

Course Syllabus
KNP3372H S – Preaching Practicum
Knox College
Toronto School of Theology
Winter 2024

Instructor Information

Instructor: Emily K. Bisset, B.A., M.Div, Th.D (homiletics)
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Course Identification

Course Number: KNP3372HS
Course Format: In person
Course Name: Preaching Practicum
Course Location:
Class Times:
Prerequisites: An introductory course in both preaching and New Testament. It is highly recommended that students be in or have completed their TFE placement and have completed a basic theology course (Reformed Theology or equivalent)

Course Description

This course is an advanced preaching practicum that will review and build on the basics of preaching and take the conversation about preaching to a new depth. The course will help students deepen their understanding of the relationship between preaching and the Bible; preaching and theology; and preaching and the listeners. Using a workbook for preachers, students will engage in thoughtful dialogue with a diverse group of some of the leading homileticians in North America and with one another. This course also focuses significant attention to the practical aspects of preaching such as voice, delivery, and oral/aural communication. Students will also become more familiar with the resources for responsible and faithful preaching for the church today.

Course Resources

Required Course Texts (available at U OF T bookstore)

- Thomas H. Troeger and Leonora Tubbs Tisdale, *A Sermon Workbook: Exercises in the Art and Craft of Preaching* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2013)
- Anna Carter Florence, *Rehearsing Scripture: Discovering God's Word in Community*, (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2018)

Course Learning Objectives/Outcomes

- to demonstrate ability to use a Biblical text in preaching and describe basic elements/movements in a sermon, especially in the Reformed tradition
- to articulate one's own theology and understanding of preaching and apply systematic theology to a teaching and preaching ministry within a congregation in relation to Reformed heritage
- to demonstrate ability to understand the role of the listeners in preaching and to preach within a particular context
- to describe the relationship of preaching to the other theological disciplines including exegesis, theology and pastoral care
- to situate, evaluate and reflect on roles and styles of preaching in relation to cultural and ecclesial changes
- prepare and preach sermons that communicate clearly in an oral/aural style
- to gain confidence in preaching and to reflect on the effectiveness and faithfulness of doing so as gospel proclamation

Evaluation

Requirements

The final grade for the course will be based on evaluations in five areas.

(1) **Completion of the Sermon Workbook Exercises (20%)** – We will be working through the sermon workbook as the backbone of this course. Exercises are required in the chapters that are assigned (unless otherwise noted). The exercises marked with an asterisk (*) must be turned in to the instructor – either a scanned copy of your handwritten work or an electronic version of your typed work. They will not be assigned an individual grade, but taken cumulatively will comprise 20% of your mark. There are 21 written exercises. You will receive 1 percentage point for each one turned in (which means you can miss 1 without penalty). ***All written assignments from Chapters 16-29 of the Sermon Workbook must utilize the oral/aural style of writing in Chapter 16 of the Sermon Workbook. You will develop your own version/style of this writing as you experiment with it.***

You will often be asked to share your responses in break out rooms with your classmates.

(2) **Book Review (15%)** – Students will choose one book from the list below, or speak to the instructor about a homiletical book in an area of interest. Write a review of the book that includes **a summary** of the chosen book, **a critical evaluation** of how it is helpful or useful to understanding and engaging in the preaching task, and **an assessment of if you would recommend this reading to other preachers and why or why not.** [4-6 double spaced, typed pages in length.

DUE February 12.

- Frederick Buechner, *Telling the Truth: The Gospel as Tragedy, Comedy, and Fairy Tale* (HarperOne, 1 Edition, 2009)
- John C. Hobert and Alyce McKenzie, *What Not to Say: Avoiding the Common Mistakes That Can Sink Your Sermon* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2011)

- Jana Childers, ed. *Birth of the Sermon: Women Preachers on the Creative Process* (Chalice Press, 2001)
- Anna Carter Florence, *Rehearsing Scripture: Discovering God's Word in Community*, (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2018)

(3) **Theological Lexicon/Journal for Preaching (15%)** – Choose 2 doctrines/theological vocabulary words using the chart of Major Christian Doctrines that we will make together. Provide a definition of each, in your own words, citing at least one theological source and one Biblical text that speaks to that doctrine.

(see recommended theological texts at the end of this document, such as Migliore, McKim, or Buechner)

Throughout the term, write 3 entries in your journal for each doctrine that provide an illustration/example/preaching point:

- 1 of the 3 entries should be an item from news/current events.
- 1 of the 3 entries should be a story of a personal encounter/conversation/memory.
- Journal entries do not have to be lengthy, but should be detailed enough to convey the story/idea and make an explicit link to the doctrine.

Due March 26

(4) **In class Sermon 1 (25%)** – The first sermon will be preached in class and a written manuscript will be submitted. The text for the first sermon must be a Gospel text from January – March 2024 (Year B). The lectionary can be found here:

<https://lectionary.library.vanderbilt.edu/>

Text selection is due by January 16. A written sermon manuscript is required. The audience for this sermon can either be the class or for a congregational context. Please specify your intended audience. In addition to preaching the sermon, you will read the Scripture text your sermon is based on.

- The evaluative focus of this first sermon is the content with a particular focus on how the sermon works with the Biblical text and expresses theology in an authentic and engaging voice.
- The focus and function, along with a theological theme examined in the sermon, should be printed at the top of each page.
- The sermon should be written in the oral/aural style of writing as demonstrated in the Sermon Workbook in Chapter 16.
- It should be about 10-12 minutes in length (4-6 written pages, depending on your style)

(5) Congregational Sermon 2 (25%) -- Students will submit a video of a sermon preached for a congregational setting (TFE placement, home congregation, work congregation). Many congregations have technology for recorded or livestream (with recording available). If you do not have an opportunity to preach, please speak to the instructor as I may be able to arrange an opportunity for you. If you cannot find a preaching opportunity, you may video your sermon on your own and submit it to the instructor; however, you must have a congregational context in mind. Students can choose their own text for preaching. **Text selection is due by February 12.**

- **The sermon should be preached between March 10 and April 7.** The video will be submitted to the instructor no later than Monday, April 8, along with a manuscript of the sermon (even if a full manuscript is not used in the pulpit) and any rough notes the students made in preparation for the sermon in terms of exegesis or in consultation with resources, including the Sermon Workbook. Sermons preached/recorded before March 10 or after April 7 will not be accepted.
- The evaluative focus of the second sermon will include Biblical exegesis and Theology, but will also include more emphasis on connecting with the listener, sermon form and effective delivery.
- The congregational context should be summarized and included at the beginning of the written sermon (name of congregation, relevant demographics, how you are connected, etc.).
- The theological doctrine you are seeking to include should be written at the top of each page.
- The sermon should be written in the oral/aural style of writing as demonstrated in the Sermon Workbook in Chapter 16.
- The recorded sermon will be reviewed and evaluated through a one on one meeting with the student and instructor sometime between Thursday April 4 and Friday April 12.

Grading System

- A+ (90-100)
- A (85-89)
- A- (80-84)
- B+ (77-79)
- B (73-76)
- B- (70-72)
- Failure

Please see the appropriate handbook for more details about the grading scale and non-numerical grades (e.g. SDF, INC, etc).

Late work (BD). Basic Degree students are expected to hand in assignments by the date given in the course outline. Late work will be deducted by 2% per day. This penalty is not applied to students with medical or compassionate difficulties; students facing such difficulties are kindly requested to consult with their faculty adviser or basic degree director, who should make a recommendation on the matter to the instructor. The absolute deadline for the course is the examination day scheduled for the course. Students who for exceptional reasons (e.g., a death in the family or a serious illness) are unable to complete work by this date may request an extension (SDF = “standing deferred”) beyond the term. An SDF must be requested from the registrar’s

office in the student's college of registration no later than the last day of classes in which the course is taken. The SDF, when approved, will have a mutually agreed upon deadline that does not extend beyond the conclusion of the following term. If a student has not completed work but has not been granted an SDF, a final mark will be submitted calculating a zero for work not submitted.

Course grades. Consistently with the policy of the University of Toronto, course grades submitted by an instructor are reviewed by a committee of the instructor's college before being posted. Course grades may be adjusted where they do not comply with University grading policy (<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/grading.htm>) or college grading policy.

Policies

Accessibility. Students with a disability or health consideration, whether temporary or permanent, are entitled to accommodation. Students must register at the University of Toronto's Accessibility Services offices; information is available at <http://www.accessibility.utoronto.ca/>. The sooner a student seeks accommodation, the quicker we can assist.

Plagiarism. Students submitting written material in courses are expected to provide full documentation for sources of both words and ideas in footnotes or endnotes. Direct quotations should be placed within quotation marks. (If small changes are made in the quotation, they should be indicated by appropriate punctuation such as brackets and ellipses, but the quotation still counts as a direct quotation.) Failure to document borrowed material constitutes plagiarism, which is a serious breach of academic, professional, and Christian ethics. An instructor who discovers evidence of student plagiarism is not permitted to deal with the situation individually but is required to report it to his or her head of college or delegate according to the TST *Basic Degree Handbook* and the Graduate program Handbooks (linked from <http://www.tst.edu/academic/resources-forms/handbooks> and the University of Toronto *Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters* <http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/AssetFactory.aspx?did=4871>). A student who plagiarizes in this course will be assumed to have read the document "Avoidance of plagiarism in theological writing" published by the Graham Library of Trinity and Wycliffe Colleges http://www.trinity.utoronto.ca/Library_Archives/Theological_Resources/Tools/Guides/plag.htm.

Inclusive Language Policy Faithfulness to the Gospel in preaching demands that we use inclusive language for both God and for human beings. This includes, but is not limited to gender-based language. Preachers of the Gospel ought to reflect the names/nature/character of God in an expansive variety of ways, as is demonstrated in the Scripture itself. Proclaimers of the good news ought to address the congregation in such a way as to ensure that all listeners feel invited and valued. For details on the inclusive language policy of Knox College, please see: https://knox.utoronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Knox-College-Policy-Use-of-Language-Policy-and-Glossary_221003.pdf

Other academic offences. TST students come under the jurisdiction of the University of Toronto *Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters* <http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm>.

Back-up copies. Please make back-up copies of essays before handing them in.

Obligation to check email. At times, the course instructor may decide to send out important course information by email. To that end, all students in conjoint programs are required to have a valid utoronto email address. Students must have set up their utoronto email address which is entered in the ACORN system. Information is available at www.utorid.utoronto.ca. The course instructor will not be able to help you with this. 416-978-HELP and the Help Desk at the Information Commons can answer questions you may have about your UTORid and password. *Students should check utoronto email regularly* for messages about the course. **Forwarding** your utoronto.ca email to a Hotmail, Gmail, Yahoo or other type of email account is not advisable. In some cases, messages from utoronto.ca addresses sent to Hotmail, Gmail or Yahoo accounts are filtered as junk mail, which means that emails from your course instructor may end up in your spam or junk mail folder.

Email communication with the course instructor. The instructor aims to respond to email communications from students in a timely manner. *All email communications from students should be sent from a utoronto email address.* Email communications from other email addresses are not secure, and also the instructor cannot readily identify them as being legitimate emails from students. The instructor is not obliged to respond to email from non-utoronto addresses.

Course Schedule

THE READINGS AND WORKBOOK EXERCISES LISTED FOR EACH CLASS ARE TO BE READ AND COMPLETED IN ADVANCE OF THE CLASS MEETING, UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED.

**** All written assignments from Chapters 16-29 of the Sermon Workbook and BOTH your sermons must utilize the oral/aural style of writing in Chapter 16 of the Sermon Workbook. You will develop your own version/style of this writing as you experiment with it. The workbook exercises marked with an asterisk (*) must be turned in to the instructor by email with the subject: “Sermon Workbook” and the title of the chapter you are working on.**

WEEK 1

Tuesday January 9

Course introduction

Sermon Workbook

*Chapter 1, “Hallmarks of Good Preaching”

*Chapter 2, “Diversity of Preaching”

Chapter 16, “Oral/Aural Speech for Preaching”

WEEK 2

Tuesday January 16

Preaching and the Bible

Reading: *Rehearsing Scripture*, chapter 2 and 3

Sermon Workbook

*Chapter 22, “Shifting the Point of View”

*Chapter 23, “What do you see?”

SELECTION OF PREACHING TEXT FOR FIRST SERMON DUE

On your own time, complete the steps of exegesis from Chapter 4 on your text. I am not asking you to turn in this exegesis, as it should largely be review from Basic Preaching. But if I have a question about your sermon, I will ask to see your exegesis on that matter.

WEEK 3

Tuesday January 23

The Biblical Story, our stories and preaching

Telling the story, engaging with Scripture and our own Moth
Radio Hour workshop

Reading TBA

Sermon Workbook

*Chapter 17, “Images of God in Everyday Life”

WEEK 4

Tuesday January 30

Preaching and Theology (focus on major doctrines of the Reformed tradition, theological vocabulary and homiletical theology)

Reading: Emily K Rodgers, *Solid Food: The Integration of the Theology of Sanctification and Homiletics to Nurture*

Congregational Preaching, Dissertation 2007 pgs. 124-132, 151-165 (Distributed)

Sermon Workbook

*Chapter 11, “Theology and Preaching”

*Chapter 26, “Reason and Feeling”

INTRODUCTION OF THE THEOLOGICAL LEXICON/JOURNAL

WEEK 5

Tuesday February 6

Preaching and Your Theology

Sermon Workbook

Chapter 6, “The Role of Imagination in Preaching”

*Chapter 12, “Making Theology Incarnate for Preaching”

*Chapter 21, “Taking Part in an Experience
of God’s Living Word”

WEEK 6

Tuesday February 12

How can this sermon best be heard?

Sermon Workbook

*Chapter 10, “A Repertoire of Sermon Forms”

*Chapter 24, “Creating Parables from Life”

*Chapter 19, “Images that Compete for Allegiance...”

BOOK REVIEW DUE

PREACHING TEXT FOR SECOND SERMON DUE

WEEK 7

*February 20
Reading Week*

NO CLASS

WEEK 8

Tuesday February 27

In Class Sermons

WEEK 9

Tuesday March 5

In Class Sermons

WEEK 10

Tuesday March 12

Preaching and your Listeners

Sermon Workbook

- *Chapter 5, “The Sermons People Receive”
- Chapter 8 (for review), “Exegeting the Congregation...”
- *Chapter 9, “The Use of Multiple Intelligences...”
- *Chapter 18, “Congregations as Partners in Preaching”

WEEK 11

Tuesday March 19

Preaching and your Listeners

(focus on Ethics and Preaching in today’s contexts, conflict)

Reading TBA

Sermon Workbook

- *Chapter 27, “Celebration in Preaching”

WEEK 12

Tuesday March 26

Funerals and the role of preaching

Sermon Workbook

- *Chapter 15, “Sermon Delivery Options”

THEOLOGICAL LEXICON/JOURNAL DUE

WEEK 12

Tuesday April 2

Putting it all together: Preaching and Ministry

Sermon Workbook

- Chapter 7, “The Weekly Sermon Preparation Process”
- *Chapter 28, “The Hungry Heart”
- *Chapter 25, “The Ambiguities of Tradition”
- *Chapter 29, “The Purposes of Preaching”

VIDEO, MANUSCRIPT AND NOTES FOR SECOND SERMON DUE NO LATER THAN WEDNESDAY APRIL 2

EXAM WEEK (FROM THURSDAY APRIL 4 -FRIDAY APRIL 12): SIGN UP FOR A TIME TO MEET WITH THE INSTRUCTOR FOR FEEDBACK REVIEW OF SECOND SERMON

A few sources to add to your preaching resources from this course

Homiletics:

- Scott Black Johnson, Ted A. Smith, and Leonora Tubbs Tisdale, ed., *Questions Preachers Ask: Essays in Honor of Thomas G. Long* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2016)
- John S. McClure, *Preaching Words: 144 Key Terms in Homiletics* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2007)
- John McClure and Burton, *Cooper Claiming Theology from the Pulpit* (Westminster John Knox, 2003)

*Your sermon workbook is full of great references to a diverse group of homileticians and theologians. I encourage you to refer to the end notes of each chapter and use this as a reference for any topics that might interest you further.

Websites/Blogs:

- workingpreacher.org
- textweek.org
- ...in the Meantime (David Lose)
- Worshipingwithchildren.blogspot.com (Carolyn Brown)

Theological texts and authors

- Daniel L. Migliore, *Faith Seeking Understanding: An Introduction to Christian Theology*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2014.
- Donald K. McKim various titles including (but by no means limited to):
 - (1996) *The Westminster Dictionary of Theological Terms*. Westminster John Knox Press.
 - (2004) *The Cambridge Companion to John Calvin*. Cambridge Companions to Religion. Cambridge University Press.
 - (2011) *A Down and Dirty Guide to Theology*. Westminster John Knox Press.
- For a lighter, more colloquial take -- Frederick Buechner
 - Whistling in the Dark*
 - Wishful Thinking: A Seekers ABC*

Peculiar Treasures

- For review and light introductions to primary theologians -- Armchair Theologian series by Westminster/John Knox press

Commentaries

- Feasting on the Word (Westminster John Knox)
- New Interpreter's Bible Commentary (10 volume set -- Abingdon press)
- Interpretation Series: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching (Westminster John Knox)
- Connections: A Lectionary Commentary for Preaching and Worship (Westminster John Knox, 9 volumes)

Bible Dictionaries

- Anchor Bible Dictionary (Yale University Press)
- New Interpreter's Dictionary (5 volume set – Abingdon)

Writers/Poets/Novelists

- Stuart McLean (for storytelling, the art of the pause, connecting to an audience)
- Mary Oliver and any of the poets (for economy, beauty and power of words)
- Comedians (for timing!)
- Novelists (for descriptive writing)

Reliable publishers for scholarly work:

Oxford
Cambridge University Press
Abingdon
Westminster/John Knox
Eerdmans
Fortress Press
Chalice