Course Profile

Course # and Title: ML403 Introduction to Preaching
Instructor: Kimberly Wagner
Semester/Year: Fall 2020

Course Rationale and Description
(Why do we offer this course? Which of LSTC’s degree program learning outcomes does it address?)

This course aims to help students engage the discipline and practice of preaching in ways that allow them to preach the Gospel faithfully for an ever-changing and diverse public church. This course will help students to integrate their biblical exegesis work, theological studies, and unfolding sense of call to ministry towards the task of preaching. Students will engage in practices of biblical interpretation and theological studies as they explore sermon construction and delivery. Additionally, students will be invited to engage in practices of attentiveness and discernment as they seek to proclaim the good news of God’s grace to a hungry and hurting world. Students will spend the semester immersed not only in their own work of sermon construction and preaching, but also in the preaching of colleagues and gifted historical and contemporary practitioners. Grounded in the belief that preaching is an important, ever-changing, biblically-grounded, and contextually-informed practice, this course aims to help students hone their own preaching gifts so that they may joyfully engage God’s people, today’s world, and the biblical text towards the ends of transformation and proclamation.

This course addresses all of the LSTC Master of Divinity Learning Competencies to some degree. As a practice that invites students to be vulnerable and to understand their own communal heritage as well as the communities to whom they will preach, ML403 addresses competencies around “Personal and Spiritual Formation” (MDiv Learning Competency #1). As students will be required to do biblical exegesis towards the ends of preaching as well as “draw on meta-narrative[s] of Scripture” to shape the narratives of communities, “express one’s faith in the language, imagery and narrative of biblical texts” and relate the work of the text to the contemporary world, ML403 fulfills requirements of MDiv Learning Competency #2: Scripture. Likewise, students will draw from History and Theology (MDiv Learning Competency #3) as they move through sermon construction and delivery. Most obviously, ML403 fulfills MDiv Learning Competency #4: Ministry Arts and Public Leadership as students develop their preaching skills towards the ends of ministry among congregations and communities, even as they discern their own voice and call. Finally, ML403 is attentive to MDiv Learning Competency #5: Cultural Context as students are required to “know, interpret, and affect particular situations, values, and meanings” through the exegeting of one’s congregation and community as they engage in biblical interpretation, sermon construction, and sermon delivery. In its most excellent form, preaching is a practice that brings together biblical studies, theology, history, one’s personal spiritual development, and an awareness of the cultural context towards the end of preaching the good news of God’s grace and redemptive work faithfully and well.

Specifically addressing the Area 4 learning competencies, Encountering the Living Word seeks to push students through the “developing” stage to the “adequate” stage of the preaching competencies. Students should leave the course being able to demonstrate:
- a responsible method of sermon preparation
- an ability to interpret Scripture in ways that are responsible to text and context
- an ability to proclaim the gospel in Christ- or God-centered ways with sermons emphasizing God’s initiative and grace, present in the gospel as good news that addresses people’s lives as well as related to the liturgical year and the rest of the service
- an ability to deliver sermons effectively, comfortable with the preaching task, yet humble regarding their call to represent the gospel.

Course Learning Outcomes (Learners will be able to):
(What difference will this course make to students’ knowledge, skills, attitudes, and practices?)

By the conclusion of this course, students should be equipped to:
- Articulate and discern the role of the preacher and a theology of preaching
- Engage Scripture in ways that are meaningful and productive for preaching
- Craft clear sermons that are appropriate to a particular congregation and are faithful to a particular text
- Develop preaching styles that evidence a respectful and thoughtful utilization of a variety of traditions
- Reflect critically on sermon delivery and style
- Begin to understand how one preaches at special occasions like weddings, funerals, or in times of communal need/crisis.
- Cultivate habits for lifelong learning and growth as a preacher

Strategies for Learning:
(How shall we go about achieving these outcomes?)

Students will achieve the above learning outcomes through full participation in:
- Weekly reading assignments
- Class conversations in Plenary and Preaching Lab
- Individual and small group weekly assignments in Plenary
- Preaching one shorter (5 minute) sermon and two longer (10-15 minute) sermons in Preaching Lab
- Preaching and recording one sermon in ministry context
- Offering thoughtful, encouraging, and constructive feedback to preaching colleagues in Preaching Lab
- Listening to, engaging, and critiquing great preaching both in Plenary and in the “Listening Library” assignments

Assessment:
(How shall we know if we—students and instructors—have been successful in achieving the outcomes?)

Students will be offered verbal feedback from preaching colleagues as well as verbal and written feedback from the professor on each sermon. The student and professor will also meet individually to discuss students’ video sermons. This feedback allows students to continually grow, experiment, and develop as preachers. Additionally, students will turn in weekly class assignments, sermon reflections, and “Listening Library” assignments for credit. While class readings and conversation will certainly be
foundation in the course, evidence of learning and integrating these ideas and materials will be assessed in class participation, reflection, engagement with one another’s sermons, and student preaching.

Bibliography:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text Title</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>ISBN# (Required)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Witness of Preaching, Third Edition</td>
<td>Thomas G. Long</td>
<td>978-0664261429</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They Like to Never Quit Praisin’ God</td>
<td>Frank A. Thomas</td>
<td>978-0829819786</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Sermon Workbook: Exercises in the Art and Craft of Preaching</td>
<td>Leonora Tubbs Tisdale and Thomas H. Troeger</td>
<td>978-1426757785</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Recommended Texts:
The Preaching Life by Barbara Brown Taylor  (ISBN: 978-1561010745)