1-1-2001

OT 755 PR755 Preaching the Old Testament: Genesis

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1. Description

This course constitutes a second class in preaching. It is devoted to the hemeneutical and homiletical problem of preaching from the Old Testament. In this course, this broader issue will be engaged via a focused treatment of a selected text-base. Various texts from that corpus will be covered in an attempt to lay bare their exegetical and theological resources that are well-suited for the homiletical and rhetorical task. Moreover, the problem of how to move from text to sermon, particularly from an Old Testament text to a sermon from the Old Testament (i.e., the question of developing a homiletical-hermeneutic for preaching the Old Testament) will be addressed (Catalog, p. 88).

In this particular incarnation of OT755/PR755, the selected text-base will be the book of Genesis. Moreover, in addition to the above, somewhat theoretical concerns, students will have the opportunity to put theory into practice by preaching (and hearing) sermons from Genesis. In satisfying this latter task and successfully completing the preaching component students will pay attention to interpretive, theological, diagnostic, artistic, and communicative elements. These elements, in turn, will receive comment and be treated throughout the course.

Prerequisites: OT520 and PR610.

2. Objectives

By the end of this course students should be able to:

- **Articulate** the theological significance and *raison d’être* of preaching from the Old Testament;

- **Evidence** adequate and sufficient knowledge of the exegetical situation faced when dealing with Old Testament genres, especially those present in Genesis, especially narrative;
• Move effectively and appropriately from text to sermon; and

• Preach effectively from Old Testament texts -- more specifically, texts in Genesis -- by effectively demonstrating faithfulness to the text, articulation of the gospel, situational accuracy, coherence and beauty of expression, and congruence in communication.

3. Textbooks

Required

• Walter Brueggemann, Genesis, Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching (Atlanta: John Knox, 1982).

• Fred B. Craddock, Preaching (Nashville: Abingdon, 1985).


• Reading Packet containing:


the Church,” “The Approach to the Bible, the Community-creating Word,” and “Preaching from the Narratives”.

Recommended


- Other recommended commentaries on Genesis are found in the Bibliography.

4. Assignments/Grading

- **Attendance** (10%). Expected. As a rule, more than 3 unexcused absences will result in a failing grade. Active participation is also an element of this 10 percent of the grade, especially in acting as a (designated) respondent/critiquer for other students’ sermons.

- **Choice of Book or Sermon Review** (15%). Students will select one of the asterisked (*) items from the Bibliography and then write a critical review. The asterisked items include books on preaching the Old Testament as well as collections of sermons. Alternatively, the student can choose a corpus of sermons on the Old Testament (not necessarily coterminus with one of the asterisked book[s]), typically at least 5 or 6 sermons, and write an analysis of these. Whichever assignment is chosen, it should be 5-6 pages in length (i.e., 1250-1500 words), double-spaced, with 1-inch margins, 12 point font, etc. This assignment can be turned in at any time in the semester, but no later than the last class session. More information on writing book reviews can be found in the document “How to Write a Book Review” by Joel B. Green and Brent A. Strawn, which is available on the Intranet (under “Resources”). More information on critical analysis of sermons will be distributed in class. Note, finally, with regard to the last option, the sermon search function in the on-line catalog of Fisher Library.

- **Two (2) Sermons (Manuscript + Exegetical Report)** (60%). These two sermons comprise the bulk of the student’s work in the course. Each sermon must be submitted in manuscript form the week (7 days) before it is to be preached. Each sermon must also be accompanied by an exegetical report which must follow the brief exegetical outline (and its constituent steps) provided and described in Thomas G. Long, *The Witness of Preaching* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1989), 60-77 (included in the course packet). Late sermon papers are heavily penalized. One of the sermons must be from Genesis 1-11 and the other from Genesis 12-50. Each is to be 15-20 minutes maximum in oral form. Videotaping of these sermons is available but
must be arranged by the student with Information Technology.

- *Theological Statement on Preaching from the Old Testament* (15%). A 4-5 page (i.e., 1000-1250 words), double-spaced, with 1-inch margins, 12 point font, etc. summary statement on why the student believes (or how the student has learned) preaching the Old Testament to be a necessary and critical task for the contemporary Christian community. This statement is due on the final meeting of the class.

### 5. Tentative Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Tues Feb 6</td>
<td><strong>Introduction/Syllabus/Overview</strong></td>
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<td>2.</td>
<td>Thur Feb 8</td>
<td><strong>Why Preach the Old Testament?: The Old Testament as Canon</strong></td>
<td>Achtemeier, “A Personal Prologue” in Reading Packet</td>
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<td>Achtemeier, “Why the Old Testament Is Necessary,” in Reading Packet</td>
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<td>3.</td>
<td>Tues Feb 13</td>
<td><strong>Models of Preaching the Old Testament</strong></td>
<td>Miles, “Introduction,” in Reading Packet</td>
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<td><em>Recommended:</em> Miles, “Contemporary Homiletical Theories,” in Reading Packet</td>
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<td>4.</td>
<td>Thur Feb 15</td>
<td><strong>On Christian Preaching of the Old Testament</strong></td>
<td>Miles, “Toward a Literary-Theological,” in Reading Packet</td>
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<td>Brueggemann, “Preaching to Exiles,” in Reading Packet</td>
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<td>Brueggemann, “Cadences that Redescribe,” in Reading Packet</td>
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<td>Brueggemann, “Preaching as Reimagination,” in Reading Packet</td>
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<td><em>Recommended:</em> Craddock, <em>Preaching</em>, 51-65</td>
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<td>5.</td>
<td>Tues Feb 20</td>
<td><strong>Overview of Genesis, Narrative, and Exegesis for Preaching</strong></td>
<td>Long, “Biblical Exegesis for Preaching,” in Reading Packet</td>
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<td>Achtemeier, “The Approach to the Bible,” in Reading Packet</td>
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<td>Achtemeier, “Preaching from the Narratives,” in Reading Packet</td>
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<td>Brueggemann, <em>Genesis</em>, 1-10</td>
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<td>von Rad, <em>Genesis</em>, 9-43</td>
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<td><em>Recommended:</em> Craddock, <em>Preaching</em> (selections, esp. 69-222)</td>
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<td>6.</td>
<td>Thur Feb 22</td>
<td><strong>Exegeting and Preaching the Primeval History (Gen 1-11)</strong> I**</td>
<td>Brueggemann, <em>Genesis</em>, 11-22</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>von Rad, <em>Genesis</em>, 45-46</td>
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**Due:** Sermon #1 Manuscripts and Exegetical Reports Begin

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Preachers</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7. Tues Feb 27</td>
<td>Exegeting and Preaching the Primeval History (Gen 1-11) II</td>
<td>Preacher 1, Preacher 2</td>
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<td>8. Thur Mar 1</td>
<td>Preaching Sermon #1</td>
<td>Preacher 1, Preacher 2</td>
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<td>9. Tues Mar 6</td>
<td>Preaching Sermon #1</td>
<td>Preacher 3, Preacher 4</td>
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<td>10. Thur Mar 8</td>
<td>Preaching Sermon #1</td>
<td>Preacher 5, Preacher 6</td>
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<td>11. Tues Mar 13</td>
<td>Preaching Sermon #1</td>
<td>Preacher 7, Preacher 8</td>
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<td>12. Thur Mar 15</td>
<td>Preaching Sermon #1</td>
<td>Preacher 9, Preacher 10</td>
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<td>13. Tues Mar 20</td>
<td>Preaching Sermon #1</td>
<td>Preacher 11, Preacher 12</td>
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<td>14. Thur Mar 22</td>
<td>Preaching Sermon #1</td>
<td>Preacher 13, Preacher 14</td>
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<td>15. Tues Mar 27</td>
<td>Preaching Sermon #1</td>
<td>Preacher 15, Preacher 16</td>
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<td>16. Thur Mar 29</td>
<td>Preaching Sermon #1</td>
<td>Preacher 17, Preacher 18</td>
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17. Tues Apr 3  Exegeting and Preaching the Ancestral Narratives
(Gen 12-50) I
Brueggemann, *Genesis*, 105-114
von Rad, *Genesis*, 152-155

18. Thur Apr 5  Exegeting and Preaching the Ancestral Narratives
(Gen 12-50) II
Brueggemann, *Genesis*, 204-212, 288-298
*Due:* Sermon #2 Manuscripts and Exegetical Reports Begin

19. Tues Apr 10  Reading Week: No Class

20. Thur Apr 12  Reading Week: No Class

21. Tues Apr 17  Preaching Sermon #2
Preacher 1
Preacher 2

22. Thur Apr 19  Preaching Sermon #2
Preacher 3
Preacher 4

23. Tues Apr 24  Preaching Sermon #2
Preacher 5
Preacher 6

24. Thur Apr 26  Preaching Sermon #2
Preacher 7
Preacher 8

25. Tues May 1  Preaching Sermon #2
Preacher 9
Preacher 10

26. Thur May 3  Preaching Sermon #2
Preacher 11
Preacher 12
27. Tues May 8  Preaching Sermon #2  
Preacher 13  
Preacher 14

28. Thur May 10  Preaching Sermon #2  
Preacher 15  
Preacher 16

29. Wed, May 16  Final Session (1:00-3:00pm)  
Preacher 17  
Preacher 18

Due: Theological Statement on Preaching the Old Testament Due
Due: Last day for Sermon or Book Review
6. Selected Bibliography

A. On Preaching the Old Testament/Hebrew Bible

NOTE: asterisked items are eligible for critical review.


*________, *Finally Comes the Poet: Daring Speech for Proclamation* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989).


*Graeme Goldsworthy, *Preaching the Whole Bible as Christian Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000).


*Howard Clark Kee and Irvin J. Borowsky, eds., Removing Anti-Judaism from the Pulpit* (New York: Continuum, 1996).


**B. Selected Commentaries on Genesis**

*NOTE:* while not exhaustive, the following works are well-known works; the asterisked (*) items are strongly recommended for use.


Hermann Gunkel, Genesis (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1997).


C. Selected Works on (Hebrew) Narrative


