

Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary
LTRGY 502 Preaching in African American Contexts
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Office Hours: By appointment.

Class Hours: Monday 6:30 p.m. – 9:30 p.m. Online only.

Course Description:

This course will engage students in the history, theology, and practice of preaching in the African American context, generally referred to as Black Preaching. It is designed to enable students to understand the unique genre and styles attributed to the African American and/or Black Church, and to develop and preach effective sermons in that context. Students will be taught the rudiments of sermon preparation and delivery so that they can meet the requirements of developing effective sermons that offer good news and with specific focus on the particularities applicable to Black preaching. They will be given several opportunities to practice their own preaching as appropriate to the African American and/or Black Church communities.

Course Outcomes:

As the student fulfills the requirements of this course, the student will ...

1. Become familiar with and engage the streams of church traditions that contributed to the formation of the genre of African American worship and specifically Black Preaching.
2. Understand the characteristics and constructs of different styles of African American sermons that are creative, celebrative, emotionally enriching and biblically literate.
3. Formulate and communicate good news that is worthy of celebration in varied sermon styles that are appropriate to varied contexts of the Black Church.
4. Develop and hone skills that facilitate critical interpretation of scripture, theology and critical reflection, pastoral sensitivity and socio-cultural interpretation.
5. Embody the sermon in a way that is representative of the emotive style of Black preaching and sensitive and responsive to diversity both locally and globally.
6. Develop an authentic preaching “voice” reflecting a unique combination of personality, physical ability, and life experience.
7. Critically engage the preaching of others as well as your own.

Corresponding assessment instruments:

1. Pre-Class Assignment
2. In-Class Participation, Preached Sermons
3. Preached Sermons
4. In-Class Participation, Preached Sermons (and Exegesis Projects)
5. Preached Sermons
6. Preached Sermons, In-Class Participation
7. In-Class Participation, Preached Sermons

Class Assumptions and Expectations:

1. That all students have read and are familiar with the class syllabus and therefore responsible for meeting all class requirements.
2. That all students will attend all synchronous class sessions on time, be visible at all times and be prepared to participate fully in class activities.
3. That all students will both consult Moodle for class assignments and be attentive to in-class updates of course information so that all assigned material will be read, all assignments will be completed, and sermons preached as scheduled.
4. That all students understand that the content of the course represents a beginning point in the ongoing development and growth of their preaching skills and are committed to their continued growth and development as preachers.
5. That the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible will be used in class and for preaching.
6. That inclusive language will be used for God and human beings in written and oral work.
7. That all students understand and adhere to G-ETS policies on plagiarism. (see Student Handbook).
8. **That the schedule and syllabus WILL be modified, and additional material added as the professor considers necessary to the course and the development of students.**
9. **That there will be no extensions allowed past the end of the term.**

Classroom Culture:

- **A Culture of Respect:** Students are expected to sign-in to the Teams virtual session on time and to participate with integrity in all class activities, in order to maintain a culture of respect for all participants in the class. **In virtual mode, this means that students will remain muted until called on to speak and allow those speaking to complete their statement without interruption. Likewise, students will monitor the length of their statements so that as many persons as possible may have the opportunity to speak and be heard.**
- **Acceptance of Diversity:** In recognition of diversity in all aspects of human identity all participants in the classroom, both students and instructors are to engage each other – the professors, other instructors, teaching assistants and fellow classmates – as colleagues; to develop and maintain a spirit of collaboration within the classroom; and to receive all material with respect for the author.
- **Moodle:** Students are expected to be familiar with the expanded class schedule, weekly readings and class assignments that have been provided on Moodle. Students will be notified in class of additional class readings and assignments as they are posted. **Where the two sources of information differ, in-class direction overrides the instructions posted on Moodle.**
- **Computer Access:** Since are expected to ensure that they have the appropriate hardware and software as well as the internet connectivity to facilitate fully in synchronous class sessions with both audio and video presence. Only in emergency situations will students be allowed to participate in online sessions by phone. In such cases, both video and audio facilities should be utilized.
- **Interruptions:** Students are required to locate themselves in areas that facilitate participation without interruption due to outside noise, telephones or other issues.

Class Sessions:

Class sessions will be designed as follows:

1. **Course material for the weekly class session** will be presented using PowerPoint charts and each class will be recorded. These recordings will be made available to students.
2. **Group and/or class discussions and quizzes** will be based on the reading assignments for the week. Students will be evaluated on their ability to engage the assigned materials.
3. **Sermon development** will be based on the sermon styles taught in class and relate to specific congregational contexts. Students will be exposed to three different styles of sermons, with emphasis on the structure and content that is considered unique to African American contexts.
4. **Performance praxis** is a critical element in learning how to embody the sermon. This class will provide students with opportunities to develop their performance skills by delivering actual sermons.

Class Sessions:

Each class session except those devoted to preaching the required practice sermons will generally consist of any or all of the following segments:

1. **Presentation with class engagement** by the professor will be based on the assigned material with other relevant material added by the professor.
2. **Mini quizzes (2 minutes) on reading assignments** will be designed to verify that students are completing the reading assignments for the week.
3. **Group or class discussion** on the reading assignments or in-class presentation that engages the selected topic for the week. Each group is required to engage the assigned materials.
4. **Sermon development** involves praxis related to the development of the sermon manuscript based on the class instruction. Students will be exposed to at least three different styles of sermons, that they will use to create the sermons that are preached in class. A written manuscript is required for each sermon.
5. **Preaching performance** will be evaluated from the sermons that are delivered in selected class sessions. Students will receive feedback from their peers following the delivery of each sermon and will meet with the professor following the delivery of the first two sermons for additional feedback.

Required Textbooks:

1. Brooks, Gennifer Benjamin. *Good News Preaching: Offering the Gospel in Every Sermon*. Cleveland, Ohio: The Pilgrim Press, 2009. ISBN-13: 9780829818222 -\$20.00
2. Brown, Teresa L. Fry. *Delivering the Sermon*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2008. ISBN – 978-0-8006-0447-9 - \$15.00
3. Crawford, Evans E. *The Hum: Call and Response in African American Preaching*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995. ISBN-13: 978-0687180202 - \$20.99
4. Gilbert, Kenyatta R. *The Journey and Promise of African American Preaching*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2011 ISBN-13: 978-0800696276 - \$20.00
5. Thomas, Frank A. *Introduction to the Practice of African American Preaching*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2016. ISBN-13: 978-1-5018-1894-3 - \$34.99

6. Thomas, Frank A. *They Like to Never Quit Praisin' God: The Role of Celebration in Preaching. Revised and Updated* Cleveland, Ohio: United Church Press, 1997. ISBN - 978-0829819786 - \$16.95
7. Lisa Thompson. *Ingenuity: Preaching as an Outsider*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2018. ISBN – 978-1501832598 - \$29.99 (**DO NOT BUY THIS BOOK. YOU WILL RECEIVE A FREE COPY PRIOR TO THE START OF CLASS**)
8. The New Revised Standard Version of the Bible. **Please have your NRSV Bible available in hard copy or ready on your computer for use at each class.**

Secondary Textbooks:

1. Brooks, Gennifer Benjamin. *Unexpected Grace: Preaching Good News from Difficult Texts*. Cleveland, Ohio: Pilgrim Press, 2012.
2. Brown, Teresa L. Fry. *Can A Sistah Get A Little Help: Encouragement for Black Women in Ministry*. Cleveland, OH: Pilgrim Press, 2008.
3. Gilbert, Kenyatta R. *Exodus Preaching: Crafting Sermons about Justice and Hope*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2018.
4. La Rue, Cleophus J. *The Heart of Black Preaching*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2000.
5. _____. *Rethinking Celebration*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2011. ISBN-13: 978-0-664-26149-8 - \$20.00
6. _____. *I Believe I'll Testify: The Art of African American Preaching*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2011.
7. Mc Mickle, Marvin A. *Where Have All the Prophets Gone? Reclaiming Prophetic Preaching in America*. Cleveland, Ohio: The Pilgrim Press, 2006.
8. _____. *Preaching to the Black Middle Class: Words of Challenge and Hope*. Valley Forge: Judson Press, 2000.
9. Mitchell, Henry H. *Black Preaching: The Recovery of a Powerful Art*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1990.
10. Moss, Otis III. *Blue Note Preaching in a Post-Soul World: Finding Hope in an Age of Despair*. Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2015.
11. Powery, Luke A. *Dem Dry Bones: Preaching, Death, and Hope*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2012.
12. Thomas, Frank A. *How to Preach a Dangerous Sermon*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2018.
13. Thurman, Howard. *Jesus and the Disinherited*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1976.

Class Files

Class files will be posted on Moodle. Students will be responsible for downloading the files and reading the appropriate material according to the schedule of class sessions once it is posted on Moodle.

Class Assignments and Grading:

1. **Preparation, attendance and participation:** Students are expected to be present and on time in video form for all synchronous class sessions and activities. Late arrival or early departure from the Zoom sessions without permission will be considered in evaluating class attendance. Late submissions for class assignments will be considered in evaluating

overall class performance. **Absence from multiple synchronous class sessions will be taken seriously as it will be considered as non-attendance and students may be required to repeat the class.** Participation in class assignments and activities includes individual and group activities. **10%**

2. **Pre-Class Assignment: Read *Introduction to the Practice of African American Preaching* by Frank A. Thomas.** Prepare 2-3 page paper that responds to the following:

- What are the distinctive characteristics of African American Preaching?
- In what way has the preaching of the African American/Black Church impacted the construct and development of the Church and the community?

Your response (2-3 pages – using 12 pt. Times New Roman, double spaced) should reflect both a summary of the author’s ideas and your critical reflection to selected material. Critical reflection requires that you engage your own thought, sharing the impact of the textbook on your own thought to arrive at a conclusion. **10%**

3. **Mini Quizzes on Assigned Readings:** The mini reports demonstrate your preparation for class to engage the topic. **10%**

4. **Preached Sermons:** There will be 3 sermons preached in class using different scripture texts, sermon styles, and congregational contexts. Students will be allowed to choose from multiple biblical texts and congregational contexts provided for each sermon. Sample sermons for each genre will be provided in the class files on Moodle. Sermons will be graded as follows:

- Sermon 1 (8 - 10 minutes) – 10%
- Sermon 2 (10 -12 minutes) – 25%
- Sermon 3 (12 -15 minutes) – 35%
- Total for preached sermons **70%**

Manuscript Requirements:

A. For the Pre-Class Assignment

- Your response should be 2-3 full pages, double-spaced, using 12 pt. Times New Roman. Do not leave large spaces between paragraphs.
- Provide footnotes for material quoted from the text or any other source.
- No Bibliography is necessary, since the assigned text is your major source. Even if you use other sources the length of this paper is insufficient to require a bibliography.

B. For Sermons:

- A written manuscript must be developed and submitted for each sermon preached. You may preach from the manuscript, the sermon outline, notes, or without any written material, but in all cases, you must know your material sufficiently in order to allow yourself freedom in the pulpit. All materials must be submitted electronically to the professors by 2:00 p.m. on the day you preach. Include the following identifying material on the first page of each sermon and exegesis manuscripts:

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Student’s name

Sermon Identifier (1, 2, or 3) including Style of Sermon

Preaching Context # and Description

Scripture passage with verse numbers

Sermon Purpose Statement

Good News Statement

Discipleship Message Statement

- Prepare all sermon manuscripts **using only Times New Roman 14 pt., double spaced, with 1-inch margins all around and pages numbered at the bottom right corner.** Be aware that each page prepared as outlines represents 2 minutes of preaching time. In the interest of ecology, please do not leave large spaces on pages. Check grammar and punctuation before submitting your work.
- **There are no footnotes in sermons,** but acknowledgement of the source must be made for all material quoted or referenced directly or indirectly. In sermons, such citations are included within the sermon manuscript, e.g. *As homiletician John Smith says in his book Praxis of Preaching “the every-Sunday preacher is constrained with respect to preparation time because of essential pastoral duties.”*
- Students will be permitted to correct and resubmit Sermons 1 and 2 as needed after the review with the professor.

C. For Homiletical Exegesis Papers

- A homiletical exegesis paper must be prepared for Sermons 1 and 2. The form containing the exegesis questions will be provided on Moodle.
- Use **Times New Roman 12 pt. type double spaced, with at least 1-inch margins** all around and respond fully to **ALL** questions provided on the homiletical exegesis form. All responses must be in sentence form, and may be presented in short paragraphs. One-word answers are not acceptable.
- Footnotes must be provided in the homiletical exegesis paper for all quoted or referenced material as appropriate.
- A bibliography of at least three sources
- Please check grammar and punctuation and **number all pages** on both the sermon manuscript and the homiletical exegesis paper before submitting your work.
- Students will be permitted to correct each exegesis paper and resubmit it for a new grade if necessary. The requirements for re-submission are the same as for sermons.

Schedule of Class Sessions: TBD

Selected Bibliography:

- Allen, Donna. *Toward a Womanist Homiletic: Katie Cannon, Alice Walker, and Emancipatory Proclamation.* New York: Peter Lang, 2013.
- Allen, O. Wesley Jr. *Preaching in the Era of Trump.* Saint Louis, Missouri: Chalice Press, 2017.
- Cosgrove, Charles H., and Edgerton W. Dow. *In other Words Incarnational Translation for Preaching.* Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2007.
- Gilbert, Kenyatta. *A Pursued Justice: Black Preaching from the Great Migration to Civil Rights.* Grand Rapids: Baylor, 2016.
- Helsel, Carolyn. *Preaching about Racism: A Guide for Faith Leaders.* St. Louis: Chalice, 2018.
- Johnson, Kimberly. *The Womanist Preacher: Proclaiming Womanist Rhetoric from the Pulpit.* New York: Lexington, 2017.
- Kim, Eunjoo. *Preaching in An Age of Globalization.* Westminster / John Knox Press, 2010.
- LaRue, Cleophus J. *Rethinking Celebration.* Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2016.

Luchetti, Lenny. *Preaching with Empathy: Crafting Sermons in a Callous Culture*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2018.

Moss, Otis III. *Blue Note Preaching in a Post-Soul World: Finding Hope in an Age of Despair*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2015.

Powery, Luke A. *Dem Dry Bones: Preaching, Death, and Hope*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2012

Satterlee, Craig. *Preaching and Stewardship: Proclaiming God's Invitation to Grow*. The Alban Institute, 2011.

Schade, Leah. *Creation-Crisis Preaching: Ecology, Theology, and the Pulpit*. St. Louis: Chalice, 2015.

Thomas, Frank. *Introduction to the Practice of African American Preaching*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2016.

Travis, Sarah. *Metamorphosis: Preaching after Christendom*. Eugene: Cascade, 2019.

Voelz, Richard. *Preaching to Teach: Inspire People to Think and Act*. Nashville: Abingdon, 2019.

Willimon, Will. *Who Lynched Willie Earle?: Preaching to Confront Racism*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2017.

Wiseman, Karyn L. *I Refuse to Preach a Boring Sermon: Engaging the 21st Century Listener*. Cleveland, Ohio: Pilgrim Press, 2013.

RUBRIC FOR SERMONS

Exceptional Ability: 100 – 95; Strong Ability: 94 – 85; Adequate Ability: 84 – 75
Marginal Ability: 74 – 65; Fails to Demonstrate Ability <65

Areas of Assessment	Exceptional Ability	Strong Ability	Adequate Ability	Marginal Ability	Fails to Demonstrate Ability
Sermon Statements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sermon Purpose (SPS) • Good News (GNS) • Discipleship Message (DMS) 	All statements properly formatted, connected to text and context, appropriately connected to each other and suitably placed in the sermon.	Statements properly formatted, connected to text and context, and suitably placed in the sermon.	At least two statements properly formatted, connected to text or context, and suitably placed in the sermon.	At least one statement properly formatted, connected to text or context, and appearing in the sermon.	Statements are not properly formatted, and either incorrectly placed or do not appear in the sermon.
Structure: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Style • Balance 	Clearly evidences all major sections and sub-sections of the stated sermon style, keeping each distinct	Evidences all major sections and most sub-sections of the stated sermon style keeping each somewhat distinct and of	Evidences some major sections and sub-sections of the stated sermon style but fails to be	Evidences some major sections or sub-sections of the stated sermon style but they are	Major sections and/or sub-sections of the sermon style are unclear.

	and of appropriate length.	appropriate length.	distinct or of appropriate length.	neither distinct nor of appropriate length.	
Structure: • Transitions	All major sections and sub-sections are connected by clear and appropriate transitions.	All major sections and most sub-sections are connected by clear transitions.	Some major sections and most sub-sections are connected by clear transitions.	Some major sections or some sub-sections are connected by clear transitions.	No sections are connected by clear transitions.
Content: • Introduction	Clearly amplifies the focus of the sermon and functions to draw listeners into the body of the sermon.	Serves the focus of the sermon and functions tangentially to draw listeners into the body of the sermon.	Somewhat connected to the focus of the sermon but does not function to draw listeners into the body of the sermon.	Somewhat disconnected from the focus of the sermon and does not function to draw listeners into the body of the sermon.	No connection to the focus of the sermon and does not function to draw listeners into the body of the sermon.
Content: • Body Puritan Plain Style: - Exegesis - Theological Analysis - Application Topical with Points: - Point 1 - Point 2 - Point 3 Narrative: - Situation - Complication - Reversal - Resolution	Complete inclusion of the material associated with the particular style and application of the text or topic to the congregational context specific to the sermon purpose (SPS), the good news (GNS), and the discipleship message (DMS)	General inclusion of the material associated with the particular style and application of the text or topic to the congregational context specific to the sermon purpose (SPS), the good news (GNS), and the discipleship message (DMS)	Partial inclusion of the material associated with the particular style and application of the text or topic to the congregational context specific to the sermon purpose (SPS), the good news (GNS), and the discipleship message (DMS)	Incomplete inclusion of the material associated with the particular style and application of the text or topic to the congregational context specific to the sermon purpose (SPS), the good news (GNS), and the discipleship message (DMS)	Lacking inclusion of the material associated with the particular style and application of the text or topic to the congregational context specific to the sermon purpose (SPS), the good news (GNS), and the discipleship message (DMS)
Content Conclusion	Closes sermon in a manner that amplifies	Closes sermon in a manner that references	Closes sermon in a manner that	Closes sermon in a manner that distracts	Closes sermon in a manner that is not

	the focus of the sermon and clearly presents the discipleship message (DMS).	the focus of the sermon but no clear discipleship message (DMS).	distracts from the focus of the sermon but with a discipleship message (DMS).	from focus of the sermon.	connected to the focus of the sermon.
Delivery	General embodiment (eye contact; voice tone, modulation emphasis, variety of expression, pace, posture, gestures, facial expression, energy) and handling and use of manuscript vividly amplify the purpose and focus of the sermon for the congregation.	General embodiment (eye contact; voice tone, modulation emphasis, variety of expression, pace, posture, gestures, facial expression, energy) amplify the purpose and focus of the sermon but handling and use of the manuscript is somewhat distracting.	Some aspects of embodiment (eye contact; voice tone, modulation emphasis, variety of expression, pace, posture, gestures, facial expression, energy) are inappropriate to the purpose and focus of the sermon and handling or use of the manuscript is distracting.	Inappropriate embodiment (eye contact; voice tone, modulation emphasis, variety of expression, pace, posture, gestures, facial expression, energy) of the sermon and poor handling and use of the manuscript.	Use of body, voice, facial expression, and relationship to manuscript are not connected to and distract from the purpose and focus of the sermon.

RUBRIC FOR HOMILETICAL EXEGESIS PAPERS

Exceptional Ability: 100 – 95; Strong Ability: 94 – 85; Adequate Ability: 84 – 75
 Marginal Ability: 74 – 65; Fails to Demonstrate Ability <65

Areas of Assessment	Exceptional Ability	Strong Ability	Adequate Ability	Marginal Ability	Fails to Demonstrate Ability
Accuracy:	Expansively and accurately reflects engagement with contemporary	Accurately reflects engagement with contemporary critical	Accurately reflects engagement with contemporary critical biblical	Accurately reflects engagement with contemporary critical biblical	Contains significant inconsistencies and errors with respect to contemporary

	critical biblical scholarship, theological perspectives, and contextual realities.	biblical scholarship, theological perspectives, and contextual realities.	scholarship, theological perspectives, and contextual realities with few inconsistencies and errors.	scholarship, theological perspectives, and contextual realities with numerous inconsistencies and errors.	critical biblical scholarship, theological perspectives, and contextual realities.
Precision:	Answers are extensive, exact and expresses depth in interpretation.	Answers are exact and expressed in clearly interpretable ways.	Answers are appropriate and interpretable with few unclear, vague, and imprecise information.	Answers are generally appropriate but with serious unclear, vague and/or imprecise information, preventing proper interpretation.	Answers are generally unclear, vague and/or imprecise, thus hindering proper interpretation.
Thoroughness	Answered all questions and layers within questions with precision and depth.	Answered all questions and most layers within questions.	Answered almost all questions and most layers within questions.	Missed some questions and/or some layers within questions.	Missed significant questions and/or layers within questions.
Presentation	Responses meet rigorous academic writing standards with no spelling or grammatical errors.	Responses meet writing standards with no spelling or grammatical errors.	Responses use complete sentences with few spelling or grammatical errors.	Responses use complete sentences but with spelling and/or grammatical errors.	Responses are not in complete sentences and there are spelling and/or grammatical errors.