

Preaching: Preparation and Delivery of Sermons
MS 2B03
Winter Semester 2012

Dr. Lee Beach
Div. College office #237
905 525 9140 (23502)
beachl@mcmaster.ca

Monday 3:30-5:20 pm
Location: TBA

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. Prerequisite: CM 1B03 or MS 1A03.

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 provide students the opportunity for reflection on spiritual and ministerial identity in relation to Christian proclamation.
- To help students identify their preferred style or styles of preaching, and gain confidence in public presentation.

Doing:

- To examine representative models of preaching, both contemporary and historical, 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.

A core value of our class is that it is a “learning community,” designed to be a place where each member of the community can grow through positive affirmation and constructive input. We should all come to the community as people in process, open to be deconstructed and formed through our mutual learning experience.

As professor it is my responsibility to empower each class member as a learner by treating each student with respect and dignity. I come to position myself as a fellow learner in the community and to offer information, reflection, experience and questions for us to reflect on together. Further, it is my responsibility to give good evaluation and feedback to your thinking, both as you offer it to the class in our discussions and through written work so that your growth through this class can be maximized as a result of our collaboration.

As a responsible member of our learning community you will be expected to commit yourself to the class throughout the semester that we are together. This means that in our class interactions you will endeavor to treat all members of our class with respect and dignity. Your attendance is required as your presence is necessary for our community (that is our class) to function at an optimal level. Assignments should be handed in on time and in good order on their suggested due date and no later than their final due date. While assignments will be gladly accepted after their final due date, all assignments handed in after their final due date will be subject to a penalty of 3% for each day (including weekends) late. Assignments should be submitted in hard copy on standardized paper.

I am not only available but also welcome and enjoy connections with each of you outside class time. If you would like to meet together please feel free to make an appointment with me for a time that works for both of us.

Course Topics

Why Preach?: An Introduction to Preaching
Preaching as art and spiritual discipline
The Preacher as Witness
Reading the Ancient Text in its Ancient Contexts
The importance of understanding the contemporary context for preaching
Moving from the ancient world to the contemporary world
The Art of preparing and composing a sermon
Choosing the right style for your sermon

Required Texts

Long, Thomas G. *The Witness of Preaching*. Second Edition. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 2005.

Edwards, Kent. *Deep Preaching: Creating Sermons that go Beyond the Superficial*. Nashville: B&H Academic, 2009.

Course Assignments

1. Welcome to my World

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.

Final Due Date: Jan. 16, 2012 (no grade)

2. Sermon Reviews

Over the course of the semester you will submit two sermon reviews of two separate sermons that you recently listened to. This assignment is designed to help you think about how preaching "works," what makes preaching effective or not effective? It can be a sermon that you heard in a worship service at a local church, College chapel, on the internet, on a CD, etc. (how you came across the sermon is not important, although please do state it in your review). The review should be **approximately 3 pages (double spaced)** in length and answer the following questions. What was the primary biblical text used in the sermon and what role did the text play (or not) in the sermon? What was the main idea of the sermon and how was it explained and supported? How did the sermon demonstrate sensitivity to the text and its application/relevance to the audience? What did the preacher do that made the sermon "come alive?" What did the preacher do that did not seem to connect with the audience? What, in your opinion, was the overall effectiveness of the sermon and why? Your own insights and input from course texts should form the basis for these reviews.

Due Dates:

First Review; suggested due date Jan. 23, 2012. Final due date Jan. 30, 2012.

Second Review; suggested due date Mar. 26, 2012. Final due date Apr. 2, 2012.

(Reviews = 10% x 2 = 20% of final grade)

3. Parable Presentation

As a tool for developing your own preaching style and the ability to exegete scripture from the ancient to the modern context you will present to a segment of the class a biblical parable told in modern language, in a modern setting, with modern characterization, etc. The presentation should render the meaning and details of the parable faithfully but with a clear application to a contemporary audience. This will be done without any notes and will be no more than 10 minutes in length.

Final Due Date: Feb. 13, 2012 (15% of final grade)

4. Exegesis Exercise

This exercise is in four parts:

- i. Provide an exegesis of one of the biblical texts listed below, giving evidence (in footnotes) of the use of a range of sources, at least one of which must originate from before 1800 or be from a non-Western source. (aprox. 4 pgs)
- ii. Provide an exegesis of your own situation and that of your anticipated audience based on the survey questions that will be handed out on the first day of class. (aprox. 3 pgs)
- iii. Keeping in mind the various interpretive and homiletical issues presented in class discuss the relationship between the text, yourself, and your anticipated audience. Reflect on how this text would relate to your audience, how your own experience will affect your preaching, how its ancient context will affect your preaching and how you will ultimately invite your audience to respond to this text when you preach it. (aprox. 3 pgs)
- iv. Provide a 1-2 page sermon outline based upon the study you have conducted.

Possible Passages: John 2 Acts 15 Matt. 5:1-12 Php. 2:1-18

Genesis 3 2 Samuel 11 Psalm 73

10-12 pages (double spaced) in length. Suggested due date: Feb. 27, 2012. Final due date Apr. 2, 2012. (30% of final grade)

5. Sermon Presentation

Part One : Assemble preparatory material for a sermon based on a text of your choice (NOT the one used in the exegesis assignment) . Explain why you chose this text and what you understand it to mean. Summarize the main points of your sermon, indicating how each point is derived from the text (exegesis) and how each point applies to your hearers (in this case, your fellow students). Of all the possible sermons that could be preached from this text, explain why you intend to preach in this way to this particular audience. Include in your exegetical work on the text evidence, in footnote form, of the use of secondary sources (e.g. commentaries or texts on preaching). The instructor will return the outline one week prior to the scheduled presentation of the sermon. *Outlines cannot, under any circumstances, be submitted late.* Length: 3-4 pages (double spaced)

Final Due Date: two weeks prior to sermon presentation (10% of final grade)

Part Two: Preach the full sermon in person for peer evaluation on a date selected in advance (these dates will be specified on the first day of class but will all be during the final 4-6 weeks of the course). **Length: 15 minutes maximum**

Final Due Date: To be determined (25% of final grade)

* While not officially a course assignment, attendance at all sermon presentations and peer evaluation of sermons presented in class is expected. This is an important aspect of our course and a way that we honour one another and our development as biblical communicators.

All papers should be submitted according to the MacDiv Style Guide, which can be found on the web at: <http://www.macdiv.ca/students/documents/MacStyleGuideApr1508.pdf>

Additional notes:

Academic Dishonesty – Academic dishonesty is a serious offence in the academic world 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 the transcript, and/or suspension or expulsion from the College. It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. Please refer to the McMaster Divinity College Statement on Academic Honesty located at www.macdiv.ca/regs/honesty.php.

Inclusive Language ~ McMaster Divinity College uses inclusive language 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 is a good example of the use of inclusive language. It is expected that all students will use inclusive language in all MDC assignments.

Sexual Harassment ~ Sexual harassment is a violation of the integrity of persons in the form of unsolicited, unwelcome, verbal or physical behavior, which discriminates on the basis of gender about a person's body, attire, gender, marital status or economic status. Among faculty, staff, and students, sexual harassment of any kind will not be tolerated.

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