COURSE SYLLABUS
Preparing to Preach PW604-Da-h-D
UNITED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
January 5 – March 6, 2015

Dr. Richard Eslinger
937-529-2201
reslinger@united.edu

Dr. Robert Howard
480-338-8741
drrrhoward@gmail.com

Dr. Joni Sancken
937-529-2327
jssancken@united.edu

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION:
This course is intended to help students begin to articulate a theology of preaching, to appreciate the contexts in which it occurs, and to explore the options available to them for both the preparation and the delivery of sermons.

II. TEXTBOOKS:
Required Reading:
Hilkert, Mary Catherine. Naming Grace: Preaching and the Sacramental Imagination.
LaRue, Cleophus. The Heart of Black Preaching.
ISBN 0-664-25847-6
Taylor, Barbara Brown, The Preaching Life.
Tisdale, Leonora Tubbs. Preaching as Local Theology and Folk Art.
ISBN 0-8006-2773-3

RECOMMENDED READING:
Bonneau, Normand, The Sunday Lectionary: Ritual Word
ISBN 978-0-8146
ISBN 8-8006-0777-5
Jacobsen, David Schnasa and Robert Allen Kelly, Kairos Preaching: Speaking Gospel to the Situation

III. GOALS:
The ability to proclaim the gospel effectively is a central skill for church leadership in the formation of disciples. This course will equip students with a basic knowledge of preaching, with an emphasis on using the biblical text faithfully as a foundation in the formation of Christian identity and Christian Witness. Students will design sermons that are theologically and contextually reflective, demonstrating an appropriation of the Christian heritage through an understanding of major theological loci appropriate to both the worship occasion and the congregation, while also demonstrating awareness of their own spiritual development characterized by mature self-acceptance and self-direction.

IV. SPECIFIC COMPETENCIES:
In order to demonstrate an ability to proclaim the gospel effectively as a central skill for church leadership in the formation of disciples, students will:

- Use both narrative and propositional discourse as tools for contextual theology to effectively engage listeners as growing disciples.
- Explore a variety of sermon forms while employing a basic “grammar” as a means to better communicate the Word.

In order to show their ability to engage with the biblical text faithfully as a foundation in the formation of Christian identity and Christian Witness, students will:

- Perform scholarly analyses of biblical texts for the purposes of preaching, using historical-critical, literary, and theological criticism.
- Recognize the multiple links biblical texts offer to connect with contemporary situations.

In order to demonstrate an appropriation of the Christian heritage through an understanding of major theological loci, students will:

- Draw on the theological traditions of the church to teach the faith effectively.
- Operate theologically using trouble and grace as theological categories, both on vertical and horizontal axes.
- Understand the distinctions between the dialectical and sacramental imaginations, and how they function homiletically.

In order to demonstrate awareness of their own spiritual development characterized by mature self-acceptance and self-direction, students will:

- Reflect critically on their own preaching.
- Practice offering positive, caring, and frank responses to peers.

V. TEACHING STRATEGIES:

This course is a hybrid, a combination of distance learning and face-to-face instruction. The face-to-face component, a preaching lab, will take place on the seminary campus during the Intensive Week of February 11-14. The remainder of the course will be taught online.

VI. CALENDAR OF TOPICS AND READINGS:

Each week’s material will be divided among four broad categories:

1. Theology of preaching
2. Liturgical and pastoral contexts
3. Biblical exegesis and interpretive concerns
4. Sermon design

The readings and assignments for this course are as follows:

**Week 1 (Jan. 5-10) Purposes of Preaching**
Readings: LaRue, Chapters 1 and 4
Media: Audio- “Preaching Parables”
Video- “Sunday Service”
Multi-Media- “LaRue, Domains of Preaching;” “Theology of Christian Preaching/Images of Preaching”

*Assignment: Homiletic Formation Post*
Attach to your forum post, a three-page paper reflecting on your own homiletic formation—the preachers, preaching tradition(s), models of biblical interpretation and piety that have formed you. Please reflect on your homiletic formation with regard to LaRue’s model of the “domains” of preaching and “images” from the PowerPoint presentations and readings. If your formation has included domains other than LaRue’s, or other images, you are invited to depict and utilize those. Please post your reflection and respond to at least two others in the class. (Due Thursday, 1/08; responses 1/10)

**Week 2 (Jan. 12-17) Exegesis of Self and Context**
Readings: Hilkert, chapters 9-10; Eslinger, chapter 2-3; Brown Taylor, Part One; Tisdale, Chaps. 1-3.
Media: Audio- “Johannine Sign”
PPT- “Preaching the Gospel of John”
Handout- “Nora Tubbs Tisdale, Exegeting the Congregation”
PPT- “Making the Sermon Come Alive”

*Assignment:*
In a forum “Exegeting the Congregation” for your first posting, make an evaluation of your congregation using the following Tisdale categories in the section, “Interpreting Congregational Worldview and Values,” 1) View of God, 2) View of Humanity, 3) View of the Church, 4) View of Christian Mission. In your responses, make suggestions for at least two peers as to how the contextual analysis might inform or affect preaching. (due Thursday, 1/15; responses due 1/17)

**Week 3 (Jan. 19-24) Biblical Exegesis**
Readings: Hilkert, chapter 5; Eslinger, chapter 4, Tisdale, the remaining chapters.
Media: Audio-“Apocalyptic, Rev. 7:9-17”
PDF- “Moving from Scripture to Sermon”
PDF/Word- Commentary resource lists
PDF- Paul Wilson, chap. 1, *Practice of Preaching*
Power-points- “Exegesis for Preaching;” “Moving from Text to Sermon”

*Assignment:*
Create an exegetical report for the first sermon you plan to preach during the Intensive Week by answering the 35 questions in the posted document. You will be given a grading rubric to help you, and lists of recommended commentaries to help you prepare this paper. Please use at least one commentary from the list (one other than white/European/male perspective), and one journal article pertinent to your chosen passage (to find articles and essays, you can use the ATLAS database on the UTS online website, or short bibliographies for each pericope can be found either before or after the commentary upon it in the International Critical Commentary, Anchor Bible, Hermeneia, and Word Biblical Commentary). Format is less important for this report, you are welcome to just answer the questions. However, citation is very important; please footnote the sources that you use and include a bibliography or works cited page at the end. (Upload to the digital drop-box by Jan. 23.)
Week 4 (Jan. 26-31) Method and Form I
Readings: Eslinger, chapter 4; LaRue, chapter 3
Media: Audio- “Preaching Epistles”
        Video- “Move Theory”
        “Illustration, Example(s), Imagery”
        “The Homiletical Plot”
Handout- “Sermon Sketch Form”

*Assignment: Two-Move Sermon Sketch (Due Thursday, 1/29; responses by 1/31)

Week 5 (Feb. 02-07) Method and Form II
Readings: Hilkert, chapter 4; Eslinger, chapters 5- 6, Sermon example packet (posted on website)
Media: Audio- “Prophecy: Joel 2:1-2, 12-17”
        Audio- Joni Sancken preaching 4-page sermon
        Powerpoint- “Issues in Old Testament Preaching”
        Video- “Designing a Four-Page Sermon”
        Multi-Media- “Overview of Wilson’s 4 Pages”

*Assignment: Following the model outlined in the video, “Designing a Four-Page Sermon,” for one of your Intensive Week sermons, in your forum post list elements for The Tiny Dog Now Is Mine and your themes and a sense of what will follow for each of the four pages. (Due 2/05, with responses by 2/07)

Week 6 (Feb. 11-14) Intensive Week (On campus)
General Daily Schedule
We will begin with a brief plenary.
10:00-12:30 Preaching Lab
12:30-1:00 Lunch
1:00-1:45 Chapel
2:00-4:00 Preaching Lab

Preaching Lab Notices
Each student will preach twice during Intensive Week:
● The sermons should be about ten minutes in length, but not exceeding twelve.
● Please choose biblical texts for your Buttrick sermon from any lection of the Revised Common Lectionary, Year B, from the Third Sunday in Lent (March 8) through Palm Passion Sunday (March 29). The text for the Four-Page sermon in session two may be taken from any lection from the Second Sunday of Easter (April 12), Year B, through Ascension Sunday (May 17), Year B.
● One sermon should be from the Old Testament and the other from the New Testament.
● One sermon should be a narrative passage and the other should reflect another genre (psalm, hymn, epistle, apocalyptic, proverb, etc.) If you have questions about the genre or selecting your text, don’t hesitate to ask your instructor.
● The first sermon should use Buttrick’s moves structure and the second sermon should use Wilson’s four-page sermon structure.
● On the day you preach, please be prepared to hand in a full manuscript. For sermon 2 please also hand in an exegetical report following the same format as your first exegesis report. You need not preach from a manuscript. You are welcome to preach in the style that is most comfortable to you whether that involves a full manuscript, outline, notes, or without notes, you may use your tablet to preach if that is your usual style. You need not preach your manuscript word-for-word; we recognize that the Spirit may inspire you differently in the hours or even minutes before you preach. Instructors will evaluate the sermon you preach but the manuscript is helpful as a back-up.
Week 7 (Feb. 16-21) Sermon Critique and Reflection
Readings: Hilkert, chapter 1-3; Eslinger, chapter 1
Video—“The Context of Preaching”
Video—“Dialectical and Sacramental imaginations"

*Assignment: In a forum post provide a brief reflection paper on one of your sermons preached during the Intensive Week on campus, including insights gained from course readings, discussions, and the feedback after the sermon. Particularly reflect on 1) what the sermon did well, 2) what the sermon could have done better, and 3) what changes you plan to make in your preaching as a result of discussions and reflections. Please limit your reflections to one paragraph per question. (Due 2/19, responses by 2/21)

Week 8 (Feb. 23-28) Worship Context
Readings: Hilkert, chapters 7-8; Brown Taylor, Part 2
Media: Video—“Calendar-Church Year”
   “Sunday Service of Word and Table”
Handouts: “How the Structure of Worship Can Affect the Sermon: Revivalist Models”
   “How the Structure of Worship Can Affect the Sermon: 4-Action Shape”

*Assignment: In a forum post, please consider the ways in which the liturgical contexts affect your preaching and how your preaching may well invite reforms within your liturgical context. (due 2/26; responses by 2/28)

Preparing to Preach, 4

Week 9 (March 02-07) Sermon Critique
Readings: Hilkert, chapter 6; Eslinger, chapters 2-3
Media: Video—“Narrative Sermon Plots”

*Assignment: Upload in the drop-box, a “Sermon Critique Paper” A critique of a published sermon taken from any of our course texts (required or recommended). Students should imagine a conversation among at least four of the authors and we read this term and yourself. How would they evaluate the sermon you chose according to their varied theology and approaches to preaching. In your imagined conversation, have the authors explain why when they make their assessment. Grading will be based on accuracy of the author’s approaches as well as your informed perspectives. The authors should be able to recognize their approach so that they would say, “Yes this is the approach or theology I use.” (Due March 6)

VII. Written Assignments:

In addition to online discussion and sermon preparation, the following posts and short papers will be required:

1. Week One - Homiletic Formation Post
   Attach to your forum post, a three-page paper reflecting on your own homiletic formation—the preachers, preaching tradition(s), models of biblical interpretation and piety that have formed you. Please reflect on your homiletic formation with regard to LaRue’s model of the “domains” of preaching and “images” from the powerpoint presentations and readings. If your formation has included domains other than LaRue’s, or other images, you are invited to depict and utilize those. Please post your reflection and respond to at least two others in the class. (Due Thursday, 1/08; responses, 1/10)

2. Week Two - Exegeting the Congregation
   In a forum, “Exegeting the Congregation,” please post an evaluation of your congregation using the following Tisdale categories in the section, “Interpreting Congregational Worldview and Values,” 1) View of God, 2) View of Humanity, 3) View of the Church, 4) View of Christian Mission.
In your responses, make suggestions for at least two peers as to how the contextual analysis might inform or affect preaching. (Due Thursday, 1/15; responses due 1/17)

3. Week Three - Biblical Exegesis
Create an exegetical report for the first sermon you plan to preach during the Intensive Week by answering the 35 questions at the end of Wilson’s chapter. You will be given a grading rubric to help you, and lists of recommended commentaries to help you prepare this paper. Please use at least one commentary from the list (one other than white/European/male perspective), and one journal article pertinent to your chosen passage (to find articles and essays, you can use the ATLAS database on the UTS online website, or short bibliographies for each pericope can be found either before or after the commentary upon it in the International Critical Commentary, Anchor Bible, Hermeneia, and Word Biblical Commentary). Format is less important for this report, you are welcome to just answer the questions. However, citation is very important; please footnote the sources that you use and include a bibliography or works cited page at the end. (Upload to the digital drop-box by Jan. 23.)

4. Week Four - Method and Form I
A two-move sermon sketch loosely based on the Prologue to the Gospel of John.

   Move 1 – The world is a world of darkness.
   Move 2 – But Jesus is the light of the world.

Each move in this sketch should include 1) a single crisp statement of the move conceptual in conversational language (the “move” statement”); 2) at least one opposition, misunderstanding or resistance to the move statement (the “opposition”); and 3) brief descriptions of one or two illustrations, examples, stories, etc., which you will employ in the move to bring it alive and make the language more concrete. (Due Thursday, 1/29; responses by 1/31)

5. Week Five - Method and Form II
Following the model outlined in the video, “Designing a Four-Page Sermon,” for one of your Intensive Week sermons, in your forum post list elements for The Tiny Dog Now Is Mine and your themes and a sense of what will follow for each of the four pages. (Due 2/05; responses by 2/07)

6. Week Six - Intensive Week on Campus — Preaching Lab

7. Week Seven - Sermon Critique and Reflection
In a forum post provide a brief reflection paper on one of your sermons preached during the Intensive Week on campus, including insights gained from course readings, discussions, and the feedback after the sermon. Particularly reflect on 1) what the sermon did well, 2) what the sermon could have done better, and 3) what changes you plan to make in your preaching as a result of discussions and reflections. Please limit your reflections to one paragraph per question. (Due 2/19; responses by 2/21)

8. Week Eight - Worship Context
In a forum post, please consider the ways in which the liturgical contexts affect your preaching and how your preaching may well invite reforms within your liturgical context. (Due 2/26; responses by 2/28)

9. Week Nine - Sermon Critique
Upload in the drop-box, a “Sermon Critique Paper” A critique of a published sermon taken from any of our course texts (required or recommended). Students should imagine a conversation among at least four of the authors and we read this term and yourself. How would they evaluate the sermon you chose according to their varied theology and approaches to preaching? In your imagined conversation, please make sure to have the authors explain their reasons behind their critical evaluations. Grading will be based on accuracy in your portrayal of the author’s approaches, as well as your informed perspectives. The authors should be able to recognize their approach so that they would say, “Yes this is the approach or theology I use.” (Due March 6)

(Further details on these assignments will be posted online as the course progresses.)

VIII. SEMINARY STANDARDS
A. Inclusive Language
United Theological Seminary has an official policy regarding the use of Inclusive Language. The policy may be found in the Seminary Catalog and is further explained in the Student Handbook. If you have specific questions, please contact one of the instructors.

B. Academic Integrity
Student integrity regarding all work assigned in this class is a basic expectation of the Seminary community. A detailed policy regarding what constitutes a violation of academic integrity can be found in the Student Handbook.

C. Online Confidentiality
One of the highlights of the online classroom is that students can draw from the experiences shared during class discussions and in written work. However, it is imperative that students do not share information that is confidential, privileged, or proprietary in nature. In addition, students are expected to honor the privacy and confidentiality of their classmates by not disclosing online conversations with those outside the online community.

IX. USING ONLINE RESOURCES
For information about how to access United Online and where to find help if you need it may be found on the seminary website at http://www.online.united.edu. Help guides are also in the student computer lab and in the Student Handbook. For online help, please e-mail onlinehelp@united.edu.

X. METHOD OF DETERMINING FINAL GRADE:
Grades will be assigned on the basis of:

- assigned papers;
- forum posts;
- sermons and feedback conversations during the intensive portion of the course;
- quality and timeliness of online participation.

A more detailed preaching rubric will be posted but some general criteria used to evaluate your sermons will be:

A "C" is an average grade. In a "C" sermon, people will remember a few bits and pieces from it, but that's about all. Its coherence is not obvious, its language not memorable. God and God’s action are not central to the sermon.

A "B" sermon will include: Careful attention to the biblical text. Clear, logical sequencing of moves or four pages; crisp move openings and closings; tight point-of-view control within moves; competent introduction and conclusion that accomplish what they are supposed to do; clear and appropriate imagery; competent embodiment of the sermon; and at least some depth of thought. God’s action is central to the sermon.

An "A" sermon will include all the factors of a "B" sermon, plus: Vivid, muscular language; concrete examples or stories that illustrate God’s action in our world today; appropriately dynamically embodied delivery which physically reflects (and thereby enhances) the thought of the sermon; deep theological insight which may change forever the way hearers think of the text or topic.

A portion of the course grade is based on online participation. Students are expected to understand, analyze, and question the subject matter presented by their instructors and classmates; and then to communicate their thoughts, experiences and ideas with the online community. This participation should be substantive. A simple reply such as “I agree” or “Yes/No” without further elaboration does not constitute substantive participation! Students are encouraged to challenge their own and their classmates’ perspectives in a constructive manner. Please base any comments on the concepts, perspectives, and practices we are learning in this class. Through our interaction online and face-to-face, we will help each other learn, and push each other to be the best preachers we can be (“the Lord being our help”). Specific assignments regarding online discussions will be posted at the beginning of each week’s module.
Percentages of the grades are as followed:

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<th>Course</th>
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<td>Course Participation</td>
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<td>Forum Posts</td>
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<td>Homiletical Formation</td>
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<td>Second Sermon</td>
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<td>“Imagined Conversation” Paper</td>
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