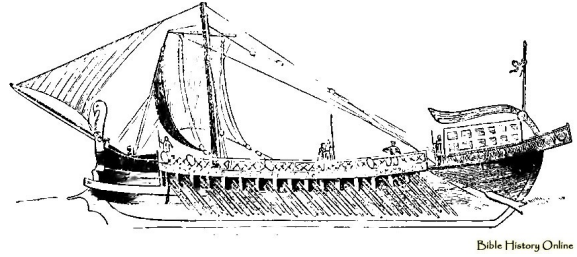


MCMASTER DIVINITY COLLEGE
FALL SEMESTER 2023



Preaching in the 21st Century

MS 3XP3 (Professional Degree/Certificate)

MS 5XP5 (Doctor of Practical Theology)

MS 6XP6 (MA/PhD)

Mondays, 4:00 – 5:50 p.m.

Dr. Michael Knowles
Divinity College 214
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Course Description

Karl Barth speaks of the Word of God in its “threefold form”: the living Word (Christ), the written Word (Scripture), and “the Word of God Preached” (*Church Dogmatics* 1.1.4). Guided by a conviction that the written word determines the shape of the preached word in its testimony to the Living Word, this course, intended for students with minimal prior experience in preaching, introduces the theory and practice of Christian proclamation in a congregational setting.

Specializations: Christian Worldview Church & Culture 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 contemporary contexts for preaching, with particular attention to the impact of postmodern thought.

BEING:

- ▶ To reflect on spiritual and ministerial identity as they apply to Christian proclamation.
- ▶ To facilitate students’ identification of 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 aims to help students:

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

Lecture Outline and Schedule

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September 11

1. Preaching: The Basics

.....
September 18

2. The Preacher as Witness; the Preacher as Navigator

Reading: Long, *Witness of Preaching*, 11–57
Supplemental: Karl Barth, *Homiletics*, 47–55

.....
September 25

“Patterns of Preaching” due (Professional degrees only)

3. Textual Interpretation

Reading: Long, *Witness of Preaching*, 58–112

.....
October 2

4. Cultural Awareness: Texts and Contexts

.....
October 9 Thanksgiving (no class)

.....
October 16

“Reading to Speak” due (all programmes)

5. The Art of Communication: Finding Analogies

Reading: Long, Witness of Preaching, 224–53
Supplemental: Wilson, Four Pages of the Sermon, 79–89; 111–22; 147–57; 189–96

October 23 OT sermon explanatory essays due (Professional degrees only)

6. Focus and Function: Keeping the Main Thing the Main Thing

Reading: Long, Witness of Preaching, 113–35

October 30 Theory and Practice of Preaching due (Research degrees only)

7. The Art of Composition: Principles for Composing a Sermon

Reading: Long, Witness of Preaching, 136–223

November 6

Student Sermons (Hebrew Bible/OT)

November 13 (Brendan DePhillippeaux)

Student Sermons (Hebrew Bible/OT)

Consultation/Sermon Workshop

November 20

8. Forms and Styles of Preaching

View and complete the reading for at least two of the four following modules (on the A2L course page):

- a. Expository Preaching (Mayhue, “Rediscovering Expository Preaching”)
- b. Narrative Preaching (Miller, “Narrative Preaching”)
- c. Pastoral Preaching (Neufeld, “Preaching and Pastoral Care”)
- d. Liturgical Preaching (Quivik, “On Liturgical Preaching”)

November 27

Student Sermons (New Testament)

Extended Class Session

December 4

Research essay due (Research degrees only)

9. Proclamation, Authority, and Grace

December 8

Last day of classes / Final date for submission of late assignments

Course Requirements:

A. Textbooks (on reserve)

Allen, Ronald J., ed. *Patterns of Preaching: A Sermon Sampler*. St. Louis: Chalice, 1998.
Long, Thomas G. *The Witness of Preaching*. Third Edition. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2016.

All required textbooks for this class are available from the Hurlburt Family Bookstore located beside the entrance to the Parker Memorial Chapel of McMaster Divinity College. For advance purchase, you may contact the bookstore manager, Bernice Quek, by phone at 416.620.2934 or 416.668.3434 (mobile); or by email at books@readon.ca. The Hurlburt Family Bookstore also carries other books and merchandise and is open throughout the academic year during posted hours.

Available on the A2L course website:

Mayhue, Richard L. "Rediscovering Expository Preaching." *The Master's Seminary Journal* 1.2 (1990) 109–27.

Miller, Calvin. "Narrative Preaching." In *Handbook of Contemporary Preaching*, edited by Michael Dudit, 103–16. Nashville: Broadman, 1992.

Neufeld, John H. "Preaching and Pastoral Care." *Vision* 10.1 (2009) 67–73.

Quivik, Melinda A. "On Liturgical Preaching: The Body of Christ in Time." *Liturgy* 25.4 (2010) 3–9.

B. Supplemental Resources

Barth, Karl. *Homiletics*. Tr. Geoffrey W. Bromiley and Donald E. Daniels. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1991.

Wilson, Paul Scott. *The Four Pages of the Sermon, Revised and Updated: A Guide to Biblical Preaching*. Nashville: Abingdon, 2018.

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

In addition of the virtual and print collections of McMaster Mills Library, all registered students have access to the online Digital Theological Library collection: <https://libguides.thedtl.org/home>. Please keep the password that you have been assigned confidential.

C. Course Requirements and Assignments

Written assignments are due at 4:00 p.m. on the due date, and are to be submitted via the Avenue to Learn course website (not via email to the course instructor or Graduate Assistant). In order to avoid late penalties, students are responsible for ensuring that assignments have been successfully uploaded.

Requirements for course assignments differ according to degree programme and specialization. In completing both oral and written assignments, DPT/MA/PhD students will focus on issues that correspond to their respective programmes of research, while MDiv/MTS students are expected to identify and emphasize themes relevant to their chosen specialization.

1. Class Participation

All students (including Auditors) are required to participate fully in on-site class sessions, including presentation of two sermons for peer evaluation. Due to the nature of the class schedule and the fact that students are responsible for evaluating each other's sermons, enrolment in this course implies consent to full participation as a requirement for academic credit.

2. Assigned Readings

Students enrolled for credit are required to complete the assigned readings for each module. The remainder of the minimum reading requirements may be selected from the course bibliography (available on the Avenue to Learn course site) and/or background materials for written assignments.

- a. MDiv/MTS 1,500 pages
- b. DPT 4,000 pages
- c. MA/PhD 6,000 pages

Bibliographies appended to written assignments should indicate the approximate number of pages read in each source listed, as well as a cumulative total.

3. Patterns of Preaching (Professional degrees only)

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

Length: 2,000 words (25%)

Due: September 25

4. Reading to Speak (all programmes)

The purpose of this assignment is to offer practice in the process of moving from text to sermon. Considering the Letters of John as sermons preached to the church of another era, select a brief passage (≈ 10 verses) from one of the three letters and explain how you would re-preach it today. In particular, what does the passage say (first) about God and (second) about life in the presence of God? What do you hear God saying in this text? In what way might this passage help your hearers to live as disciples of Jesus in 2023?

MDiv/MTS 1,000 words (10%)

Due: October 16

DPT 1,500 words (10%)

MA/PhD 2,000 words (10%)

5. Theory and Practice of Preaching (Research degrees only)

In dialogue with contemporary homileticians who both support and differ from your position, briefly outline your understanding of the rôle and authority of Scripture for Christian preaching.

DPT 1,500 words (20%)

Due: October 30

MA/PhD 2,500 words (20%)

6. Sermon Preparation (All programmes)

Each student will preach two original sermons in class, on texts of the student's choosing from the Old and New Testaments, respectively. For Professional Degree students, preparation for the first sermon will take the form of an explanatory essay to be graded and returned no later than one week prior to the sermon presentation. Oral sermon presentations will be discussed and graded by other members of the class, using the "Sermon Evaluation Form" posted on the course website.

a. *Explanatory Essay* (Professional degrees only)

Assemble preparatory material for a sermon based on a text of your choice from the Hebrew Bible. Explain why you chose this text and what you understand it to mean. Of all possible sermons that could be preached from this text, explain why you intend to preach in this manner to this particular congregation (i.e., your fellow students). Do not submit a draft of the sermon itself; simply summarize your main points, indicating how each is derived from the text and applies to your audience. Where appropriate, include footnotes indicating use of secondary sources (i.e. commentaries or texts on preaching). Because they are intended as preparation for in-class preaching, late essays will not be graded or accepted for academic credit.

MDiv/MTS 1,500 words (15%)

Due: October 23

b. *Sermon Presentations* (All programmes)

Incorporating responses to the explanatory essay and/or insights from peer assessment, preach two original sermons in person on November 6 & 13

(OT texts) and 27 (NT texts). Please note that in order to accommodate all students, class sessions may extend beyond the scheduled time slot on these two dates.

MDiv/MTS 2 × 25% Length: 15 minutes maximum (all programmes)
 DPT 2 × 15%
 MA/PhD 2 × 15%

7. Research Essay (Research degrees only)

Using the essays in Jana Childers, ed., *Purposes of Preaching* (St. Louis: Chalice, 2004) as a starting point (and interacting extensively with other critical literature, as appropriate), discuss:

- a. the theological, ecclesiastical, social, and/or rhetorical purpose(s) of contemporary preaching;
 - b. what method(s) or style(s) of preaching are best suited to achieving these goals, and why, in relation to the postmodern (or post-postmodern) context.
- In particular, discuss the rôle(s) of human and divine agency, respectively, in the preparation and delivery of the sermon.

DPT 3,500 words (40%) Due: December 4
 MA/PhD 5,000 words (40%)

Grading Summary				
		Length	Percentage	Due
<i>Professional Degrees (MDiv/MTS)</i>				
Patterns of Preaching		2,000 words	25%	Sept 25
Reading to Speak		1,000 words	10%	Oct 16
OT Sermon	Explanatory Essay	1,500 words	15%	Oct 30
	In-class presentation	15 minutes	25%	Nov 6/13
NT Sermon	In-class presentation	15 minutes	25%	Nov 27
<i>Research Degrees (DPT/MA/PhD)</i>				
Reading to Speak		1,500/2,000 words	10%	Oct 16

Theory and Practice of Preaching	1,500/2,500 words	20%	Oct 30
OT Sermon	15 minutes	15%	Nov 6/13
NT Sermon	15 minutes	15%	Nov 27
Research Essay	3,500/5,000 words	40%	Dec 4

D. Style

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://mcmasterdivinity.ca/resources-forms/mdc-style-guide>. To assist with composition and completion of assignments, students are encouraged to make use of [grammarly.com](https://www.grammarly.com) (<https://www.grammarly.com>), along with the academic support services provided by McMaster's Student Success Centre (<https://studentsuccess.mcmaster.ca/academic-support>). Failure to observe appropriate form will result in grade reductions. See also "CRITERIA FOR GRADING OF WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS," below.

E. Academic Honesty

Academic dishonesty is not qualitatively different from other types of dishonesty. It consists of misrepresenting the ownership of written work by deception or by other fraudulent means. In an academic setting this may include any number of forms such as: copying or using unauthorized aids in tests, examinations; plagiarism, i.e., submitting work that is not one's own (regardless of the means of its production) but passing it off as if it is; submitting work for credit in a course for which credit is being or has already been given, unless the previously submitted work was presented as such to the instructor of the second course and has been deemed acceptable for credit by the instructor of that course; aiding and abetting another student's dishonesty; giving false information for the purposes of gaining admission or credit; giving false information for the purposes of obtaining deferred examinations or extension of deadlines; forging or falsifying McMaster University or McMaster Divinity College documents.

F. AODA

In accordance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), the content of this course is intended to be accessible to all students who are enrolled in the course, including those with disabilities. If a student requires accommodation to participate fully in this course, that student is to contact SAS at McMaster University, who will then work directly with the McMaster Divinity College Registrar to negotiate reasonably appropriate accommodation for the student. The MDC Registrar will communicate with faculty regarding necessary accommodations. Please note that an accommodation is not retroactive and must be requested in advance to allow sufficient time for implementation.

G. Gender Inclusive Language

McMaster Divinity College uses inclusive language for human beings in worship services, student written materials, and all its publications. It is expected that inclusive language will be used in chapel services and all MDC assignments. In reference to biblical texts, the integrity of the original expressions and the names of God should be respected, but you will need to use gender-inclusive language for humans, and you will need to quote from a gender-inclusive version such as, for example, the following: NRSV (1989), NCV (1991), TEV/GNB/GNT (1992), CEV (1995), NLT (1996), NIV (2011), and the CEB (2011).

H. Protocols for Live-Streaming/Online Participation

Appropriate etiquette for online participation is set out in the document *Online Classroom Etiquette.pdf* (<https://is.gd/rZmmwH>)

I. Cell Phone/Computer Policy

Students should 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.

J. Deadlines and Late Submission Penalty

Assignments are due at 4:00 p.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). The final date for submission of late work is December 8, after which assignments will not be accepted for grading or credit.

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.

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			

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?

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

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?

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