backpack filled with sermon forms that can be utilized and adapted to make the proclamation of the Good News appropriate to the particular scriptural text being used, the primary theological focus and emotional function of the sermon, the specific liturgical occasion, and the state of the life of the congregation. This course in sermonic design will serve as an in depth introduction to a variety of sermon forms, including issues such as how one chooses an appropriate form for a given sermon, how form shapes delivery, and how different forms are heard and experienced.

C. CLASS PROCEDURES
Because the goal of this course is to make a wider variety of approaches to sermonic design user-friendly to students, we will survey five different forms proposed in recent decades, read sermons exemplifying the forms, analyze the strengths and weaknesses of the forms, and practice using them.

As an upper level seminar, Sermonic Design will consist primarily of discussion. Students must be prepared for discussion by reading the assigned materials well.

Moreover, this is meant to be a hands-on class, where students preach what they practice. Students will be asked to prepare a sermon draft for each of the five forms we will study. For the sake of focusing on the form (as opposed to other elements of sermon development, such as exegesis, etc.), we will use a single biblical text for all our sermon drafts.

Students will, however, preach full sermons twice in class using other biblical texts and choosing from the range of forms studied.

D.Min. students will also write a major paper surveying the broader homiletical discussion during the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, locate their own preaching within that discussion, and evaluate directions their preaching should develop in light of this study.
D. COURSE GOALS AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. Students will continue building on the theological understanding of preaching they developed in Basic Preaching (HOM 531).
2. Students will continue the process begun in Basic Preaching (HOM 531) of finding their voice for the pulpit.
3. Students will learn to evaluate different approaches to sermonic design theologically, rhetorically, and pastorally.
4. Students will sharpen their approach to and discipline of developing and delivering weekly sermons by narrowly focusing on the stage of sermonic design related to shaping the rhetorical movement of the sermon.
5. In addition to the outcomes listed above, D.Min. students will gain a broad overview of the homiletical discussion of the last four or so decades concerning sermonic design and learn to better evaluate their preaching ministry in relation to the discussion.

E. REQUIRED TEXTS & READINGS

Required

O. Wesley Allen, Jr., Good News from Tinyville: Stories of Heart and Hope (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 1999).
Fred B. Craddock, As One without Authority, rev. ed. (St. Louis: Chalice, 2001).
Frank Thomas, They Like to Never Quit Praisin’ God (Cleveland: Pilgrim, 1997).

F. RECOMMENDED TEXTS & READINGS


G. ASSIGNMENTS

M.Div.

Class Participation 20% (demonstrated in attendance, participation in discussions and familiarity with readings)
Sermon Drafts 50% (10% per draft)
Sermons 30% (15% per sermon)

D.Min.

Class Participation 15% (demonstrated in attendance, participating in discussions and familiarity with readings)
Sermon Drafts 45% (9% per draft)
Sermons 20% (10% per sermon)
Final Paper 20%

*NOTE: The quality of work for the doctoral program is assumed to be higher than that of the Masters programs. D.Min. students are required to do work that is equivalent to a B or higher to receive Credit for the course.
H. GRADING

A  (94-97)    B  (84-87)  C  (74-77)  D  (64-67)
A-  (90-93)  B- (80-83)  C- (70-73)  D-  (60-63)

I. ABSENCES
Class attendance is expected. Unexcused absences will lead to a reduction of the final grade. Being significantly and/or repeatedly late for class will be counted as absences and will also lead to a reduction of the final grade.

J. OTHER POLICIES

- **Cell Phones**
  Cell phones should be turned off during class. Cell phones disturbing class will affect your class participation grade.

- **Assignment Due Dates**
  All assignments are due at the beginning of class as listed on the schedule below. Any assignment missed or turned in late will create weeping and gnashing of teeth in relation to one’s grade.

  Dates that sermons will be preached in class will be selected and negotiated in class. Once a date is set, however, it cannot be changed. Failure to preach on an assigned date will result in a student receiving a zero for the sermon.

- **Inclusive Language**
  For written materials, class discussions and sermons delivered in class, students will be expected to be familiar with and adhere to the Inclusive Language Policy of the Seminary.

- **Plagiarism**
  Students are expected to be familiar with and follow the School’s policy concerning plagiarism. Plagiarism in preaching is a widespread problem that weakens the proclamation and reception of the Gospel. However, the oral nature of sermons requires assigning credit to sources in a different manner than one uses in written materials. We will discuss these issues when we turn our attention to imagery and language for the sermon.

K. DISABILITIES
Lexington Theological Seminary complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. If you believe you have a condition that will require accommodation, please refer to the Student Handbook, page 9, and follow the procedures outlined. Please review this syllabus carefully and make an appointment with the professor to discuss any assignments for which you believe you will need accommodation according to the arrangements made with the dean.

L. DAILY CLASS SCHEDULE

1/26  Introduction
      Syllabus
      Exegesis of Passage

     Form #1: Four Pages

1/31, 2/2  Read and discuss Wilson’s *The Four Pages of the Sermon*

2/7, 2/9  Present and discuss Four-Page Sermon Drafts
Form #2: Inductive

2/14, 2/16 Read and discuss Craddock’s *As One Without Authority*
2/21, 2/23 Present and discuss Inductive Sermon Drafts

**Preaching Labs**

2/28, 3/2, 3/7, 3/9

3/14, 3/16 **SPRING BREAK**

Form #3: Narrative

3/21, 3/23 Read and discuss Lowry’s *The Homiletical Plot*
3/28, 3/30 Present and discuss Narrative Sermon Drafts

Form #4: Celebration

4/4, 4/6 Read and discuss Thomas’s *They Like to Never Quit Praisin’ God*
4/11, 4/13 Present and discuss Celebration Sermon Drafts

Form #5: Story-Sermon

4/18 Read and discuss Allen’s *Good News from Tinyville*
4/20, 4/25 Present and discuss Story-Sermon Sermon Drafts

4/27, 5/2, 5/4, 5/10 **Preaching Labs**

M. SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY FOR FURTHER STUDY


Paul Scott Wilson, *Preaching and Homiletical Theory* (St. Louis: Chalice, 2004) esp. 73-100.