Course Syllabus
KNP3362HF/KNP6362HF
Transformative Preaching: Prophetic and Ethical Approaches
Knox College
Toronto School of Theology
Fall 2024

Instructor Information

Instructor:	Dr. Sarah Travis
Office Location:	Knox College (2nd floor near the chapel)
Telephone:	289-795-1065
E-mail:	sarah.travis@utoronto.ca
Office Hours:	by appointment

Course Identification

Course Number:	KNP3362HF/KNP6362HF
Course Format:	*In-class*
Course Name:	Transformative Preaching: Prophetic and Ethical Approaches
Course Location:	Room TBD, Knox College
Class Times:	Tuesdays 2-4pm
Prerequisites:	An introductory preaching course

Course Description

Prophetic and ethical approaches to preaching assume that there is a need for positive social change in communities. This course explores how the preaching of the church contributes to social change within the church and beyond. Through an emphasis on contextualization of the word, and critical engagement with a variety of homiletic proposals, this course seeks to build a robust understanding of the gospel in context and the ways that good news is heard and received in various locations. Topics include decolonial preaching, Eco theology, liberation preaching, black preaching, feminist preaching. The goal is to craft and deliver sermons that engage deeply with the biblical text and can respond to social phenomenon and crises in contextual and gospel-centered ways.

Course Resources

Required Course Texts/Bibliography

All course readings may be accessed through Quercus/Library Reading List

A note about readings: the readings are particularly heavy in the first few weeks of the course. It is not necessary to read every word of the books, but please become familiar enough that you can state their main argument and participate in a conversation. Be prepared to offer one question and one key thought about each book.

- Brueggemann, Walter. *The Practice of Prophetic Imagination: Preaching an Emancipatory Word*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2012.
- Jacobsen, David Schnasa. *Theologies of the Gospel in Context: The Crux of Homiletical Theology*. Eugene, Ore: Cascade Books, 2017.
- McClure, John S. *Ethical Approaches to Preaching: Choosing the Best Way to Preach about Difficult Issues*. Eugene, Oregon: Cascade Books, 2021.
- McMickle, Marvin Andrew. *Where Have All the Prophets Gone? : Reclaiming Prophetic Preaching in America*. Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 2006.

[Graduate students] Read ONE of the following books for a 10-minute oral book report. If you would like to choose a book not on this list, please speak to the Professor.

- Campbell, Charles L. *The Word before the Powers: An Ethic of Preaching*. 1st ed. Louisville, Ky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002.
- Childs, James M. *Preaching Justice: The Ethical Vocation of Word and Sacrament Ministry*. Harrisburg, Pa: Trinity Press International, 2000.
- Tisdale, Leonora Tubbs. *Prophetic Preaching: A Pastoral Approach*. 1st ed. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2010.
- Smith, Christine M. (Christine Marie). *Preaching Justice: Ethnic and Cultural Perspectives*. Cleveland, Ohio: United Church Press, 1998.

Course Website

Quercus: https://q.utoronto.ca/

This course uses Quercus for its course website. To access it, go to the UofT Quercus login page at https://q.utoronto.ca/ and login using your UTORid and password. Once you have logged in to Quercus using your UTORid and password, look for the **My Courses** module, where you'll find the link to the website for all your Quercus-based courses. (Your course registration with ACORN gives you access to the course website in Quercus.) Information for students about using Quercus can be found at: https://community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC-10701 . Students experiencing difficulties accessing Quercus should contact the registrar's office of their college.

Course Schedule (subject to change)

Week 1

September 10   Course Introduction
                        Syllabus
                        Effective Sermons

Week 2
September 17   Naming the Problem: Preaching to a Broken World

Reading: Brueggemann

Week 3
September 24   Naming the Promise: The Gospel in Context

Reading: Jacobsen

Week 4
October 1   Ethical Approaches to Preaching
                      Grad Students: Oral Book Reports

Reading: McClure

Week 5
October 8   Prophetic Approaches to Preaching

Reaching: McMickle

Week 6
October 15   Topic Seminar: Decolonial Perspectives
                      Topic Seminar: Feminist Perspectives

Reading: TBA

Week 7
October 22   Topic Seminar: Ecotheological Perspectives
                      Topic Seminar: Black Perspectives

Week 8
November 5   Topic Seminar: Asian Perspectives
                      Topic Seminar: LGBTQ Perspectives

Reading: TBA

Week 9

November 12 Class sermons or seminars

Week 10
November 19 Class Sermons

Week 11
November 26 Class sermons

Week 12
December 3 Class sermons

Exam Week
TBD

Evaluation

Requirements

The final grade for the course will be based on evaluations in [three] areas:

Basic Degree Students:

(1) *Participation (15%)* – In addition to participating in the regular activity of the class, including the reading of the required texts, students are expected to engage vigorously in class discussions, including the evaluation of sermons.

(2) *Description of Context* (15%)– a concise 1000-word description of the context of the congregation for whom you are imagining your sermons. Instructions and Rubric provided. Due Oct 1

(3) *Written sermons and Final Sermon Preached in Class*

   a) write three sermons (1500 words). Instructions and rubric provided. (45%)

       Due Oct 15, Nov 5, November 19.

   b) choose ONE of those sermons, revise it according to feedback, and preach it in class. (25%). As scheduled

Graduate Students

(1) *Participation (10%)* – In addition to participating in the regular activity of the class, including the reading of the required texts, punctuality and full participation, students are invited to participate in the course by choosing a portion of a sermon to read at the beginning of class (3-

5 minutes). Sermons should relate to the ethical/prophetic content of the course. Sign up in class.

(2) *Oral Book Review (10%): On Week 4 of the course students are asked to give a 10-minute oral report on the book they have chosen to read. The purpose is to share the wisdom of the book with the rest of the class – what did you learn about preaching that can contribute to positive social change?*

(3) *Seminar and selection of article* (30%). Students are asked to prepare and lead a one-hour seminar on an assigned topic (see week 6,7,8). Students are not expected to speak for an hour, but to provide leadership for a class conversation. Students are asked to provide an article related to their topic for the class to read (submit article by Week 5 of the course) Rubric will be provided for the seminar.

(4) *In Class Sermon (20%):* Students will prepare and preach a 10–15-minute sermon in class. The goal of the sermon is to promote transformation in a particular context in relation to a particular issue. Rubric will be provided.

(5) Final paper (30%) – 20-25 pages, scholarly format, rubric provided. Topic to be chosen in consultation with the professor.

Grading System - Basic Degree Students

1000, 2000 and 3000 level courses use the following numerical grading scale:

90-100 (A+)	Exceptional
85-89 (A)	Outstanding
80-84 (A-)	Excellent
77-79 (B+)	Very Good
73-76 (B)	Good
70-72 (B-)	Acceptable
0-69 (FZ)	Failure

Grading System - Graduate Degree Students

5000, 6000 and 7000 level courses use the following alpha grading scale:

A+	(90-100)	Profound & creative
A	(85-89)	Outstanding
A-	(80-84)	Excellent
B+	(77-79)	Very Good
B	(73-76)	Good
B-	(70-72)	Satisfactory
FZ	(0-69)	Failure

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

Policies

A note about "triggers": As you prepare for your vocation, you will encounter situations in class and in the real world that stretch the limits of your emotional capacity. If you are struggling with your emotions, please reach out to the Professor. In this class, you are welcome to leave the class for a few minutes, or take a walk if you need time to pull yourself together. If your distress continues, please reach out to the Registrar's office whose staff will be ready to assist you. In your practice of ministry, you will not necessarily have an opportunity to collect yourself before responding to uncomfortable emotions. It is vital that you learn coping skills and strategies for caring for yourself.

Class attendance. Students are expected to conduct themselves in a manner congruent with the vocation they are seeking to enter and in which they desire to give leadership. To that end, it is a regulation of Knox College that a minimum of approximately 80% attendance at courses (10 of 12 weeks) is required for credit; 100% attendance is expected at seminar courses. Habitual lateness for class will be counted as absence.

Teaching and learning are interactive, not passive, activities. Therefore, students may not "attend" an in-person class through unauthorized audio or video streaming or by watching or listening to a recording; instructors are not obligated to record or permitted to stream their in-person classes. Online classes that include a synchronous video component require the same level of attendance as an in-person course, and students may not "attend" by watching or listening to a recording. Online classes that include an asynchronous component require participation in all the activities for each week or module to meet the attendance requirement. Students requiring accommodations to attend class must present medical and/or Accessibility Services documentation that outlines the type and duration of accommodation(s) required.

Class recording. Much of the learning that goes on in the virtual or in-person classroom is founded upon mutual disclosure that takes place between instructor and student, and between students. Parties outside of this learning community have not committed themselves to this relationship of trust. A student without an approved accommodation who wishes to make an audio recording of an in-person class must secure the agreement of the instructor and all classmates; livestreaming and video recordings are not permitted. Online video-streamed classes may be recorded at the discretion of the instructor. Personal recordings may be used only by the student who made the recording; no recording may be reproduced, posted, or distributed without the written permission of the instructor.

Late work (BD)*.* Basic Degree students are expected to hand in assignments by the date given in the course outline. If you need more time to complete an assignment you must contact the Professor prior to the due date. There is no penalty for late work. The absolute deadline for the course is the examination day scheduled for the course or the last day of exam week for the semester in which the course is taught, whichever is sooner.

Students with documented medical or compassionate difficulties or exceptional reasons (e.g., a death in the family or a serious illness) are kindly requested to consult with their faculty adviser or basic degree director, who should make a recommendation on the matter to the instructor and request an SDF. The absolute deadline for obtaining an SDF for the course is the examination day scheduled for the course or the last day of examination week, whichever is sooner.   An SDF must be requested from the registrar's office in the student's college of registration no later than the last day of exam week 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.

Late work (Graduate)*.* The prima facie deadline for the completion of work in a course is the last day of the examination week for the trimester in which the course is taken. Students are expected to meet the course deadlines of the instructor offering the course and are advised to plan their research projects accordingly. Students who find themselves unable to meet deadlines for completing coursework can, under certain conditions, receive extensions for completing the work after the dates set by the college in which the course is offered.

The authority to grant an extension for the completion of work in a course beyond the original TST or college deadline (whichever is earlier) for that course rests with the student's college Graduate Director, not the instructor of the course. Nevertheless, the instructor's signature is required for course extension requests to be processed. Students will petition their college Graduate Director for extensions, using a standard form provided by TST on its website. See Section 7.11 of the Conjoint Graduate Degree Handbook.

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 to ACORN. Grades are not official until they are posted to ACORN. Course grades may be adjusted where they do not comply with University Assessment and Grading Practices Policy found at https://governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/secretariat/policies/grading-practices-policy-university-assessment-and-january-26-2012, policies found in the TST conjoint program handbooks, or college grading policy.

Inclusive Language*.* In your assignments and class discussions, you are expected to use language that is inclusive for people, and use a variety of terms to refer to God. Knox College has an inclusive language policy, available at https://knox.utoronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Knox-College-Policy_Use-of-Language-Policy-and-Glossary_221003.pdf.

Accessibility*.* Students with a disability or health consideration, whether temporary or permanent, are entitled to accommodation. Students in conjoint degree programs must register at the University of Toronto's Accessibility Services offices; information is available at http://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/as. 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 their head of college or delegate according to the Graduate program Handbook linked from http://www.tst.edu/academic/resources-forms/handbooks and the University of Toronto *Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters* https://governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/secretariat/policies/code-behaviour-academic-matters-july-1-2019. 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: https://www.trinity.utoronto.ca/library/research/theology/avoiding-plagiarism-in-theological-writing/

Use of Generative AI, e.g., ChatGPT. While AI may be used as a conversation partner in developing your assignments, you may not submit assignments generated by AI unless it is specifically required by the instructor for a particular assignment.

Other academic offences*.* TST students come under the jurisdiction of the University of Toronto *Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters* https://governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/secretariat/policies/code-behaviour-academic-matters-july-1-2019 .

Back-up copies*.* Please make back-up copies of assignments 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 me may end up in your spam or junk mail folder. Students in non-conjoint programs should contact the Registrar of their college of registration.

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 in conjoint programs must 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 for students in conjoint programs. Students in non-conjoint programs should only use the email address they have provided to their college of registration.

Course Learning Objectives/Outcomes

Basic Degrees – Knox and TST

This course has the following course-level learning outcomes	
Outcome	**Evaluation**
1. Demonstrate a biblical approach to preaching a sermon	sermons
2. To identify and describe one's own context. To articulate knowledge of the broader context for preaching.	Description of Context
3. To articulate the contextual nature of gospel	Sermons Participation
4. To prepare, preach, evaluate and revise sermons.	Sermons
5. To identify and use various communication strategies relates to social change.	Sermons Participation

A student successfully completing this course has made progress towards the following Knox College degree program learning outcomes:

MDiv	MTS	MPS
☒ Interprets Scripture and Christian tradition (Reformed), using a variety of methods, sources, and norms, to preach, teach, write, and to provide care and witness. *Evaluation:* Context assignment, sermons	☒ Demonstrates knowledge at a basic level in various theological disciplines. *Evaluation:* sermons	☒ Demonstrates knowledge at a basic level in various theological disciplines, in the Reformed or another tradition. [* the student may come from another tradition] *Evaluation:* sermons
☒ Demonstrates skills in creative, faith-centred, adaptive, and innovative leadership for current and emerging communities of faith. *Evaluation:* sermons	☒ Finds, selects, reads, and appropriately integrates theological information. *Evaluation:* sermons	☐ Demonstrates knowledge and skills in spiritual care and therapy, grounded in appropriate theories, for professional practice and leadership in community and institutional settings. *Evaluation:* *Click or tap here to enter text.*
☐ Enhances the vocational and spiritual development, practices, and well-being of self and others. (See Professional and Critical Competencies.) *Evaluation:* *Click or tap here to enter text.*	☒ Engages respectfully and constructively in a theological community of scholarship. *Evaluation:* Participation, sermons	☒ Demonstrates an appropriate spiritual and professional identity formation in relation to specialized practice. *Evaluation:* Sermons, participation
☒ Analyzes and evaluates social, cultural, and community contexts to enable communities of faith to participate in God's work and justice in a diverse and changing world. *Evaluation:* Contextual assignment, sermons	☒ Writes and speaks in English sufficiently well to engage in theological discourse. *Evaluation:* Sermons, contextual assignment	☒ Writes and speaks in English sufficiently well to engage in professional practice. *Evaluation:* Sermons, contextual assignment

Graduate Degrees – TST only

TST GRADUATE "DEGREE LEVEL EXPECTATIONS"	CORRESPONDING COURSE GOALS AND OUTCOMES	CORRESPONDING COURSE ELEMENTS / ASSIGNMENTS
EXPECTATIONS: *In this course students are expected to demonstrate the following:*		
1. Depth and Breadth of Knowledge	Students will learn a variety of ethical and prophetic approaches to preaching so that they can compare and discern	Lectures Seminars

TST GRADUATE "DEGREE LEVEL EXPECTATIONS"	CORRESPONDING COURSE GOALS AND OUTCOMES	CORRESPONDING COURSE ELEMENTS / ASSIGNMENTS
	the appropriate approach in a given context. Students will deeply explore and critique a particular approach to preaching.	
2. Research and Scholarship	Students will identify and research a question related to social change and preaching.	Seminars Papers Book Review
3. Level of Application of Knowledge	Students will prepare and present sermons that combine biblical and theological knowledge with homiletic principles in order to address a specific issue related to social change.	Sermon Seminar Paper
4. Professional Capacity or Autonomy	Students will be able to discuss the possibilities and limits of public theology.	Lectures Seminars
5. Level of Communication Skills	Students will communicate in a scholarly way – written and orally-a proposal for ethical/prophetic preaching in a particular context. Students will be able to prepare and preach sermons that address the gospel in context while contributing to positive social change.	Final Paper Seminar Sermon Book Review
6. Awareness of the Limits of Knowledge	Students will thickly describe a particular context, and be able to discuss the contextuality of gospel and preaching.	Lectures Seminar Sermon