

**Andover Newton Theological School**  
**CMPR 609F**  
**Preaching in the Congregation:**  
**An Introduction to the Pastoral Practice of Preaching**

**Class Meetings and Instructor Information**

*Semester:* Fall 2008

*Day and Time:* Thursdays, 6-8:50 p.m.

*Instructor:* J. Mary Luti

*Office:* Worcester 204 and Wilson Chapel

*Office Hours:* By appointment. Please email to schedule an appointment. Instructor will normally be on campus daily.

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**The Course**

Students will develop a beginning theology of preaching as a pastoral practice and will have several opportunities to try their hand at it. Attention will also be paid to preaching relative to other pastoral practices, as well as to the preacher's vocation, authority, personality, and life of faith.

**Outcomes**

By the end of the course, students will have greater awareness of and appreciation for "the company of preachers" among whom preaching is carried on, and will have begun to take their own place in that company. This means, in part, that students will:

1. become conversant with key historical and contemporary discussions about the nature and purpose of preaching, and be able to articulate their own developing views in that discussion;
2. acquire a vocabulary of preaching and demonstrate an ability to work with some of its characteristic practices (text study, contextualizing, shaping the message, etc.);
3. begin to appreciate the range of styles and voices of Christian preaching, and explore their own *via* homiletic opportunities in and outside the class; and
4. begin to grapple with the practical challenges of preaching regularly, and with the intimate challenge of preaching faithfully.

**Requirements**

*In brief*

1. Leadership of one opening devotion, including brief homily
2. All readings for class discussions, with summary notes
3. One written review of an additional book on preaching, or a written review of sermons by two preachers
4. A written response to *Preaching without Contempt*

5. Delivery of two original sermons

*In detail*

1. Opening Devotions

Devotions will be 10-15 minutes long, including a 5-minute homily on a text of the leader's choice. Guidelines for devotions are in the Appendix to this syllabus. A sign-up sheet will be available in the first class. NB: There are more students than scheduled class sessions! We will discuss ways of dealing with this glitch once we are underway.

2. Readings

Students will complete all readings as assigned and to do so attentively. For each assignment, students will fill out a brief summary sheet and use it in class during the discussion. The outline for summary notes is in the Appendix. Occasionally the instructor will suggest other readings for enrichment, but these will always be recommended, not required.

**Required Books** The following are available in the ANTS Bookstore:

1. Thomas Long, *The Witness of Preaching* (WJK) [*Witness*]
2. Richard Lischer, *The Company of Preachers* (Eerdmans) [*Company*]
3. Marilyn Salmon, *Preaching without Contempt* (Fortress) [*Contempt*]
4. Ronald Allen, *Patterns of Preaching* (Chalice) [*Patterns*]

3. Book Review/Preacher Review

OPTION A

Students will choose one additional book on preaching and write a 3-5 pp., double-spaced review. A list of books from which to choose and guidelines for the review are in the Appendix. NB: Students must provide hard copies of their review for all class members, OR they may post their review at our class site on CONNECT.

**Due in class, Thursday, November 13, 2009. Students may also email the review to the instructor before the in-class deadline.**

OPTION B

Students will view and critique recordings of sermons delivered by two preachers of their choice. One preacher may be someone like you in background and tradition; the other must be different from you in gender, or ethnic/cultural background, or religious tradition (e.g., Black church, liberal church, mega-church evangelical, etc.). You must view at least 3 sermons by each preacher, 6 sermons in all. Taped sermon series by well-known preachers (such as Fred Craddock, Barbara Brown Taylor, Gardner Taylor, etc.) may be found in the Trask Library at ANTS and other theological libraries in the BTI, as well as on the web. They may also be purchased from various denominational and other publishing houses. NB: Students must provide hard copies of their critiques for all class members, OR they may post them at our class site on CONNECT. Guidelines for critiques are in the Appendix.

**Due: Critiques (3-5 pp., double-spaced for each preacher, 6-10 pp. total) are due at the start of class, Thursday, November 13, 2009. Students may also email the critique to the instructor before the in-class deadline.**

**4. Response to *Preaching without Contempt***

Students are expected to read *Contempt* in its entirety by the end of the semester. However, all students must read at least pp. 1-74 (Introduction through Chapter 2) and pp. 157-160 (Conclusion) during the first 3 weeks of the course and prepare a written response to this material (3-5 pp., double-spaced). Guidelines are in the Appendix. NB: Because this response may include personal reflections of a delicate nature, students will NOT be asked to provide copies of their reviews for all class members, nor will they need to post on CONNECT. Those who wish to share may do so, but it is not required.

**Due: Beginning of class, Week IV, October 2, 2008. Students may email the response to the instructor before the in-class deadline.**

**5. Two Sermons**

All students will prepare and preach two 10-12 minute sermons, one on a text from the Hebrew Bible, the other from the New Testament. One sermon will be scheduled for preaching and peer review in class. The other must be preached elsewhere, either in a congregational setting, in the Wilson Chapel, or before some other group, but always in the context of worship. The "off-site" sermon must be recorded (videotape, CD, DVD, etc.) for review with the instructor. Guidelines for scheduling, preparation, delivery, and review are in the Appendix.

**Evaluation**

Students may opt to take this course on a PASS/FAIL basis. Otherwise, the usual letter grades will be awarded. Grades will be determined as follows:

- ❖ Class presence (quality and quantity!), evidence of preparation for and participation in class discussions, active listening and quality of peer review, timeliness of assignments and postings.....30%
- ❖ Opening devotions and 5-minute homily.....15%
- ❖ Book/Sermon Review Reviews.....15%
- ❖ Response to *Contempt*.....10%
- ❖ Two Sermons.....30%

**Extensions, Incompletes, Accommodation for Disability**

Extensions and incompletes will be granted only in exceptional circumstances. If you have a disability and need accommodation, please tell the instructor and the Dean of Students before the second class.

## **Ethical Commitments**

Preaching exposes our vulnerability. It is important, therefore, that we treat one another carefully. Especially when providing feedback after student sermons, we will all act with great respect. We aim to create an informal setting in which all feel at home, but we will do so within boundaries that we will discuss and set together during the first class. Students will also demonstrate academic and personal integrity in all their work. They should periodically review the Policies section of the Student Handbook for policies concerning plagiarism, inclusive language, and other matters.

## **Course Schedule**

*Week I 9/11/08 Introductory*

Devotions

Getting acquainted

Syllabus review, sign-ups

BREAK

Creating our class, setting our boundaries

STRETCH BREAK

Instructor Presentation: Preaching As A Practice

Closing prayer

### **Assignment for Week II**

- ❖ Read any 3 selections from *Company*, Section I: "What Is Preaching?" Prepare summary notes on each selection.
- ❖ Read *Witness*, Introduction and Chapter 1, "What Does It Mean to Preach?" Summary notes on Chapter 1.

*Week II 9/18/08 What Do We Think We Are We Doing?*

Devotions

Discussion of main points, critical questions, *Company*, Section I

BREAK

Discussion of main points, critical questions, *Witness*, Chapter 1

STRETCH BREAK

Views from the Pews: What is preaching? Guests from area parishes talk back to "the Company"

Closing prayer (or homily)

### **Assignment for Week III**

- ❖ Read any 2 selections, *excluding* Sakenfeld and González, in *Company*, Section IV: "Biblical Interpretation." Summary notes.
- ❖ Read Chapters 2 and 3, "The Biblical Witness in Preaching," and "Biblical Exegesis for Preaching," *Witness*. Summary notes.

*Week III 9/25/08 Entrusted with Texts, I*

Devotions

Discussion of main points, critical questions, *Company*, Section IV

BREAK

Discussion of main points, critical questions, *Witness*, Chapters 2 and 3

STRETCH BREAK

Class exercise: Working with a text

Closing prayer (or homily)

**Assignment for Week IV**

- ❖ Read selections by Sakenfeld and González, in *Company*, Section IV. Summary notes.
- ❖ Read Chapter 4, "The Focus and Function of the Sermon," *Witness*. Summary notes.
- ❖ NB: 3-5 pp., double-spaced response to Salmon, *Contempt*, pp. 1-74 (Introduction through Chapter 2) and pp. 157-160 (Conclusion), is due at start of Week IV class.

*Week IV, 10/2/08 Entrusted with Texts, II*

**Due today: 3-5 pp., double-spaced response to *Contempt*, pp. 1-74 (Introduction through Chapter 2) and pp. 157-160 (Conclusion)**

Devotions

Discussion of main points, critical questions, *Company*, Section IV: selections by Sakenfeld and González

STRETCH BREAK

Discussion of main points, critical questions, *Witness*, Chapter 4

BREAK

Roundtable with guests: Issues in biblical interpretation for Christians. What's at stake? Can we preach "without contempt"?

Closing prayer (or homily)

**Assignment for Week V**

- ❖ Read any 3 selections from *Company*, Section V, "Rhetoric." Summary notes.
- ❖ Read Chapters 5 and 6, *Witness*, "The Basic Form of the Sermon," and "Refining the Form." Summary notes.
- ❖ NB: Bring *Patterns* to Week V class

*Week V, 10/9/08 Shaping Things Up*

Devotions

Discussion of main points, critical questions, *Company*, Section V

BREAK

Discussion of main points, critical questions, *Witness*, Chapters 5 and 6

Class exercise: Where's Wally? Finding the sermon's form.

BREAK

First student sermon and peer response

Closing prayer

**Assignment for Week VI**

- ❖ Read Chapters 7-9, "Beginnings, Endings, Connections," "Images and Experiences in Sermons," and "From Desk to Pulpit," *Witness*. Summary notes.

*Week VI 10/16/08 Writing the Gosh-Darned Thing*

Devotions

Discussion of main points, critical questions, *Witness*, Chapters 7-9

BREAK

Student sermon and peer response

BREAK

Student sermon and peer response

Closing prayer

**Assignment Week VII**

- ❖ **Read any 3 selections, *Company*, Section III, "The Event." Summary notes.**

Week VII 10/23/08 *Preaching for...What? Comfort, affliction, terror, celebration...*

Devotions

Discussion of main points, critical questions, *Company*, Section III

BREAK

Student sermon and peer response

BREAK

Student sermon and peer response

Closing prayer

**Assignment Week VIII**

- ❖ **Read any 4 selections, *Company*, Section II: "The Preacher." Summary notes.**

Week VIII 10/30/08 *The Preacher and the Preaching Life, I*

Devotions

Discussion, *Company*, Section II, with local preachers as guests: Issues of vocation, authority, inspiration, voice, faithfulness, ego, envy, authenticity, trying too hard, not trying hard enough...

BREAK

Student sermon and peer response

BREAK

Student sermon and peer response

Closing prayer

**Assignment Week IX**

- ❖ **Take the week off! No assignment.**

Week IX 11/6/08 *The Preacher and the Preaching Life, II*

Devotions

Instructor presentation and class discussion on "parking lot" questions and postponed topics

BREAK

Student sermon and response

BREAK

Student sermon and response

**Assignment Week X**

- ❖ **Read any 1 selection, plus selections by Willimon and Campbell, *Company*, Section VII, "Preaching and the Church"**
- ❖ **NB: Book review/sermon critiques due at the start of next class, Week X.**

*Week X 11/13/08 Preaching and Weekly Worship*

**NB: Book review/sermon critiques due**

Devotions

Discussion, *Company*, Section VII

BREAK

Student sermon and response

BREAK

Student sermon and response

Closing prayer

**Assignment Week XI**

- ❖ **Read *Witness*, Chapter X, "Conversation along the Pilgrim Way."**
- ❖ **Prepare a list of at least 3 questions of a practical nature that you would like to ask a seasoned practitioner of preaching about the actual weekly business of preparing, delivering and getting feedback on sermons. Bring questions for discussion with guests.**

*Week XI 11/20/08 Shop Talk, War Stories, and Other Odds and Ends*

Devotions

Discussion with guests, student questions

BREAK

Student sermon and response

BREAK

Student sermon and response

Closing prayer

**Assignment for Week XII**

- ❖ **Come to class prepared to share with others one important thing you learned this semester about yourself as a preacher, and one or two of the most helpful things you learned about the practice of preaching.**

*Week XII 12/4/08 Concluding...*

Devotions

Student sermon and response

BREAK

Student sermon and response

BREAK

Class sharing, concluding observations

Closing prayer