Course Profile

Course # RHS/ML 502  Preaching the Gospel of John
Instructor:  Barbara Rossing, Benjamin Stewart  Semester  Fall 2020

Course Rationale and Description
(Why do we offer this course?  Which of LSTC’s degree program learning outcomes does it address?):
This integrative course addresses M.Div. degree program Outcomes 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6.

This course is a serious study of the Gospel of John as a text for preaching a compelling vision for Christian life, centered in the worship assembly. The movement of the course is from rigorous exegetical study, to determining and crafting the good news, to delivering the sermon. Texts will primarily be selected from those found in the Revised Common Lectionary. Consideration will be given to their liturgical and contemporary contexts as well as their historical settings in first-century communities. By using the lectionary which is based on the liturgical year, we will bring John’s Gospel to bear on every major Christian doctrine, developing students’ leadership skills through proclamation and biblical leadership. The goal is to explore the ways the Gospel of John teaches and images “abundant life” as a way of life for the Christian community.

This class also counts as the New Testament Graduate Biblical Seminar for this semester for PhD and ThM students, with rigorous exegetical research papers and Greek translation, for future teachers who will teach the Gospel of John.

Course Learning Outcomes (Learners will be able to):
(What difference will this course make to students’ knowledge, skills, attitudes, and practices?)
Students who take this course will be able to:
• Articulate the strengths, tensions and challenges of preaching John’s Gospel for the contemporary church and world;
• Formulate strategies for preaching the Gospel of John “across seasons.”
• Know the content of the Gospel of John; to be able to draw on the narrative of John’s Gospel to shape the narrative of one’s own life; to be able to express one’s faith in terms of the language, imagery and narrative of John’s Gospel;
• Strengthen skills in reading Greek and using exegetical tools (Concordance, text criticism) for study of the gospels; valuable also for those who know no Greek!
• Address key historical questions related to the Gospel of John, including first-century life in context of Roman Empire; Judaism and the Jesus movement; the relation of John to the Synoptic Gospels; Christian anti-Judaism
• Communicate the narrative and historical contexts of the Gospel of John, including critical scholarly issues, in order to help parishioners explore their theological significance and vision for Christian life in today’s pluralistic context;
• Develop leadership models for articulating, practicing and teaching Christian faith as a way of abundant life in light of John’s Gospel and Jesus’ vision for abundant life.

Strategies for Learning):
(How shall we go about achieving these outcomes?)
We will study the arc of John’s gospel from beginning to end, approximately two chapters per week. Through lectures and seminar discussion, we will explore selected texts from John’s Gospel in terms of how preaching is influenced by and interprets (1) their historical and theological significance, (2) their lectionary and liturgical context, and (3) their vision for a way of life.

Students will sign up to work on two pericopes from John. For each pericope the student will present an exegetical research paper for discussion one week (using guidelines from instructors; emailed to all seminar participants in advance of the discussion), and then preach a sermon based on their text the following week.

Advanced studies students taking the class for GBS credit may substitute a longer research paper for preaching sermons, in consultation with instructor. Greek translation work will also be required of Advanced studies students.

Required work for course:
• **Attendance** at all class sessions is expected, including advance reading of exegetical papers and participation in discussion that reflects comprehension and use of the reading assignments. Students taking the course for Advanced Exegesis credit will attend a half-hour Greek translation session from 1:00 to 1:30.

• Preparing two five- to seven-page **exegetical papers** on texts from John, **leading class discussions** on your text in light of your paper (send copies of your exegesis paper in advance to each class member).

• Preparation and delivery of two **sermons** on the texts you have exegeted. (not a requirement for Advanced Studies ThM and PhD students)

• **Preparation and review** of sermons with the homiletics instructor. (Please schedule appointments for preparation/logjam as soon as possible; the latest time is 48 hours before preaching event.)

• **In-class sermon review.** Involvement in a collegial (i.e. gentle yet honest) discussion of the sermons and liturgies presented in class

• A two-page final **reflection paper**, entitled “John’s vision of abundant life as a way of life for our congregation”—written in the format of a church newsletter article or letter to the church council at your internship congregation

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

Assessment of student learning will be based on:

- the two exegetical papers (**40 percent total**—20 percent for each paper)
- Preparation and delivery of two **sermons** on the texts you have exegeted (**40 percent total**—20 percent per sermon)
- **Preparation and review** of sermons with Prof. Stewart. [Please schedule appointments for preparation/logjam as soon as possible; the latest time is 48 hours before preaching event.] (**5 percent**)
- Class attendance and participation in all discussions; advance reading of everyone’s seminar papers; participating ion in-class sermon reviews (**10 % of grade**)
- Greek translation with Prof. Rossing for those taking the course for Advanced Studies credit; passages to be prepared in advance.
- Research paper for those taking the course for Advanced Studies credit;
- **Final Reflection paper** (**5 % of grade**)

Grades: Since this is a preaching course, **Pass/Fail** is the option strongly encouraged for grading unless students need a letter grade. Advanced studies (ThM and PhD) students will take course for letter grade.

**Bibliography:**

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<tr>
<th>Text Title</th>
<th>Author</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Interpreter’s Bible Volume 9: Luke</td>
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Additional information:
**Prerequisites for Enrollment:** Jesus With Judaism or Introductory Gospels Course; for MDiv: Introductory Preaching class