

1-1-2009

PR 610 The Theology and Practice of Preaching

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Recommended Citation

Kalas, J. Ellsworth, "PR 610 The Theology and Practice of Preaching" (2009). *Syllabi*. Book 83.
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Syllabus

Course: PR610 W2 (SP 2009)

Title: The Theology and Practice of Preaching

Hours: 3.00

Published: Yes, on 02/09/2009

Prerequisites:

OT(IBS)6xx and SP501

- or -

NT(IBS)6xx and SP501

Department: Preaching

Faculty: Dr. Ellsworth Kalas



Email: ellsworth.kalas@asburyseminary.edu

Office: AD

SPO: 801

Meetings:

During 02/09/2009 to 05/22/2009 on Tuesday and Thursday from 9:30a to 10:45a in AD302.

- Breakout Room or Additional Reserved Room in EXLEXL.
- Breakout Room or Additional Reserved Room in BC235.

Maximum Registration: 16

Catalog Description: This course nurtures a vision of Christian preaching as a theological and pastoral activity of the church in service to the gospel. The core objectives of this course have been established to facilitate critical understanding of and competence in view of (1) preaching as witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ revealed in the Christian Scriptures and (2) preaching as both a gift of the Holy Spirit and a human vocation which serves the creation of a community called to worship the Triune God as revealed through the narrative of the whole biblical canon. This course approaches preaching as a theological practice and from a perspective shaped by the Wesleyan tradition; it is informed by a conscious integration of doctrinal and biblical exegesis and the practice of theological hermeneutics. Emphasis is placed on the lifelong task of acquiring practical habits appropriate for cultivating judgment required for faithful communication of the biblical witness in service of the Word of God, as an act of Christian worship and within the context of personal, social, and cultural challenge and change.

Objectives:

PR610: Servant as Proclaimer

Professor: J. Ellsworth Kalas

Ellsworth.Kalas@asburyseminary.edu

Office Phone: (859) 858-2202

SPO: 793

Spring, 2009

Office: AD 208

Office Hours:

(By appointment)

TR, 9:30 – 10:45

AD 302, BC 235

PR610 is the basic course in preaching and is prerequisite to other preaching courses. Since preaching is both a literary and an oral art, we work at both content and delivery. Our semester is divided roughly in half. During the first portion by lecture and discussion we examine the principles and methodology of preaching, and in the latter half of the term we become a preaching laboratory, in which each student gives three sermons of different lengths, each of which is then critiqued by the class and the professor. And because we are a people of The Book, we emphasize biblical preaching.

TEXTS: Pasquarello, Christian Preaching
Kalas, Preaching from the Soul

Witham, City Set Upon a Hill
 McDonnell, Swift, Lord, You Are Not
 Selected sermons from *Twenty Centuries of Great Preaching*
 A novel or drama from the list below

The rationale for our textbooks, and how to use them:

Preaching is an art. At its best, therefore, preaching has about it the creativity, the imagination, and the originality that appear in good music, good graphics, and good literature. This means that some elements in preaching are *gifts*, part of your basic person – and therefore, also, not easily taught or learned. It often seems that God has distributed these gifts unequally. The great secret, then, is to learn how to use your particular gifts as effectively as possible.

(Let me interrupt myself to note that perhaps the greatest gift of all is the gift of *desire*. The Good Book tells us that the race is not always to the swift. So it is that some of the most talented athletes, the most brilliant scholars, and the most richly-endowed performers never win the prizes, because they haven't the desire to apply themselves to the full development of their gifts. So, too, with preachers.)

But preaching is more than an art and certainly more than a pocketful of techniques. It is a holy enterprise. So the preacher needs to know *why* he or she preaches, and for *Whom*, and what resources there may be that are beyond textbooks or skills or even the most dedicated human effort.

If a preacher doesn't understand that ours is a holy enterprise, he or she will be nothing more than a peddler of a product, a sophist who should never be trusted with holy things. But on the other hand, if we have a grand theology of preaching but never learn how to cast a clear sentence or to develop an idea or speak with clarity and persuasiveness, our theology of preaching will itself become an absurdity.

So we must have both a devout understanding of what preaching is about and the best-trained skills of composition and delivery. We will seek in this course for both these ends – and I pray that we will continue this search right up to the last sermon we ever preach.

The Pasquarello text gives us a deeply-reasoned theology of preaching. It builds its case on Trinitarian theology, and it reacts to what is popular in some contemporary preaching. The Witham book gives us a grand tour through preaching and preachers in the course of American history – and thus a perspective on what it means to be a preacher. I think this book will help you grasp the trust that incurs with entering a pulpit.

For better or worse, we learn a good deal about preaching by the sermons we hear or read. Thus another text for this course is a selection of sermons from *Twenty Centuries of Great Preaching*. I have purchased a set of these books for the use of my students. We will discuss in class how these sermons are to be used. You don't have to respond favorably to each of these sermons. But I want you to learn from all of them, in one fashion or another, and through them to get a feeling for preaching over the centuries.

A third portion of your assigned reading is the text by McDonnell and the novel you choose for your second written assignment. A preacher's strategic tool is *words*. The more we learn about words, and the more efficient we become in using them with precision, taste, and economy, the better our preaching will be. We will spend the better part of a class hour discussing poetry in general and Father McDonnell's poetry in particular, to learn from their use of words and – in Father McDonnell's case – to see how a fine poet exegetes a biblical passage.

I ask you to read a novel because the Bible comes to us primarily in hundreds of stories – ultimately, the truest stories ever given to our human race. There is a plot running all through the Scriptures. There ought to be a plot in every sermon, no matter what its structural form. The assignment of a novel is intended to help you understand such primary homiletical skills as character development, description, and the unfolding of a plot.

The Kalas textbook seeks to touch on the total preacher: his or her theology, skills as writer and speaker, as a fallible human being who is trusted to deliver life to other fallible creatures.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS:

A series of weekly assignments, each one responding to two sermons (as listed below) from *Twenty Centuries of Great Preaching*. In no more than one double-spaced page (covering both sermons) tell why you think the given preacher is looked upon as one of history's "great preachers." If you disagree, say why.

February 12: Volume 1: Francis of Assisi, "To the Birds"
 John Wyclif, "On the Nativity of Christ"

February 19: Volume 2: Martin Luther, "Sermon on Soberness and Moderation"
 John Calvin, a sermon of your choosing

February 26: Volume 3: George Whitefield, "The Burning Bush"

Thomas Chalmers, "The Expulsive Power of a New Affection"

- March 5: Volume 4: John Henry Newman, "Witnesses of the Resurrection"
F. W. Robertson, "The Power of Sorrow"
- March 12: Volume 5: William Booth, "Who Cares?"
T. DeWitt Talmage, "The Spider in Palaces"
- March 19: Volume 6: Phillips Brooks, "Christmas Day"
Sam Jones, "Taking the Fort"
- March 26: Volume 7: Gipsy Smith, "The Saviour of All"
Walter Rauschenbusch, "The New Jerusalem"
- April 9: Volume 8: G. Campbell Morgan, "The Kingdom Shall Be the Lord's"
Arthur John Gossip, "When Life Tumbles In, What Then?"
- April 16: Volume 9: Fosdick, "The Modern World's Rediscovery of Sin"
G. A. Studdert Kennedy, "Beware of Christ!"
- April 23: Volume 10: Halford Luccock, "Love Laughs at Locksmiths"
Ralph W. Sockman, "The Arm of the Lord"
- April 30: Volume 11: James Stewart, "The Power of His Resurrection"
William E. Sangster, "Good Without God"
- May 7: Volume 12: Gerald Kennedy: "The Trouble with Religion"
Martin Luther King, Jr., "The Man Who Was a Fool"

Due March 12: A paper of 4 pages, double space, most of it relating to new insights you have gained from this history on the impact of preaching – with specific examples or short quotations. The last page will be a personal reflection on which period of history you wish you could have been a preacher, and why – again, specifically. It is not an option to explain why you'd rather be a preacher today, though I'm happy if you feel that way.

Due April 14: A paper of 6 to 7 pages on a work of literature from the list below. Substitutions are permitted but they must be specifically approved by Dr. Kalas. Begin this paper by analyzing what this reading has done for you as a preacher. Then, from this reading give two sermon ideas (summarized, with a title and a Scripture lesson reference – no need to print the passage), three illustrations, and four quotations, all with page references. The illustrations and quotations need not be related in any way to the sermon ideas; they can be material you might use in any sermon.

Plays:

Arthur Miller, *Death of a Salesman* **AND** Archibald Macleish, *J.B.*

Novels:

Georges Bernanos, *Diary of a Country Priest*
Fyodor Dostoevsky, *Crime and Punishment*
George Eliot, *Middlemarch*
Graham Greene, *The Heart of the Matter* **AND** *The End of the Affair*
Sinclair Lewis, *Babbitt*
Alan Paton, *Too Late the Phalarope* **AND** *Cry, the Beloved Country*
John Steinbeck, *East of Eden*
John Updike, *In the Beauty of the Lilies*
Robert Penn Warren, *All the King's Men*
Edith Wharton, *The Age of Innocence*
Charles Williams, *All Hallow's Eve* **OR** *Descent into Hell*
Thomas Wolfe, *The Web and the Rock* **OR** *You Can't Go Home Again*

Oral: You will preach three times, as scheduled below. All of the preaching will be without notes or manuscript.

-- 5 - 6 minute homily, on an assigned Old Testament passage. You will not be graded on this assignment.

-- 9 - 10 minute homily, on an assigned New Testament passage.

-- 15 – 19 minute sermon, on a passage of your own choosing.

There will not be a final exam, but we may have a session during the exam period.

Regarding late papers: Late work will be accepted, but the grade will be affected. That is, an A- paper will become B+, etc. If a paper is seriously late, the deduction will of course be greater. But even a reduced grade is better than an F.

Basis for Grading:

Written work, roughly 50 per cent, weighted according to the length and complexity of the assignments. You will not help a grade by writing a longer paper than is requested; I will judge that you didn't discipline yourself to make your point in the announced limits.

Oral sermons, roughly 45 per cent. I look especially for evidence of care in preparation and for signs of growth. Getting an 'A' in PR610 doesn't mean that you are or will be a great preacher, nor will a lower grade suggest that you will not someday be a pulpit giant.

Classroom participation, roughly 5 percent. Five per cent can materially affect a grade. The issue, however, will not be "much speaking," but speaking with insight, brevity, and clarity.

Unexcused absences will affect your grade.

Feb 10:	The importance of preaching; soul preaching	Kalas, Intro.
Feb 12:	Where sermons begin; sources of creativity	
Feb 17:	Guest professor; TBA	
Feb 19:	The plot principle; titles	Chs. 1, 2, 3, 4
Feb 24:	Words, poetry, writing	
Feb 26:	Introductions; body	Chs. 5, 6
Mar 3:	Body; sermon forms	5, 6 cont'd
Mar 5:	Guest professor; TBA	
Mar 10:	Conclusions; preaching for decision	Chs. 7, 8
Mar 12:	Illustrations, statistics, quotes, metaphors	Ch. 9
Mar 17:	Preaching Without Notes	
Mar 19:	The Preacher as Person	Chs 11, 13
Mar 24:	Judges 4: 12 2 9	
	Judges 6: 7 3 15	
Mar 26:	Judges 8: 10 16 8	
	Judges 11: 4 11 1	
Apr 7:	Guest professor, TBA	
Apr 9:	Ruth 1, 2: 6 14 17	
	1 Samuel 1: 5 13	
Apr 14:	Luke 4: 9 10 16 2	
Apr 16:	Mark 5: 4 8 12 1 (Guest professor: TBA)	
Apr 21:	Matthew 8: 15 6 11 7	
Apr 23:	Mark 10: 3 13 5 14	
Apr 28:	9 16 2	
Apr 30:	8 4 10	
May 5:	12 1 6	
May 7:	11 7 3	
May 12:	13 15 5	
May 14:	14	

Online Section Descriptions and Communication Guidelines

The Virtual Classroom is built upon the open-source Moodle platform. By logging into <http://one.asburyseminary.edu> and clicking on the Virtual Campus tab (upper right corner) you will have access to this course and be able to collaborate with participant-colleagues and me throughout the course.

The following are functions with which you should familiarize yourself:

1. The **Course Information Center** contains many features to be used throughout the semester: a) **Course News and Announcements**, where I will post items important for the entire class; b) **Syllabus**, where a copy of the syllabus is provided; c) **To Professor**, which is a way for you to post a message directly to me and we can discuss an issue privately; d) **Course Questions**, which is a public forum where you can publicly post any questions you have regarding the course so others may see your message and respond. Anytime you have a question or comment about the course, the schedule, the assignments, or anything else that may be of interest to other participants and me you should post it to the Course Questions Forum; e) **Prayer Forum**, which is a public forum where you can post prayer concerns and

praises for all to see. This is a way for us to build community; f) **Open Forum**, which is a public forum where you can post anything that is not course-related for all to see. Examples include someone getting married, an upcoming birthday, discussions on topics not course-related, etc. This is a way for us to build community.

2. **Modules**, which are located below the Course Information Center, will contain forums where group discussions will take place, documents or other files to download or view online, and assignment links where you will post your assignments to me. Modules will be clearly labeled so you can follow along during the semester.

Virtual Support Contact Information

For technical support, library research support, library loans and virtual media contact Information Commons: Phone: (859) 858-2233; Toll-free: (866) 454-2733

For general questions and administrative assistance regarding the Virtual program, contact Dale Hale: Phone: (859) 858-2393

Accessing Information Commons Materials

1. General Questions:

a. The Information Commons is a "one-stop shop" for all student research, circulation and technical needs. The Information Commons hours are posted here: <http://private.asburyseminary.edu/information-commons>

2. Materials Requests:

a. To search the library catalog for available materials, click here: <http://private.asburyseminary.edu/information-commons>

b. Virtual Students may request books, photocopies or emailed attachments of journal articles/portions of reference books from Asbury Seminary's Library. Please allow 3-10 business days for all requests to be filled. Contact the Information Commons for costs and instructions on how to make requests.

c. Virtual students are encouraged to make use of local library resources. Students who live within a 50 mile radius of either the Florida or the Kentucky campus should come to campus to obtain their materials.

3. Research Questions:

a. Virtual students are encouraged to contact the Information Commons for research assistance including help determining the best sources to use for a paper, finding book reviews, or research questions about using the online databases or any other library materials.

4. Online Databases:

a. To access the online library resources including the library catalog and full-text journal databases, go to <http://www.asburyseminary.edu/information> and enter your 10-digit student ID# number in the login box. Your student ID# is provided on the biographical information section of the student registration webpage. Add a 2 and enough 0's to the front to make a 10-digit number (20000XXXXX where XXXXX = your student id).

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