SP 501 Communication for Christian Leaders

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The purpose of Communication For Christian Leaders is to provide an introduction to the art of written and spoken communication within a theological framework and for the purpose of Christian ministry. The course has been designed to address particular needs in the Asbury Seminary curriculum by providing a foundation for preaching and teaching ministries of all kinds. We will combine theory and practice, examining classical canons of rhetoric to acquire practical wisdom for clear, coherent, and persuasive written and oral communication that is placed in the service of the Gospel and Kingdom of Jesus Christ.

The course will enable students to:
1) acquire a basic understanding of the most important features of classical rhetoric
2) discern how theory is embedded in and informs practice, enabling perspective and judgment necessary for effective communication
3) sharpen their capacity for: critical thinking, organizing clear and coherent presentations, persuasive delivery

REQUIRED TEXTS

David S. Cunningham, *Faithful Persuasion*
Augustine of Hippo, *Teaching Christianity*
Duane Litfin, *Public Speaking*

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

Reading and responding to the required texts: A three-four page review of Cunningham’s book that evaluates, in your opinion, his PRACTICAL contributions to Christian communication. Due on Mar 7.

Complete 2 of the written exercises at the end of each chapter in Litfin. Due on last day of classes.

A three page written response to Augustine’s “Teaching Christianity” stating what he has taught us to know and understand if we are to be faithful Christian communicators. Why do you think this work was the standard text on the subject for over 1,000 years? Due on Mar 21.
Complete 7 one-page evaluations of sermons, speeches, lectures, or presentations, reviewing them by the criteria established in class. Due on last day of classes.

One exam, covering readings and lectures.

Two 10 minute oral presentations. Both will be made on a Christian topic, theme, or subject. Neither is to be a sermon! Your aim will be to instruct, engage, and persuade, to effect understanding, emotions, and behavior. Both must be supported by some authority (ies) other than your personal experience, opinion, feeling, etc. (Scripture, Tradition, Christian examples, etc.) Both will assume a context and audience for some kind of Christian ministry. (a congregation, committee, UMW, Sunday School, Bible Study, Youth, Campus Ministry, Confirmation Class, groups outside the church whom you may address in your ministry-I will let you use your imagination here in order to practice for the future). An outline of the presentation must be handed in with a manuscript. List the references you have used. Delivery may include the use of one page of notes.

A final essay is due on the last day of class. (there will be no final exam)
This is not a research paper, but a reflective essay on the practice of communication for Christian leaders in light of what has been read, discussed, learned, and completed in this class. Attach a conclusion to your written work on Cunningham and Augustine, providing an outline of the most important practical wisdom a Christian communicator must acquire to be faithful and competent.

COURSE EVALUATION

Reading, written responses, evaluations: 15%
Participation and attendance: 10%
Exam: 10%
Final Paper: 15%
Oral Presentations: 50%

Attendance is assumed at the plenary sessions during the first part of the semester. Thereafter, the class will be divided into 2 sub-groups for presentations. All presentations must be given on the assigned dates, make-ups cannot be scheduled unless there is a very Written work that is submitted late will be penalized.

OUR CALENDAR (Tentative)

R-Feb 21: Cunningham, pages 1-97. Find a narrative in one of the Gospels and in the Book of Acts that demonstrate PATHOS
R-Feb 28: Cunningham, 98-203. Find an example of ETHOS and LOGOS in both the Old and New Testaments.
I welcome you to this class. It is my hope that you will grow in your competence and confidence as a Christian communicator. I also hope you will begin to make important connections between the Word of God and your words, recognizing that not only what we say, but also how, why, and to whom, are issues that must be treated in a Christian manner! I encourage you to see this course in light of your vocation: preaching, teaching, counseling, administration, specialized ministries, etc. Use what we do to prepare yourself for the next step you will take on the path to that ministry. This course is now a prerequisite for Preaching 610. Therefore, we will not go back to cover these topics in preaching, but will assume that you have had an introduction to the basic principles of rhetoric and have reflected on their importance and use within a Christian framework to proclaim the Gospel. This should give you a strong head-start in preaching, allowing you to concentrate on the most important matters of biblical exegesis, theological reflection, and pastoral discernment in the preaching course.

I would welcome the opportunity to have lunch or dinner to get better acquainted with you and to learn more of your vocational plans and how Asbury Seminary may assist you in answering God’s call. Please feel free to email me with your questions and concerns during the semester. I will respond as soon as possible. I also will be holding office hours on Tuesday and Thursday from 2:30-5:30.

Peace,

Mike Pasquarello
SP 501  Fall: 2001  
Professor Mike Pasquarello

I have asked you to provide one-page, double-spaced evaluations and responses to seven (7) oral presentations: sermons, lectures, talks, speeches, etc.  These will be due on Nov 13.  The purpose of this exercise is to enable you to sharpen your eyes and ears for recognizing and appreciating faithful persuasion by Christian speakers and leaders.

The following suggests questions you may consider as you listen.  I do not expect that you will answer every one of them in each evaluation.  Use your judgment as to which ones may be most important for your assessment.

How, and how well, has the speaker identified with the audience?  Did he or she speak as if you, the listener, were an important part of this activity?

Comment on the self-presentation of the speaker: the ethos, character, and life that were being communicated with the message.  What signs, gestures, words, attitudes, and convictions were communicated to you?  Did this person engage you in a compelling way?

Is the message clear, well organized, and delivered in a manner that you are able to follow and to grasp?  Is this message appropriate for this audience and this occasion?  Why?  Did the style and delivery enhance or detract from your hearing and response?  What, if anything, attracted you and created a desire for you to respond accordingly?

Was it clear to you that the speaker was confident and competent enough to lead you from A to B?  Was the purpose of the message clear to you?  Was this accomplished in a Christian manner?

Any other comments concerning speaker, message, audience, setting, etc?

What did you learn that is beneficial for you?
You are the pastor, a staff member, or a person who works in a full-time ministry, such as a hospital chaplain, Christian counselor, or campus minister. Whoever you are, you have been selected to address the congregation where you worship and/or serve. The occasion is a congregational meeting to make a decision on starting a new service of worship on Saturday evening that will be contemporary in style and intentionally aimed at reaching out into the community. Your task is to propose this ministry to the congregation, offering justification for its implementation, while appealing for the full support of the church and its resources: prayer, money, space, equipment, hospitality, personnel, acceptance, etc.

The congregation is located in an urban community, where it has been for over 100 years. The church membership has declined substantially over the past 30 years, as many of its members moved out to the suburbs and its young people grew up and moved away from home. The congregation includes many older members who have been active for years and have known each other well for a long time. They do not understand why their church has declined, but they are very anxious and worried about its future, especially as they have watched an increasing number of the faithful die.

There is a small but active core of middle-aged and younger adults who either grew up in the church or have moved into the city where they are purchasing older homes and investing in their renovation. Most of them are college-educated and professionals, some are fairly new to Christianity and the church. They are very excited about reaching the community around the church and have brought their concerns to the leadership of the congregation. After several meetings and a consultation with your denomination, it has been decided by the pastoral staff and key leaders that offering an opportunity for worship and friendship that is oriented towards the unchurched is the most fitting way for the congregation to make God’s presence known in the community.

The biggest challenge that you face is that the surrounding neighborhood has become mixed to include, along with the younger professionals: ethnic minorities, lower-class families, and a growing gay culture. Crime has increased in the area and the church buildings have been broken into several times during the past few years, with sound equipment worth $2,000 being stolen.

How will you prepare for this presentation? What sorts of important issues will you consider? How will you choose, support, and organize your material?
Assignment for Tuesday, October 16: SP501

Select 5 readings from Scripture to include: a narrative from the Old Testament, a Psalm, Proverbs or Ecclesiastes, a Gospel, an Epistle or Revelation. Try to choose passages that are units of 10 or more verses. Practice reading these texts at home, following the suggestions provided by Jacks. On Tuesday, take turns reading aloud within your groups. Use your imaginations to see yourselves in a service of worship for which you are one of the leaders. Also assume that a sermon will follow your reading.

Write a pastoral prayer for your congregation. Take turns leading your groups in prayer, again, trying to follow the guidance provided by Jacks. Let your prayers gather up the praise, thanksgiving, lament, confession, and intercession of your congregation on behalf of the world.

PRESENTATIONS

We will begin presentations on October 23. The class will be divided into two groups, as follows, with 6 presentations being given on each day, to be NO LONGER than 10 minutes, 8 will be sufficient!!! Be clear and concise.

Tuesday Group: October 23, 30; November 6, 13, 27; December 4, 11.
Thursday Group: October 25; November 1, 8, 15, 29; December 6, 13.

Presentation Order

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tuesday Group</th>
<th>Thursday Group</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Africa, Jeremy</td>
<td>Lipscomb, Christy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Berry, Eric</td>
<td>Lockman, David</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black, Jessica</td>
<td>Noble, Kristina</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brown, Danny</td>
<td>O’ Reilly, Martha</td>
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<tr>
<td>Coates, Greg</td>
<td>Pitzer, Michael</td>
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<tr>
<td>Croel, Andrew</td>
<td>Roberts, Metty</td>
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<tr>
<td>Edmonson, Michael</td>
<td>Sahms, Jacob</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fehl, Jonathan</td>
<td>Shrauner, Randal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fish, Steven</td>
<td>Sims, Bryan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gillette, Jason</td>
<td>St. Peter, Susan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Graff, Julie</td>
<td>Thomas, Nicole</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hartness, Richard</td>
<td>Thorthon, Lea</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hogg, Jeffrey</td>
<td>Tippey, James</td>
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<tr>
<td>Holsing, Jared</td>
<td>Wahl, Brenda</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hummel, Beau</td>
<td>Ward, David</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jennings, Kristin</td>
<td>Wells, Melissa</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lees, Scott</td>
<td>Wine, Jeremy</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Your identification with the real or imagined audience, how you included the listener as an important participant.

Your self-presentation: ethos, the way you communicated yourself as part of the message.

The signs, gestures, language, attitudes, and convictions that were displayed.

Were you engaging and compelling, what made your presentation attractive and interesting?

Was there clarity and organization that made the message easy to follow and to grasp? Was this message appropriate for the audience? Was your purpose clear?
How style and delivery enhanced or detracted from our hearing.