

**BASIC PREACHING**  
**PW 100-3, Spring 2007**  
Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary  
Tuesday, Thursday 3:00 p.m.-4:30 p.m.  
with alternate group meeting times 1:30 p.m.-3:00 p.m.  
Nelson Hall 119

**Instructor:**

**Patricia K. Tull** (Gardencourt 304, ext. 378, [ptull@lpts.edu](mailto:ptull@lpts.edu))

*This online syllabus should be used to gain a better understanding of the content and focus of a course. The syllabus given out in the class may differ from this online version and its content supercedes that of the online syllabus.*

**Course Description**

This course provides an introduction to the nature, theology, and process of preaching. In plenary sessions, students will study the exegetical, hermeneutical, theological and pastoral dynamics of preaching, and the week-to-week specifics of the homiletical task. In practicums, students will learn to listen to sermons discerningly and will prepare and preach sermons, receiving constructive feedback from classmates and professor. Our objective in this course is not the perfection of individual sermons. Rather it is to lay a foundation in knowledge and skill for your continued development as a responsible preacher of the gospel. By the end of this course you should have a good and growing understanding of the intricate task of preaching and of your own strengths and growing edges, as well as a plan for continuing to build your communicative skills in the future.

**Required Texts**

Thomas G. Long, *The Witness of Preaching*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox, 2005).

Leonora Tubbs Tisdale, *Preaching as Local Theology and Folk Art* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1997).

Mary Alice Mulligan et al., *Believing in Preaching: What Listeners Hear in Sermons* (St. Louis: Chalice, 2005).

**Recommended to buy; there will be some required reading**

Lucy L. Hogan, *Graceful Speech: An Invitation to Preaching* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox, 2006).

Cleophus J. LaRue, *The Heart of Black Preaching* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox, 2000).

Cleophus J. LaRue, ed., *Power in the Pulpit* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox, 2002).

John S. McClure, ed., *Best Advice for Preaching* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998).

Majorie Suchocki, *The Whispered Word: A Theology of Preaching* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 1999).

**Course Components**

1. Readings and class discussion: There will be reading assignments most days. You are responsible to have actively read the material with enough attentiveness to be able to discuss it in class and to employ the insights gained in our in-class discussions of sermons and

sermon segments. Many days, further recommended reading is offered for those who would like to find out more, either now or in the future, on a particular aspect of preaching.

2. **Online Preacher's Scrapbook:** Thoughtful preaching involves developing one's faculties as a keen observer of life, able to see and articulate meaning in the events around us—the conversations we hear; the moments we observe; the words we read. We will develop this practice through an online preacher's scrapbook. You will post paragraphs once every two weeks in the appropriate place in the Blackboard Discussion Board, where others can read and respond to your entries. This is not a personal journal, and these entries are not to be about yourself; rather, you are pointing the "eye of the camera" out to the world around you.
3. **Out-of-Class Sermons:** As you learn to listen to sermons analytically, you will notice a great deal more about what contributes to a sermon's success as faithful, authentic, meaningful preaching. In the classroom we will observe some excellent preaching that we will discuss as a group. In addition, each student will write a series of six brief responses to sermons heard or read in other contexts. Two of these should be heard live; two should be heard electronically (on TV; online; in a recording); and two should be sermon manuscripts read. You may choose which week which medium is used. Try to listen to a variety of preachers, some of which you might not otherwise have heard. These sermons should be properly documented (preacher; sermon title; bibliographical description of source) and submitted in the appropriate place in the Blackboard Discussion Board, where your classmates can read them as well.
4. **Speech Workshop:** on Thursday, February 22, we will break into two groups (half of the class will come from 2:00 to 3:00, the other half from 3:15 to 4:15). You will bring a **new video tape** to class and come to the speech workshops prepared to do two things in front of the group, in order to receive feedback on basic speech communication skills:
  - a. Read a brief passage of Scripture - no more than 4-5 verses.
  - b. Give a 2-3 minute speech. Your topic will be one of the following: 1) The funniest thing that ever happened to me; 2) My favorite relative; or 3) The worst or weirdest vacation I ever had.
5. **Sermon Analysis Notes:** In preparation for three of our sessions, each student will listen to a sermon available through Blackboard and write notes regarding a particular aspect of the sermon as assigned each week. These will be turned in through Blackboard Digital Dropbox before the class session in which we will discuss that sermon together.
6. **Preaching:** The small group preaching practicum is meant to be a supervised, supportive *feedback* group enabling students to begin to claim strengths and confront weaknesses as preachers and communicators. Students will be divided into two small groups (1:30-2:50 and 3:00-4:20) for each of the three sermons. We will change the groups each time so that you will hear and give feedback to all your classmates at one point or another.

First Sermon: Each student will preach a sermon (20-minute maximum including reading of scripture passage) on a text chosen from a list of passages. **Exegetical notes** will be turned in through Blackboard Digital Dropbox by class time on March 27. **A written manuscript** of the sermon will be sent in **at least 2 days before presentation** through Blackboard Digital

Dropbox. The sermon will be videotaped, so **bring your speech workshop videotape to class**. After the sermon has been preached, the group will provide feedback. I will review your speech workshop presentations and your first sermon and will meet with you individually by appointment to discuss them.

Second and Third Sermons: **Written manuscripts** of these sermons will be turned in at least 1 day prior to presentation through Blackboard Digital Dropbox. The sermon will be taped, but exegetical notes and individual sermon review are not required for these sermons.

In order to allow you freedom to experiment with preaching form or style, your final preaching grade will be based on the best two out of three sermons. To give yourself additional freedom for revision and rethinking, please don't plan to preach these sermons in other settings (field education; home congregation; chapel) during the semester. You may of course preach these sermons—or revised versions of them—later on, as they seem appropriate to the preaching contexts in which you find yourself.

### **Grading**

15% – online preacher's scrapbook (6+comments)

15% – online responses to out-of-class sermons (6)

15% – sermon analysis notes (3) turned in through Blackboard digital dropbox

5% - exegetical notes (1) turned in through Blackboard digital dropbox

40% – sermons (best 2 out of 3) turned in through Blackboard digital dropbox

10% – collegial participation in discussions and critical feedback

Sermons will be graded with an eye to:

1. Biblical interpretation (includes exegesis and interpretation for preaching).
2. Theological reflection
3. Pastoral sensitivity
4. Homiletical communication (development of sermon)

They will be graded on the following scale:

- A Excellent work, demonstrating sound exegesis, careful theological reflection, pastoral sensitivity, skillful homiletical development, and engaging oral communication.
- B Good, solid work. Evidence of strength in most areas.
- C Acceptable, but not noteworthy work. Significant additional progress to be hoped for.
- D Not good at all; considerable progress needed.
- F Not acceptable.

### **Other Expectations**

*Attendance, promptness, and courtesy* – are necessary. Unexcused absences will lead to a reduction in your grade. Turn your cell phone **OFF** and stow it away before class begins. Eat snacks, chat with friends, play computer games, and visit the restroom *before* or *after*, not during, class. Especially when your colleagues are preaching, dedicate yourself to attentive listening.

*Assignments* – are to be turned in promptly through Blackboard. Assignments missed or late will adversely affect grades. Preaching dates will be selected and negotiated in the sermon group. Once a date is set, do not expect to change it. Except in the event of a catastrophe or your

own premature demise, failure to preach on the assigned date is subject to a grade of “zero” for that sermon.

*Inclusive Language* –It is expected, not only because it is the policy of this seminary, but because it is requisite for thinking pastorally, that language, symbols, and metaphors used in class discussions and in written and oral communication strive to include the whole human community in respect to gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, age, and physical and intellectual capacities. Although language used about God is a more complex issue in terms of Scripture and tradition, students are actively encouraged to strive to craft their speech and especially their sermons to present God in language that is graceful and winsome, and imagery worthy of the expansive metaphors and language for God found in Scripture and tradition. For example: “He is Lord” demands the assumption that God is a man, while a reconstruction such as “God is God” is both emptied of content and linguistically redundant. “Our God reigns” says it all, gracefully.

*Plagiarism* – is a special problem not only in schools but in the pulpit. The sermons that you preach and the papers that you write, in totality and in their parts, are expected to be your own. Sources for material quoted or cited in sermons should be properly footnoted in the written manuscript of the sermon. Any instances of plagiarism discovered will be reported to the Dean’s office. Two reports of plagiarism constitute grounds for dismissal from LPTS.

### **Further Reading for Preachers**

- O. Wesley Allen Jr., *The Homiletic of All Believers: A Conversational Approach to Proclamation and Preaching* (Louisville: WJKP, 2005).
- Ron Allen, *Hearing the Sermon: Relationship/Content/Feeling* (St. Louis: Chalice, 2004).
- L. Susan Bond, *Trouble With Jesus: Women, Christology, and Preaching* (St. Louis: Chalice, 1999).
- Walter Brueggemann, *Cadences of Home: Preaching Among Exiles* (Louisville: WJKP, 1997).
- Charles L. Campbell, *The Word before the Powers: An Ethic of Preaching* (Louisville: WJKP, 2005).
- Jana Childers, ed., *Purposes of Preaching* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2004).
- Burton Cooper and John McClure, *Claiming Theology in the Pulpit* (Louisville: WJKP, 2003).
- Fred Craddock, *As One Without Authority* (4<sup>th</sup> ed., Christian Board of Publication, 2001).
- Fred Craddock, *Overhearing the Gospel* (rev. and expanded; St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2002).
- J. González and C. González, *The Liberating Pulpit* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994).
- Michael Gorman, *Elements of Biblical Exegesis: A Basic Guide for Students and Ministers* (Hendrickson, 2001).
- Jack Haberer, *Godviews: The Convictions that Drive Us and Divide Us* (Louisville: WJKP, 2001).
- Cleophus J. LaRue, ed., *This is My Story: Testimonies and Sermons of Black Women in Ministry* (Louisville: WJKP, 2005).
- John McClure, *The Roundtable Pulpit: Where Leadership and Preaching Meet* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1995).

- John McClure and Nancy Ramsay, ed., *Telling the Truth: Preaching about Sexual and Domestic Violence* (Cleveland, OH: United Church Press, 1998).
- John McClure et al., *Listening to Listeners: Homiletical Case Studies* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2004).
- Mary Alice Mulligan and Ron Allen, *Make the Word Come Alive: Lessons from Laity* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2005).
- Henry H. Mitchell, *Black Preaching: The Recovery of a Powerful Art* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1990).
- Olin P. Moyd, *The Sacred Art: Preaching and Theology in the African American Tradition* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1995).
- Carol Norén, *The Woman in the Pulpit* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1991).
- G. Lee Ramsey, *Care-Full Preaching: From Sermon to Caring Community* (St. Louis: Chalice, 2000).
- Christine Smith, *Preaching as Weeping, Confession, and Resistance: Radical Responses to Radical Evil* (Louisville: WJKP, 1992).
- Barbara Brown Taylor, *The Preaching Life* (Cambridge, Mass: Cowley Publications, 1993).
- Frank A. Thomas, *They Like to Never Quit Praisin' God: The Role of Celebration in Preaching* (Cleveland, OH: United Church Press, 1997).
- Willimon, William R., and Richard Lischer, eds. *Concise Encyclopedia of Preaching* (Louisville: WJKP, 1995).