

Course of Study School Fall 2025
Preaching 214 (321)
Professor Alyce M. McKenzie

Meeting Times: 5 two-hour zoom sessions.

Thursday mornings 8-10 am Central Time October 2,9,16,23, and 30.

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Required Texts

Thomas G. Long, *The Witness of Preaching* (2nd or third editions) Westminster John Knox Press

Frank A. Thomas, *They Like to Never Quit Praisin God: The Role of Celebration in Preaching* (Pilgrim Press, 2013)

John C. Holbert and Alyce M. McKenzie, *What Not to Say: Avoiding the Common Mistakes that can Sink Your Sermon*

Marvin McMickle, *Shaping the Claim* (Fortress Press, 2008)

Learning Goals:

- Articulate a theology of proclamation
- Learn a method of biblical exegesis for preaching that can be applied to any text that engages its contemporary, literary, theological, and historical dimensions.
- Learn the importance of a clear single theme and how to achieve it.
- Learn the importance of dynamic sermon form and three different options for achieving it.
- Learn to use a sermon response process to evaluate a sermon's coherence, biblical integrity, theological soundness, and engagement with listeners.
- Practice the skill of identifying and capturing preachable insights from your everyday experiences.
- Be able to articulate your strengths and growing edges in preaching

Topic: October 2

Lecture/Discussion - Theology of Preaching/Role of the Bible

Working through first 7 steps of a 10-step exegetical process for preaching

Assignment for October 2.

Read Long, *The Witness of Preaching*, Introduction and Chapters 1, 2 and 3.

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Submit a three-page essay that consists of one paragraph answers to each of these questions from Long (3 pages total).

- Long discusses four images of the preacher in Chapter 1 of *The Witness of Preaching*. Which one do you resonate with most? Which do you need to incorporate more fully into your pulpit identity?
- Why does Long spend so much time talking about how the preacher gets to the pulpit?
- What is the relationship of the preacher to the community of faith for Long?
- What, according to Long, makes a sermon biblical and a preacher a biblical preacher?
- Is preaching the only means of proclamation?

Work through the first 7 steps of McKenzie's 10 Steps of Biblical Exegesis on Mark 14:1-11, the Anointing at Bethany. Bring notes to contribute to the discussion of our findings/questions/hunches for each step.

Be prepared to enter into conversation with the group about your findings/questions/hunches with regard to each step.

Topic: October 9

Workshopping our sermonic claims and connection statements.

Assignment for October 9

Listen to Dr. McKenzie's lecture/ppt on sermonic claim and congregational connection. Finish working through steps 8, 9 and 10 of the exegetical process.

Submit a draft of a sermonic claim and congregational impact statement to workshop in class 10/9!

Submit a brief essay (2-3 pages) that answers the question: Why is each feature of an effective sermonic claim important?

- Terse
- Biblical Text- Specific
- Theologically balanced (contains both challenge **and** grace)
- Context-specific (congregational/cultural).

What happens when one or more are missing or off base? If you can think of examples (keep preachers anonymous, please) include one good and one bad example.

Read McMickle Introduction and Chapters 1 and 2 Be prepared to discuss his key concepts of what, so what and now what?

Topic: October 16

Workshop our sermon forms

Discuss key ideas on sermon form from Long, Thomas and McMickle,

Discuss the marks of an effective sermon – Using a Sermon Response Sheet the Professor will distribute.

Assignment for October 16

To do:

Listen to Dr. McKenzie's lecture/ppt on sermon form

Read Dr. Long Chapter 6

We will divide up the readings from Holbert, Thomas, Long and McMickle with each student assigned a portion to report on. (to be assigned by the Professor)

Submit an outline (communication plan) of how your sermon will unfold to discuss in class: In what sequence will you roll out concepts/stories/images? Pick one of two sermon forms for your sermon-

“The Four Pages” (Paul Scott Wilson) or “Erase, Replace and Celebrate” (Frank Thomas)

Topic: October 23

Finding and using illustrative material

Guidelines for telling stories about yourself

Strategies for effective storytelling

Assignment for October 23

To Read: Long, Chapter 8; Holbert/McKenzie Chs 6 and 7

To do: Write a brief essay (4 -5 pp) that answers these questions from the readings:

Which types of illustrations Long discusses do you use most often?

(analogy/example/metaphor)

How might you use one of them in your Mark 14 sermon?

Where do most of your illustrations come from? Your own life? History, literature, current events, pop culture? Where will your illustration(s) come from for your Mark 14 sermon?

According to Holbert and McKenzie (What Not to Say, Chapters 6 and 7)

What makes for an effective use of personal stories? An ineffective use?

What advice do Holbert and McKenzie offer on using personal stories (Chapter 6), stories in general? (Chapter 7)

Topic October 30

Preaching our sermons in class with professor and classmates' feedback.

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Assignment for October 30

To do: complete your exegetical work on the passage and the manuscript and turn it in by October 29.

Instructions for the sermon manuscript and exegetical paper.

Prepare an exegetical paper based on your working through McKenzie's ten steps on Mark 14. The paper is to be 8 pp with an additional cover sheet at the beginning and bibliography sheet at the end. Write it in the form of a narrative that explains how your sermonic claim arose and developed throughout the steps.

Use a minimum of 4 exegetical resources. Study Bibles can be used in addition to, but not in place of, commentaries. Consider diversity of gender, ethnicity, and race in your choice of scholars.

Cover sheet for the assignment should contain

- **Your name**
- **Title of sermon**
- **Text for sermon**
- **Sermonic Claim**
- **Congregational Connection Statement**
- **Form (communication plan) you have chosen for the sermon- 4 Pages or Erase, Replace, Celebrate**
- **Congregation you are envisioning preaching the sermon to**