



MS 2P03

THE ART OF PREACHING

Tuesdays, 7:00 – 9:00 p.m.

Location: TBA

Dr. Michael Knowles
Divinity College 214
(905) 525-9140 x27088
knowlesm@mcmaster.ca

Course Description

This course provides an overview of the theological character, goals, and methods of Christian proclamation in a congregational setting, giving particular attention to issues of hermeneutics, interpretation, structure, delivery, and the relation of preaching to contexts of worship, discipleship, and mission.

Specializations: Pastoral Studies

Course Objectives

KNOWING:

- ▶ To introduce basic hermeneutical issues that apply to the process of moving from biblical and social exegesis to proclamation.
- ▶ To examine and evaluate the component elements of preaching and their respective contributions to effective communication.
- ▶ To explore appropriate methods and contexts for preaching, and their impact on style and presentation.

BEING:

- ▶ To reflect on spiritual and ministerial identity as they apply to Christian proclamation.
- ▶ To help students identify their preferred style or styles of preaching, and gain confidence in public presentation.

DOING:

- ▶ To evaluate representative forms and models of preaching in relation to students' own ministries of preaching.
- ▶ To provide students with practice in the composition and delivery of sermons, together with opportunities for comprehensive peer evaluation.

This course is intended to help students:

- ▶ Read biblical texts and congregational contexts in light of each other.
 - ▶ Communicate a biblical world view and biblical insights in a creative and engaging manner.
 - ▶ Communicate comprehensibly and proficiently in public.
-

Lecture Outline and Schedule

September 11

I. Introduction

A. Wondering Where the Lions Are: An Introduction to the Basics of Preaching

September 18

Reading Assignment: Long, *Witness*, 11–51
Supplemental: Karl Barth, *Homiletics*, 47–55

B. The Purposes of Preaching

September 25

Reading Assignment: Long, *Witness*, 52–98
Sermon Review Due

C. The Preacher as Witness; the Preacher as Navigator

October 2

II. The Art of Reading: Texts and Contexts

A. The Ancient Text in its Ancient Contexts

1. Economic, Social, Historical, and Cultural Contexts
2. Hermeneutical Contexts

B. Contemporary Contexts for Preaching

1. Cultural Exegesis and the Exegesis of Culture
-

October 9 Reading Week (no class)

October 16

Reading Assignment: Long, *Witness*, 99–116
Exegesis Assignment Due

III. The Art of Communication

A. Analogical Imagination: Trouble and Grace

Allen, Ronald J., ed. *Patterns of Preaching: A Sermon Sampler*. St. Louis: Chalice, 1998.
MILLS BV 4211.2 .P28 1998 (Reserve)

Long, Thomas G. *The Witness of Preaching*. Third Edition. Louisville: Westminster/John
Knox, 2016. MILLS BV 4211.3 .L66 2016 (Reserve)

All required textbooks for this class are available from the College's book service, READ On Bookstore, Room 145, McMaster Divinity College. Texts may be purchased on the first day of class. Other book services may also carry the texts. For advance purchase, you may contact:

READ On Bookstore	E-mail: books@readon.ca
5 International Blvd	http://www.readon.ca
Etobicoke, ON	Tel: (416) 620-2934
M9W 6H3	FAX: (416) 622-2308

B. Recommended additional resources

Barth, Karl. *Homiletics*. Tr. Geoffrey W. Bromiley and Donald E. Daniels. Louisville:
Westminster John Knox, 1991. MILLS BV 4214 .B313 1991 (Reserve)

Wilson, Paul Scott. *The Four Pages of the Sermon: A Guide to Biblical Preaching*.
Nashville: Abingdon, 1999. MILLS BS 534.5 .W55 1999 (Reserve)

The course bibliography is available online on the Avenue to Learn course site

C. Assignments	% of Final Grade
1. Regular participation in all class sessions, including peer evaluation of student sermons presented in class.	
2. Completion of all assigned reading.	
3. Sermon Review	15%

Select four sermons of your choice, one from each of the four sections of Ronald J. Allen, ed., *Patterns of Preaching: A Sermon Sampler* (St. Louis: Chalice, 1998): "Traditional Patterns," "Contemporary Patterns," "Patterns for Subjects," and "Patterns for Theology." Briefly describe the content and method of each sermon in relation to the intended purpose and goals of the pattern in question. Explain what makes each sermon effective (or ineffective), both in terms of the techniques that the particular sermon employs, and as

concerns the value of the method and pattern that the sermon exemplifies. As illustrated by your chosen examples, to what sort of message is each of these strategies best suited?

Length: 6 pages/1500 words

Due Date: September 25

4. Exegesis 25%

This exercise is in four parts, totalling approximately eleven pages.

- a. Provide an exegesis of one of the following passages, giving evidence (in footnote form) of the use of a range of secondary sources, at least one of which must originate prior to 1800 or represent a non-Western perspective (~four pages):

Matthew 5–7

John 18–21

Romans 5–8

Revelation 1–3

Mark 4

Acts 1–4

Hebrews 11–12

- b. Provide an exegesis of your own situation and that of your anticipated audience, based on the attached survey (~four pages).
- c. Keeping in mind the various interpretative issues reviewed in class, discuss the relationship between the text, yourself, and your anticipated audience, outlining the challenges and opportunities for understanding and spiritual formation that arise from this interaction (~two pages).
- d. Provide a one-page outline of a sermon based on the study you have conducted.

Total length: 11 pages/~2,500 words

Due Date: October 16

5. “Welcome to My World” [Not graded]

Because many people find it difficult to speak in front of others, this exercise is intended to provide initial practice in public speaking. Your assignment is to speak for five minutes without notes, visual aids, or electronic assistance, on the subject, “Welcome to My World.” The content is entirely at your discretion, but must convey something of personal relevance or interest and include a reference to at least one biblical text or theme.

Date: November 13

6. Sermon Preparation

Each student will preach two sermons in class: preparation for the first sermon will take the form of an explanatory essay (due two weeks prior and returned the following week); preparation for the second sermon will include a commentary and self-analysis based on the video record of the first sermon presented in class.

a. First Sermon

i. *Explanatory Essay* 15%

Assemble preparatory material for a sermon based on a text of your choice from either Testament (but not the same passage or biblical genre used for the exegesis assignment). Explain why you chose this text and what you understand it to mean. Of all the possible sermons that could be preached from this text, explain why you intend to preach this message in this manner to this particular congregation (who in this case are your fellow students). Do not submit a draft copy of the sermon itself; simply summarize your main points, indicating how each premise is derived from the text and applies to your audience. Where appropriate, include evidence (in the form of footnotes) indicating use of secondary sources (e.g. commentaries or texts on preaching). The essay will be returned one week prior to the scheduled presentation of the sermon. *Essays cannot, under any circumstances, be submitted late.*

Length: 6 pages/1500 words

Due Date: November 6 or 13

ii. *Sermon Presentation* 20%

Incorporating instructor comments provided in response to the explanatory essay, preach the full sermon in person for peer evaluation on a date selected in advance (i.e. March 9 or 16). Sermons will be video-recorded for personal review and self-evaluation.

Length: 12–15 minutes *maximum*

Scheduled for November 20 & 27

b. Second Sermon

i. *Self-Analysis and Commentary* 5%

After reviewing the video of your first in-class sermon, comment on your strengths as a preacher, as well as areas for possible correction or improvement. On the basis of this review, articulate your goals for improvement as a preacher and indicate what you intend to do differently in your second sermon.

Length: 2 pages/500 words

Due Date: November 27/December 4

ii. *Sermon Presentation* 20%

Incorporating insights from your self-analysis, prepare and preach a second sermon in person for peer evaluation on a date selected in advance.

Length: 12–15 minutes *maximum*

Scheduled for December 4 & 11

<i>Assignment Summary</i>			<i>Length</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>Due Dates</i>
Sermon Review			1,500 words	15%	Sept 25
Exegesis			2,500 words	25%	Oct 16
“Welcome to My World”			5 minutes	not graded	Nov 13
Group A	Sermon 1	Explanatory Essay	1,500 words	15%	Nov 6
		In-Class Sermon	15 minutes	20%	Nov 20
	Sermon 2	Self-Assessment	500 words	5%	Nov 27
		In-Class Sermon	15 minutes	20%	Dec 4
Group B	Sermon 1	Explanatory Essay	1,500 words	15%	Nov 13
		In-Class Sermon	15 minutes	20%	Nov 27
	Sermon 2	Self-Assessment	500 words	5%	Dec 4
		In-Class Sermon	15 minutes	20%	Dec 11

D. Academic Honesty

Academic dishonesty is a serious offence that may take any number of forms, including plagiarism, the submission of work that is not one’s own or for which previous credit has been obtained, and/or unauthorized collaboration with other students. Academic dishonesty can result in severe consequences, e.g., failure of the assignment, failure of the course, a notation on one’s academic transcript, and/or suspension or expulsion from the College. Students are responsible for understanding what constitutes academic dishonesty. Please refer to the Divinity College Statement on Academic Honesty: <http://www.mcmasterdivinity.ca/programs/rules-regulations>.

E. Gender Inclusive Language

McMaster Divinity College uses inclusive language for human beings in worship services, student written materials, and all of its publications. In reference to biblical texts, the integrity of the original expressions and the names of God should be respected. The NRSV and TNIV are examples of the use of inclusive language for human beings. It is expected that inclusive language will be used in chapel services and all MDC assignments.

F. Style

All stylistic considerations (including but not limited to questions of formatting, footnotes, and bibliographic references) must conform to the McMaster Divinity College Style Guidelines for Essays and Theses: https://www.mcmasterdivinity.ca/sites/default/files/documents/mdc_styleguide.pdf. To assist with prose composition, students are encouraged to make use of grammarly.com, which is funded by the university, along with the Writing Support Services provided by McMaster's Student Success Centre (<http://studentsuccess.mcmaster.ca/students/academic-skills/writing-support-services.html>). Failure to observe appropriate form will result in grade reductions. See also "CRITERIA FOR GRADING OF WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS," below.

G. Cell Phone/Computer Policy

Students must refrain from conducting cell phone conversations while class is in session. Should you need to maintain contact with family members and/or your church or ministry, please turn off the ringer so as to avoid disturbing others; upon receipt of an urgent call, you may discretely excuse yourself from the classroom. The same policy applies to all computer-generated sound schemes, pagers, or other electronic annunciation systems.

H. Deadlines and Late Submission Penalty

Assignments are due in class at 10:30 a.m. on the due date, after which they will be considered late and penalized accordingly. The penalty for late submission of assignments is 1% per calendar day (without limit).

Once classes have concluded, graded assignments will be available for retrieval from the Student Records Office (Room 210) for 30 days after the end of the semester (calculated as the day on which grades are due), following which they will be discarded.

Disclaimer:

This syllabus is the property of the instructor and is prepared with currently available information. The instructor reserves the right to make revisions up to and including the first day of class.

SERMON EVALUATION FORM

Date: _____ Start time: _____ End time: _____

Preacher: _____ Evaluator: _____

Theme, focus, or text: _____

Thesis: The main point this sermon makes is... _____

Purpose: As a result of this sermon, the hearers should... _____

Structure: What is the basic outline of this sermon? (List points on reverse side) _____

Was the sermon clearly structured or developed (beginning, middle, end)? Easy to follow?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 _____

Biblical exegesis/theological analysis: How clearly did the sermon explain the text/theme?

3 6 9 12 15 18 21 24 27 30 _____

Culture and Audience: How clearly did the sermon relate to contemporary culture/the immediate audience?

3 6 9 12 15 18 21 24 27 30 _____

The Speaker: How effectively did the speaker use voice and body movements?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 _____

Communicative strategies: How effective were the illustrations in relation to the text/theme?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 _____

Summary: How effective was the sermon in accomplishing its intended purpose?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 _____

Additional comments and observations: _____

TOTAL _____
100

UNDERSTANDING YOURSELF, YOUR CULTURE, AND YOUR AUDIENCE: AN EXERCISE IN SOCIAL AND CULTURAL EXEGESIS

Personal Information

Name:

Your Current Age:

Gender:

Highest Degree received:

Income Range of your Family of Origin:

Under 20K	_____	60 – 80K	_____
20K – 40K	_____	80 – 100K	_____
40K – 60K	_____	Over 100K	_____

Which of the following designations would best describe you, your family of origin, family friends, or neighbourhood?

Administration	_____%	Educational	_____%
Blue Collar/Labour	_____%	Management	_____%
Clerical	_____%	Military	_____%
Domestic	_____%	Professional	_____%

Institution or Context for Ministry

Name:

Age of Members of your Audience (by percentage):

0–15	_____%	35–45	_____%
15–25	_____%	45–65	_____%
25–35	_____%	65+	_____%

Gender of Audience/Community:

Male _____% Female _____%

Educational Background:

Primary	_____%	Secondary	_____%
Post-Secondary	_____%	Post-Grad	_____%

Income Range:

Under 20K	_____%	60 – 80K	_____%
20K – 40K	_____%	80 – 100K	_____%
40K – 60K	_____%	Over 100K	_____%

What percentage of your audience/community would likely describe themselves, their occupations, or employment situations in the following terms?

Self-Employed	_____%	Small Business	_____%
Service Industries	_____%	Unemployed	_____%
Skilled Trades	_____%	(any of the above)	

In what church or setting were you converted, or did you spend the longest period of time between the ages of 5 and 25?

Type of Institution/Community (Church, Hospital, Prison, etc.):

Which of the following terms would you use to describe yourself and your faith journey?

Agnostic	Catholic	Feminist
Anglo-Catholic	Charismatic	Fundamentalist
Atheist	Conservative	Liberal
Back-sliding	Creationist	Liberationist
Bible-believing	Eco-Theological	Liturgical
Born-again	Evangelical	Messianic

Which of the following terms might significant numbers of your audience use to describe themselves and their faith journey?

New Age	Radical	Sacramentalist
Non-Christian	Reformed	Spiritualist
Non-conformist	Renewed	Traditionalist
Non-denominational	Restorationist	12-Step Adherent
Observant	Revisionist	Womanist
Orthodox	Revivalist	Other

Name three significant personal or social factors that keep you interested in reading the Bible and/or seeking to understand God:

What, in your opinion, are the three most significant reasons why people in your congregation/community gather together?

Name three reasons why, despite its difficulty, you want to undertake Christian ministry:

Identify three ways in which Christian adherence makes a difference in the lives of members of your community:

If Jesus were to grant you a personal audience this evening, what three questions would you ask him?

If Jesus were to attend the next gathering of your church or place of ministry, what three questions might its members most want to ask?

CRITERIA FOR GRADING OF WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS

Grading of written materials will be based on the following general criteria

Grade Range	Content	Argument	Presentation
90–100 A+ 85–89 A 80–84 A–	Mastery of subject matter; creativity and individualized integration of insights and their relationships; exceeds required elements	Clear, logical structure; with comprehensive introduction, persuasive argumentation, and innovative conclusions	Detailed adherence to relevant style for formatting of text, notes, and bibliography; no errors of grammar or syntax; elegant presentation
77–79 B+ 73–76 B 70–72 B–	Above-average grasp of principles and concepts, and their inter-relationship; completion of all required elements	Coherent structure and consistent argumentation; well-stated introduction and conclusion	General adherence to relevant style and format; few errors of grammar or syntax
67–69 C+ 63–66 C 60–62 C–	Adequate understanding of theoretical foundations; minimal completion of required elements	Rudimentary structure; minimal introductory and concluding statements	Significant errors of grammar, syntax, or style
57–59 D+ 53–56 D 50–52 D–	Low level of comprehension; required elements incomplete or missing	Lack of coherence or structure in argumentation; no introduction or conclusion	Abundant grammatical, syntactical, and stylistic errors
0–49% F	Inability to grasp basic concepts; required elements missing	Incomprehensible or illogical structure and argumentation	Failure to follow stylistic guidelines; incomprehensible syntax
Comments			