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PR 700 WO 700 Creative Preaching on the Sacraments

Lester Ruth

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Prerequisites: a course in the range of PR610-49 and a course in the range of WO510-549.

Course Description:
What are the meanings of the sacraments and how can a preacher unfold these meanings for worshippers? These are the central concerns for this course.

This course will focus on a specialized form of creative preaching on the sacraments called mystagogy. This type of preaching will be explored in both its liturgical context in the early church as well as in modern attempts to reclaim it. The goal will be to assist the students in using historical models to develop a theoretical basis to support their practice of connecting Word and Sacrament. The course will involve student preaching. The course will thus include these three dimensions: historical, theoretical, and practical.

Professor’s information:
Dr. Lester Ruth; BC (Beeson) 218; 859-858-2175 or 859-219-9166; fax 858-2026;
lester_ruth@asburyseminary.edu;
Office hours: Tuesday/Thursday 1:15-2:15 and Thursday 4:15-5:15.
During office hours, I can be contacted by telephone, email, or Moodle message. Telephone calls preferred over emails. Appointments for other office meetings gladly welcomed.

Students completing this course will:
--develop a theology of Word in relationship to Sacrament
--understand historically the kind of preaching associated with sacramental administration in the late patristic church
--develop the necessary skills to translate the patristic approach to these issues to a contemporary context, particularly among post-modern hearers
--increase the student’s proficiency and comfort in preaching

Textbooks:
These three books are required:
--Satterlee, Craig and Lester Ruth, Creative Preaching on the Sacraments, Discipleship Resources.

Additional reading from materials on electronic reserve (provided on the Moodle website) will include sections from the following:
--Danielou, Jean, The Bible and the Liturgy, Univ. of ND Press.
--Harmless, William, Augustine and the Catechumenate, 316-24 and 364-7
--http://liturgy.nd.edu/assembly/assembly23-2augustine.shtml (Augustine on eucharist)

Other necessary materials:
The student will need a way to videotape the third sermon and submit it for review by the professor at the due date noted below.

The Online Dimension
The class will occur in an online environment named Moodle. The particular course site within Asbury’s Moodle environment can be access via this url: virtual.asburyseminary.edu. Class discussions will take placed in a variety of forums to be found on this site. Additional readings will be found on links on this site.
Students will be expected to post at least 6 times every week of the class (a week defined as Tuesday through Tuesday). Each of these posts should make a substantial, even if brief, comment on the current discussion/materials. (An example of a less-than-substantial post would be “Frank, I really liked your sermon. Keep up the good work. Bye.” or “Wasn’t Ambrose great? I wish I could preach like him.”)

Less than the required number of posts for the semester will result in the loss of a letter grade for the semester (An A will become a B.)

Ideally spread your postings out through the week so that you develop a sense of coming and going from class at regular times and are able to participate in discussions at their beginning, middle, and end. The professor recommends strongly that you develop a rhythm for class preparation and participation so that you can achieve this level of posting.

Every post by the professor should be read and every question posed by the professor should be responded to. Watch especially for his posts will be being each forum’s discussion.

This level of participation is necessary because this class is being run as an online seminar. The reading is not a huge amount and so your learning as well as your classmates is dependent upon your active, informed, thoughtful involvement. If you are not prepared and if you do not participate, you rob yourself as well as your classmates.

The professor will monitor, direct, and participate in the discussion. He will also manage the Moodle site so that the current discussions and assignments are found easily.

Team East and Team West Student Groups

The class will be divided into two groups in terms of posting sermons for peer and professor’s feedback beginning on Tuesday, April 8. At the beginning of the semester, the professor will divide the class into two groups: Teams East and West. Posting of sermons will alternate weekly until the end of the semester. (This method substitutes for signing up for preaching times in an on-campus class.)

During these weeks you’ll be asked to interact with each other’s sermons rather than with patristic material. The same level of posting requirements applies (at least 6 per week), however. See the bottom of the syllabus for the sorts of questions you ought to consider regarding each sermon.

See below for descriptions of satisfactory and unsatisfactory participation during these discussion.

**Professor’s Expectations for Students:**

Because this class is held in a seminar format, attentive, consistent preparation of readings is expected. The professor also expects students to aim for the highest levels of understanding as represented by the attached statements concerning explanation, interpretation, application, perspective, empathy, and self-knowledge. Indeed, these will be the criteria by which grades are given in the assignments.

In addition, students are expected to participate well in class discussions. Here is how satisfactory and unsatisfactory preparation and participation are defined for this class:

**Satisfactory** preparation and participation by a student show the following characteristics:

- Posted at least 6 times substantially during every week of the class.
- Has completed all the exercises and assignments assigned for the class.
- Demonstrates engagement and interest with the class and the material.
- Can show going beyond mere repetition of the material to be read and reviewed by asking questions or making comments that show her or his own insights on the material; this can be shown by insightful integration of today’s material with other course material; can discuss viewpoints with intensity but without combative or abusiveness.
- Facilitates learning by others on the material by asking key questions, making helpful explanations or insights, and/or providing useful summary.
- Can listen well and at the right time.

**Unsatisfactory** preparation and participation by a student show the following characteristics:

- Did not participate in the required number of weekly, substantial postings.
- Did not complete all exercises and assignments assigned.
- Acts dismissive, uninterested, or abusive toward the material, the class, or other class members; perhaps combative.
- Shows no familiarity with the material or only the most rote, preliminary sort of repetition of the material to be read or reviewed; perhaps shows no ability to think beyond pre-formed opinions.
Does not help the learning of others or actually detracts from the learning of others
Does not listen well and at the right time

Means of student evaluation:
There are four assignments (a book review and three sermons, the last of which will be videotaped) that factor into the grade:

1) A book report on the book *Sanctified Vision* by O’Keefe and Reno (20% of grade)
   - Task: using the template for a report (found by link on the Moodle site)
   - What the professor will be looking for: to see if you can use the O’Keefe and Reno book to understand the theology-and-use-of-the-Bible background that lies behind the patristic sermons we are reading in class
   - Due date: March 11 by 6 p.m. (Eastern time)
   - Grading scale: 0-20 points (expectation for B- = 16 points)

2) a first mystagogical sermon preached to the class (25% of grade)
   - Task: to write a mystagogical sermon on some aspect of worship appropriate for a congregation of your choosing today; a full manuscript is due
   - What the professor will be looking for: see the included mystagogy checklist at the end of the syllabus
   - What to keep in account: would one of our patristic preacher’s recognize what you do and say “amen”?
   - Due date: post manuscript by April 8 (Team East) or April 15 (Team West) on the Moodle site
   - Grading scale: 0-25 points (expectation for B- = 20 points)

3) a second mystagogical sermon preached to the class (25% of grade)
   - Task: to write a full manuscript on another mystagogical sermon on a different aspect of worship
   - What the professor will be looking for: see below
   - What to keep in account: see above
   - Due date: post manuscript by April 22 (Team East) or April 29 (Team West) on the Moodle site
   - Grading scale: 0-25 points (expectation for B- = 20 points)

4) a third mystagogical sermon preached to the class (30% of grade)
   - Task: to write a full manuscript on another mystagogical sermon on a different aspect of worship and to videotape it. The sermon should not be longer than 15 minutes.
   - What the professor will be looking for: see below
   - What to keep in account: see above.
   - Due date: post manuscript by May 6 (Team East) or May 13 (Team West) on the Moodle site
   - Videotaping: This sermon is to be videotaped and mailed to the professor by Monday, May 12. Mail the tape using the least expensive way possible. There is no need to overnight the tapes.
   - Grading scale: 0-30 points (expectation for B- = 24 points)

Tardiness policy:
Submit your assignments on time. There are tardiness penalties of the following: up to 24 hours late is the loss of a letter grade on that assignment, 24-48 hours is two letter grades, 48-72 three, etc. Of course, there’s a grace period of a few minutes before any of this kicks in.

Course Schedule:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 1 (Feb. 12-19)</td>
<td>Read and discuss Satterlee &amp; Ruth book/Kavanagh baptism reconstruction</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 2 (Feb. 19-26)</td>
<td>Patristic preaching: Cyril of Jerusalem from Yarnold, pp. 67-97</td>
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Week 3 (Feb. 26-March 4)  Patristic preaching: Cyril discussion continued
Week 4 (March 4-11)  Patristic preaching: Ambrose of Milan from Yarnold, pp. 98-149
Week 5 (March 11-18)  Patristic preaching: Ambrose discussion continued
Week 6 (March 18-25)  Patristic preaching: Chrysostom of Antioch from Yarnold, pp. 150-64 and electronic reserves; Augustine (see Moodle link); and Harmless from electronic reserves
Week 7 (March 25-April 8)  Patristic preaching: Theodore of Mopsuestia from Yarnold, pp. 165-250; Danielou from electronic reserves

Note that March 31-April 4 is Spring Break. Participation in the online discussions is not required this week. The professor will not be participating again until April 7.

Week 8 (April 8-15)  Student preaching: Team East first sermon
Week 9 (April 15-22)  Student preaching: Team West first sermons
Week 10 (April 22-29)  Student preaching: Team East second sermons
Week 11 (April 29-May 6)  Student preaching: Team West second sermons
Week 12 (May 6-13)  Student preaching: Team East third sermons
Week 13 (May 13-20)  Student preaching: Team West third sermons

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

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   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/index.htm 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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Mystagogical Checklist for Student’s Sermons

First question: What makes the sermon mystagogical preaching?
Rooted in big biblical story as expressed in smaller biblical stories; there is a large cohesive story that crosses Testaments
Connection to this story from the very Beginning
Participation in this story now, e.g., ongoing conflict with Satan
Participatory perspective: the cosmic God with a cosmic metanarrative is working in the church’s worship now; this is what we are experiencing and participating in
Uses biblical, cultural, and natural images to articulate this participation
Uses a surplus of images
Tends to be organized by the rite itself, i.e., is intimately connected to what we saw, heard, and tangibly sensed in the order of worship
Purpose: brings to light the meaning behind the obvious sacraments; to see beyond what our eyes can see, to discern participation in the Kingdom and the spiritual world
Purpose: explaining the experience; provide a lens for interpreting worship experience; reveal (metanarrative) meaning beyond the obvious

Comments:

First question: scale: 0-12 points
Points assigned?

Second question: What makes the sermon good mystagogical preaching?
Taps into biblical, cultural, and natural images that already reside within the listeners
Explores but doesn’t explain away
Poetic, not discursive
Abundance of images piled together
Transforms the experience; heightens expectation in worship; anticipates and builds
Calls for action/decision in light of the experience of an active God in worship
Goes beyond expository preaching in that it is not really a matter of accepting or rejecting cognitive interpretation but draws people into participating in the mystery of the biblical story
Tethered
Appropriately triggered (not overused)

Comments:

Second question: scale: 0-13 points
Points assigned?
Third question: What makes the sermon good preaching? (This only applies to the last sermon)
   Handling of body
   Mannerism
   Understanding of congregation and connection to them
   Rhetorical power; handling of words
   Good oral quality
   Trustworthiness of witness to the Gospel

Comments:

Third question: scale: 0-5 points
Points assigned?

Total points assigned: ____ (first question) + ____ (second question) + ____ (third question on the third sermon) = ________