

Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary
LTRGY 502 Preaching in African American Contexts
FaJanuary 2021

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Office Hours: By appointment. Students may schedule times for individual meetings

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

These are the scheduled class times. The actual synchronous times will be added to the final syllabus before the term begins

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 in order to meet the requirements of developing effective sermons 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. Students will also be exposed to different styles of Black Preaching by reading, viewing and reflecting on selections from videos of sermons by Black preachers.

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, theological analysis and 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 particular 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 and will 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 Zoom 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. Participation in group and class activities must take into account the right of every student to be heard equally.
- **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:** Students 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 Zoom sessions by phone. In such cases, both video and audio facilities should be available and utilized.
- **Interruptions:** During synchronous class sessions, students are required to locate themselves in areas that facilitate participation without interruption due to outside noise, telephones or other issues.

Synchronous Class Sessions:

The content and shape of class sessions will be provided to students prior to the actual class. Sessions will be designed to include one or more of these elements:

1. **Mini reports on reading assignments** will be done outside of class and require students to respond to a major question related to the theme or focus of the class session. These mini reports will be open book and are designed to verify that students are completing the reading assignments for the week.
2. **Group or class discussion** on the reading assignments that engages the selected topic for the week. Each group is required to engage the assigned materials.
3. **Video review and feedback** based on pre-recorded material developed by the instructors. Feedback discussions may be done in groups or with the class as a whole.
4. **Sermon development** involves teaching and praxis related to the development of the sermon manuscript. Students will be exposed to several different styles of sermons, three of which will be designated for use in developing the sermons that are preached in class based on specific congregational contexts.
5. **Performance praxis** is a critical element in learning how to embody the sermon. This class will provide students with multiple 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 any or all of the following segments:

1. **Mini reports (2 minutes) on reading assignments** will be done in class based on a major question related to the theme or focus of the class session. These mini reports are designed to verify that students are completing the reading assignments for the week.
2. **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. Working together, students should be able to identify at least two or three significant points from the readings that relate to the theme or focus of the week.
3. **Sermon development** involves teaching and praxis related to the development of the sermon manuscript. Students will be exposed to several different styles of sermons, three of which will be designated for use in developing the sermons that are preached in class.
4. **Performance practice** in preparation for the effective delivery of the sermon is a critical element in preaching. This segment of the class will provide students with as many opportunities as possible to develop their preaching performance skills. On selected weeks, all students will practice their preaching performance by delivering actual

sermons and receive appropriate feedback on the content of their sermons and their delivery performance.

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. Gilbert, Kenyatta R. *The Journey and Promise of African American Preaching*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2011 ISBN-13: 978-0800696276 - \$20.00
4. 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. ISBN-13: 978-0-664-26160-3 - \$18.00
5. Lisa Thompson. *Ingenuity: Preaching as an Outsider*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2018. ISBN – 978-1501832598 - \$29.99
6. 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. _____, Editor. *Black United Methodists Preach!* Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2012.
3. Brown, Teresa L. Fry. *Can A Sistah Get A Little Help: Encouragement for Black Women in Ministry*. Cleveland, OH: Pilgrim Press, 2008.
4. Crawford, Evans E. Crawford. *The Hum: Call and Response in African American Preaching*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995.
5. Gilbert, Kenyatta R. *Exodus Preaching: Crafting Sermons about Justice and Hope*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2018.
6. La Rue, Cleophus J. *The Heart of Black Preaching*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2000.
7. _____. *Rethinking Celebration*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2011. ISBN-13: 978-0-664-26149-8 - \$20.00
8. _____. *I Believe I'll Testify: The Art of African American Preaching*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2011.
9. Mc Mickle, Marvin A. *Where Have All the Prophets Gone? Reclaiming Prophetic Preaching in America*. Cleveland, Ohio: The Pilgrim Press, 2006.
10. _____. *Preaching to the Black Middle Class: Words of Challenge and Hope*. Valley Forge: Judson Press, 2000.
11. Mitchell, Henry H. *Black Preaching: The Recovery of a Powerful Art*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1990.
12. Powery, Luke A. *Dem Dry Bones: Preaching, Death, and Hope*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2012.
13. Thomas, Frank A. *Introduction to the Practice of African American Preaching*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2016.

14. Thomas, Frank A. *How to Preach a Dangerous Sermon*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2018.
15. Thurman, Howard. *Jesus and the Disinherited*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1976.

Class Files

Students will be responsible for downloading and viewing course files posted via Moodle. Course files will include video lectures, digital readings, and other assignments.

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: *The Journey and Promise of African American Preaching* by Kenyatta R. Gilbert. Prepare a paper that responds to the following material as contained in the author's work.
 - How do you understand what is meant by "The Black Church?"
 - What are the characteristics and what is distinctive about Black Preaching?
 - What are the current challenges to the authenticity of the preacher's role in the Black Church and community?
 - Is there a particular responsibility for the preacher in responding to the challenges faced by the Black community in society and in the world?
 - What is Trivocal Preaching and how do you understand the need for the Black preacher to speak in those three voices.

Your response (4-6 pages – using 12 pt. Times New Roman, double spaced) should include both a selective summary of the author's ideas and your **critical reflection** in response to his work. Critical reflection requires that you engage the textbook, and your own thought, sharing the impact of the textbook on your own thought. Engage specific points in the reading, taking care to cite appropriately. **10%**

3. **Mini Reports on Assigned Readings:** The mini reports demonstrate your preparation for class to engage the topic. **10%**
4. **Preached Sermons:** In order to provide as many opportunities as possible for sermons delivery, there will be 3 sermons preached in class using different scripture texts and sermon styles, and one written sermon, for a funeral. Students will be allowed to choose from multiple biblical texts provided for each sermon. Sample sermons for each genre will be provided in the class files on Moodle. For the preached sermons, three different congregational contexts will be provided, and each sermon must be preached to a different context. Students will select a funeral situation from the lists provided and incorporate additional information to enable the sermon to be appropriately contextual. Sermons will be graded as follows:
 - Sermon 1 (6 - 8 minutes) – 10%

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

Manuscript Requirements:

A. For the Pre-Class Assignment

- Your response should be 4-6 full pages, double-spaced, using 12 pt. Times New Roman, double spaced print. Do not leave large spaces between paragraphs.
- Provide footnotes for material quoted from the text or any other source and please consult Turabian Manual of Style for the format. There will also be a style sheet posted on Moodle to facilitate student use.
- 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, along with a homiletical exegesis paper unless otherwise directed. 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. Given the virtual nature of the class, and the current situation caused by the pandemic, students will be asked to preach and record one sermon that will be reviewed by their classmates. All materials must be submitted electronically to the professors by 2:00 p.m. on the day you preach. For recorded sermons, the class schedule will provide the date and time that sermons are to be uploaded and feedback responses posted.
- 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

Description of preaching context or situation

Complete scripture passage with verse numbers

Sermon Purpose Statement

Good News Statement

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."*

- Feedback sheets will be provided to facilitate student responses to the sermons of their classmates. In addition to receiving feedback during the preaching event, students will meet with the professors to review their preached sermons and to make corrections to the preached manuscript and re-submit it for a new grade. This may be done only once and there is no guarantee that the revised version will receive a higher grade. Be aware that the revised manuscript must reflect both the editorial and content changes noted by the professor.

C. For Homiletical Exegesis Papers

- 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 for both biblical and topical exegesis and include the original questions, as provided on the original, on the exegesis paper. All responses must be in sentence form, and short paragraphs are generally expected for the responses to most questions. One-word answers are not acceptable.
- Footnotes must be provided in the homiletical exegesis paper for all quoted or referenced material as appropriate. Consult Turabian (Chicago manual of Style) for the appropriate format of each footnote depending on the source of the material.
- 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 exegesis papers and resubmit them for a new grade. The requirements for re-submission are the same as those provided for sermons.

Schedule of Class Sessions

TBD