

BEXLEY SEABURY SEMINARY

Course Title: The Art of Preaching (ML 332) 3 Credits
Term Offered: Summer 2021
Learning Environment: Online, synchronous and asynchronous
Meeting Times: Online pre-work begins 1 June 2021
Course begins 7 June 2021
Schedule of synchronous sessions listed below
All work due by 22 June unless an extension is granted
Instructor: John A. Dally (he/him/his)
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I respond quickly to email enquiries.

Course Description:

Preachers are asked to be writers, actors/performance artists, composers, dancers, painters and sculptors all at one time, yet they are rarely given the tools they need to make good on these expectations. What if preachers thought of themselves as creative artists who employ many artistic disciplines to craft and deliver their sermons? This course is open to beginning, intermediate, and advanced preachers who would like to draw both their preparation and execution from the right sides of their brains.

Schedule of Synchronous Meetings

All participants must be present for all synchronous meetings to receive credit for the course.

- Monday, June 7, 10:00 – 11:30 am CT
- Thursday, June 10, 10:00 – 11:00 am CT
- Thursday, June 10, 2:00 – 3:00 pm CT
- Monday, June 14, 10:00 – 11:30 am CT
- Monday June 14, 2:00 – 3:30 pm CT
- Thursday, June 17, 10:00 – 11:30 am CT
- Thursday, June 17, 2:00 – 3:30 pm CT
- Monday, June 21, 10:00 – 11:30 am CT
- Monday June 21, 2:00 – 3:30 pm CT

Course Goals and Outcomes

Students who complete this course will:

- learn a different approach to the exegesis of scripture based on intuition and emotion and employing a hermeneutic of love. [M.Div. Curricular Goals 1 and 2]
Outcome: Familiarity with the backstory method of exegeting scripture as presented in class and the ability to develop a completed sermon from it. [Curricular Outcomes 1.1, 1.3, 2.1]
Assessment: Exegetical backstories completed in class and in the final project
- gain knowledge of the many implications of understanding preaching as an art form and learn practical ways to apply artistic disciplines to the art of preaching [M.Div. Curricular Goals 4, 5]
Outcome: A self-identity as a preacher-artist, an appreciation for the components of effective sacred speech and a confidence in deploying them. [M.Div. Curricular Outcomes 4.1, 4.2, 5.2]
Assessment: Final project and the student self-assessment that accompanies it.
- become familiar with a variety of cultural resources and develop the cultural competencies needed for effective, empowering and contextually appropriate leadership in diverse, multicultural congregations and communities. [M.Div. Curricular Goal 3]
Outcome: The ability to craft sermonic messages that are appropriate to specific cultural contexts. [M.Div. Curricular Outcomes 3.1,3.3, 3.4]
Assessment: Final project and student self-assessment that accompanies it.
- acquire the ability to proclaim and preach the gospel of God’s love and justice with creativity, passion and conviction in context-appropriate and accessible ways. [M.Div. Curricular Goal 5]
Outcome: A theologically profound and personally grounded sermon delivered with natural grace and candor. [M.Div. Curricular Outcome 5.5]
Assessment: Final Project

A Word about Assessment: From Course Outcome Assessment to Program Assessment

Bexley Seabury Seminary regularly evaluates the quality of our programs using a variety of data, including documents that are deposited into student portfolios. These portfolios consist of designated student work (artifacts) from each course, along with the instructor’s graded artifact and a scored rubric that assesses the work in light of desired curricular outcomes. The designated assessment artifact for this course is the final project.

We use your portfolio to assess student learning (in the aggregate) and the effectiveness of our curricula in reaching desired goals and objectives. This process does not involve any further evaluation of your work for grading purposes. No identifying information will be included in any evaluation or report provided to our accreditors or other outside parties. For further information, see the Student Handbook. You may also talk with your instructor, your advisor, the Assessment Coordinator (Lelia Fry, lfry@bexleyseabury.edu), or the Academic Dean, (Terry DeLisio, tdelisio@bexleyseabury.edu).

Learning Methodology:

This course focuses on the process of becoming a preacher, not the craft of writing sermons. Emphasis will be placed on the unique package of gifts, skills and life experiences each participant

brings to the course and on the refinement and strengthening of those assets. This approach requires soul-work rather than the mastery of a technique.

A distinction will be made between the habitual and natural voices of each preacher. Our habitual voices are formed from feedback we've received over a lifetime and may embed patterns of vocal production that do not enhance our preached message.

Included in this awareness is the fact that English has been used as a language of colonization. Participants who are not of English-speaking heritage by birth (whether in their generation or in former generations) will be encouraged to draw on their first languages in many of the building blocks of our time together. Those for whom English is a first language will be asked to cast a critical eye on English words and expressions that encode supremacist and racist thinking, even if used without that intention. Together we will ask how language can help to form an anti-racist society and church.

This is a highly interactive course. Students will learn by doing from the first day of class. Movies, music, and images will be used to stimulate the right brain. The method of preaching taught will be organic, each step growing out of the previous one until the final result is achieved. Opportunities will be provided for private reflection, one-on-one exercises, and group discussions.

Required Reading:

Book to be read in its entirety:

Childers, Jana. *Performing the Word: Preaching as Theatre*. Abingdon Press: 1998. ISBN: 978-0687074235

Excerpts and Articles posted on Canvas:

Brooks Jennifer: "How Shall They Hear? The Challenge of a Verbal Art in a Visual Culture" (2008 Lecture)

Buechner, Frederick. *Telling the Truth: The Gospel as Tragedy, Comedy, and Fairy Tale*. Harper Collins: 1977. ISBN: 978-0060611569

(A note about *Telling the Truth*: Frederick Buechner wrote *Telling the Truth* in 1977, a few years before inclusive language began to be discussed and, later, mandated in academic and literary circles. As a result, the book is typically male-centric for its time: God is a man, other human beings are men, the preacher is a man. I generally do not assign any reading that requires a contemporary reader to stumble over such anachronisms, but I decided that on balance the message of this short chapter from an equally short book transcends its datedness and conveys with great eloquence what I hope will be one of the major takeaways of this class, namely, that preaching that relies solely on the meaning of words can never be effective. JAD)

Butler, Anthea. NPR Interview 30 July 2007

Dally, John Addison. *Choosing the Kingdom: Missional Preaching for the Household of God* Alban Institute: 2008. (Excerpt)

Isherwood, Charles: "Take Off Your Emotional Clothes and Sing"

Kim, Eunjoo Mary. *Preaching in an Age of Globalization*. Westminster John Know Press, 2010. (Excerpt)

Mendoza, KP: "I Am No Hero. I Am Not Ready to Die"

Mitchell, Henry H. *Celebration and Experience in Preaching*. Abingdon Press: 1990. (Excerpt)

Course Assignments and Expectations

1. Participation in all synchronous sessions. (10%) This is particularly important because this class is being conducted entirely online. Assessed on the basis of the rubric for online discussions.
2. Participation in two break-out sessions with partner. (10%) Assessed on the basis for online discussions.
3. Completion of all assigned reading and submission of the Reading Response Paper described below by June 6, 2021. (15%) Assessed on the basis of the rubric for Journals.
4. Completion of all in-class assignments (Something I Care About, Scriptural Backstory, Opening Paragraph, Three-Paragraph Sermon, Lyric Poem Country Song) by the dates assigned in class. Instructions for these projects are not given ahead of time due to the organic nature of the class. Each assignment flows naturally out of the previous one and cannot be worked on ahead of time. Instructions will be posted project by project on Canvas. (45% total all assignments) Assessed on the basis of the rubric for reflective writing.
5. A final project, described below (20%). Due 21 June 2021. The final project will also serve as the portfolio artifact for this course. Assessed on the basis of the rubric for this project (see below)

Late work— i.e., anything submitted after midnight on June 25 --- cannot be accepted without permission from the instructor before that date and submission of the extension form, found in the Student Resources area on Canvas.

Reading Response Paper

Please respond to the following questions about the readings by midnight, June 6, 2021. Put all your responses in a single post of 300-500 word on Canvas in the designated forum

1. How might you apply Childers' concept of "the unselfish performer" to your preaching?
2. How would a class experience with Barbara Cook make you feel? (Isherwood article)

3. The excerpt from my book argues that preaching isn't about informing or persuading; what other kinds of preaching have you heard, or what other kinds can you imagine?
4. In light of the Buechner excerpt and the Mendoza article, what would "telling the truth" look like in your preaching?

Final Project

1. Choose a single scriptural text appointed by the lectionary propers that will be distributed on June 17. Take that text through the steps we learned during our time together: Read it through personal, communal, national and global lenses, choose the one that seems most urgent, and decide on a single line that seems to capture the heart of the passage for you.
2. Write a sermon addressing the cognitive, intuitive and emotive in your listeners. Deliver the sermon with clarity, authenticity and invitation at one of our last two sessions on June 21. After you receive feedback, record the sermon incorporating that feedback, post the sermon to an online platform and send the instructor a link to the video by midnight on June 25.

Pre-Class Assignments

Post an introduction in the Introduction Forum (by 6/6/21)

Post responses to the readings (by 6/6/21)

Watch "The Holly and the Ivy" (link on Canvas) and post a response (by 6/6/21)

Class Plan (During and Between Synchronous Meetings)

Prior to first synchronous meeting **watch** Introduction to the Class on Canvas

Prepare "Something I Care About" exercise (instructions posted on Canvas Sunday, June 6.)

June 7, 10:00 – 11:30 am CT: **Perform** "Something I Care About" exercise and participate in analysis of engaged speech in first synchronous session.

June 7-8: **Complete** Backstory Exercise for assigned scriptures. (instructions posted on Canvas after June 7 synchronous session)

June 9: **Complete** Partner Work for Backstory Exercise (instructions posted on Canvas end of day June 8)

June 10, 10:00 – 11:00 am CT: **Perform** scriptures in light of Backstory Exercise in second synchronous session.

June 10, 2:00 – 3:00 pm CT: **Perform** scriptures in light of Backstory Exercise in third synchronous session.

June 11-13: **Watch** "The Bible: The Elevator Speech," **Read** "First Impressions: Using the First 30 Seconds of the Sermon" and "Crafting Opening Paragraphs," all posted at start of day on June 11.

June 14, 10:00 – 11:30 am CT: **Perform** scripture and opening paragraph in fourth synchronous session.

June 14, 2:00 – 3:30 pm CT: **Perform** scripture and opening paragraph in fifth synchronous session

June 15-16: **Read** “Fulfilling the Bid: Crafting a Short Sermon in Light of Your Opening Paragraph” and complete your own short sermon

June 17, 10:00 – 11:30 am CT: **Perform** scripture and short sermon in sixth synchronous session

June 17, 2:00 – 3:30 pm CT: **Perform** scripture and short sermon in seventh synchronous session

June 18-20: **Repeat** the entire process of journaling on a single line of a new scripture, creating a backstory, sharing the backstory with a partner, and crafting a three-paragraph sermon.

June 21, 10:00 – 11:30 am CT: **Perform** second scripture and sermon in eighth synchronous session.

June 21, 2:00 – 3:30 pm CT: **Perform** second scripture and sermon in final synchronous session.

June 22-25: **Record** your second sermon incorporating any feedback you received, post it to an online platform, and send a link to the instructor.

Feedback:

The instructor will post responses to all Canvas forums within a week after the deadline for student responses. If the instructor has concerns about a student post he will contact the student directly rather than posting that concern online. Final projects will receive instructor responses within a week of their posting in a personal email.

Grading:

This course will assign a letter grade for Master’s-level students.

Bexley Seabury requires a minimum grade of C to pass a course.								
Grade	Points	Description	Grade	Points	Description	Grade	Points	Description
A (4.00)	96-100	Superior/Mastery	A- (3.67)	90-95	Excellent	B+ (3.33)	87-89	Very Good
B (3.00)	84-86	Good (high)	B- (2.67)	80-83	Good (low)	C+ (2.33)	75-79	Acceptable (high)
C (2.00)	70-74	Acceptable/Adequate						
F/NC (0)	<70	Unacceptable (Fail/No Credit)						

A grade of “P” or “CR” in a Pass/Fail of Credit/Non-credit course is equivalent to a grade of C or above.

All students in Bexley Seabury courses are expected to be familiar with the following information that is provided on Canvas:

- Academic policies and forms
- Requests for withdrawals, extensions, and incompletes
- Technological requirements and assistance
- Writing guidelines and assistance
- Course netiquette
- Prohibition of plagiarism

Rubrics for Journals

Course Element	Outstanding 3	Sufficient 2	Insufficient 1	Score
<u>Journal responding to assigned readings</u> Develop ability to listen, read, speak and write effectively in order to contribute to the life of the church	Demonstrates mastery of assigned readings and makes connections between them	Demonstrates completion of and comprehension of assigned readings	Fails to demonstrate completion of and/or comprehension of assigned readings	
<u>Journal responding to classroom or extra-classroom experiences</u> Develop an aptitude for theological reflection Develop ability to listen, read, speak and write effectively in order to contribute to the life of the church	Describes experiences vividly and offers layered and nuanced theological analysis of them	Describes experiences clearly and offers some theological analysis of them	Describes experiences inadequately and/or offers no significant analysis of them	
			<i>Total score</i>	
			<i>Average score</i>	

Rubrics for Online Discussions

Curricular goal or class element	Outstanding 3	Sufficient 2	Insufficient 1	Score
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Comprehension and critical thought	Shows evidence of comprehension of material Shows evidence of critical engagement with material Relates material to other aspects of the course, larger course topic, larger relevant topics and issues	Shows evidence of understanding of material Shows evidence of ability to analyze, interact with material Relates material to immediate topic	Summarizes material briefly Mistakes of understanding Does not deal with material	
Responsiveness	Builds from prompt to initiate or expand discussion Responses to other student(s) post(s) relate post to larger topic Response moves discussion forward	Follows prompt and engages assigned topic Responses to other student(s) post(s) address point(s) made by poster Response continues discussion	Ignores or mistakes prompt Responses to other student(s) post(s) are cursory (“I agree.”) or otherwise do not engage points Response contributes little to discussion	
Clarity	Writing is consistently clear, accessible, and organized References to materials are clear and easy to follow Writing shows command of written language and ability to use language to persuade, explain, respond, etc. No errors of grammar and syntax	Writing is generally clear, accessible, and organized. References are made to other materials Writing shows ability to use written language to persuade, explain, respond, etc. No errors of grammar and syntax	Writing is unclear, hard to understand, and/or poorly organized or difficult to follow No reference to other materials Writing skills are poor Errors of grammar and syntax	
Interaction with peers	Takes care to acknowledge value of other’s contributions Poses constructive questions, offers further thoughts that build on peer’s contribution Critical response is respectful and open to further discussion	Acknowledges other’s contribution Responds directly to other’s contribution Shows respect for other	Ignores or mistakes other’s contribution Does not respond to other’s contribution Tone, language, etc., are dismissive, disrespectful, or heedless of likely effect	
Timeliness	Initial post and response to other	Initial post and response to other	Initial post and/or response posted late	

	student(s) posted on or ahead of schedule Initial post and response to other student(s) are posted on different days	student(s) posted on schedule Initial post and response to other student(s) are posted on same day	Initial post not made Response not made	
			Total score	
			Average score	

Rubrics for Reflective Writing

Class Element	Outstanding 3	Sufficient 2	Insufficient 1	Score
Engages the reader by establishing a context and analyzing a personal situation	Effectively identifies a condition, situation, or issue in order to analyze a personal situation. Insightful analysis conveys significance of the condition, situation, or issue.	Clearly identifies a condition, situation, or issue in order to analyze a personal situation. Analysis conveys significance of the condition, situation, or issue.	Identifies a context, a situation, or an issue but does not engage in analysis.	
Creates a coherent organizing structure.	The response is skillfully organized from beginning to end; opening, body, and closure are appropriately complex.	The response is clearly organized from beginning to end; opening, body, and closure are appropriately complex.	Produces an organization that is incomplete or one or more elements causes confusion.	
Demonstrates understanding of English language conventions and uses <i>Turabian</i> appropriately.	Demonstrates consistent control of grammar, usage, punctuation, sentence construction, and spelling. Uses <i>Turabian</i> appropriately.	Demonstrates control of grammar, usage, punctuation, sentence construction, and spelling. Infrequent errors do not interfere with meaning. Uses <i>Turabian</i> appropriately.	Did not proofread essay. Essay demonstrates little control of usage, grammar, punctuation, sentence construction, and spelling. Numerous errors interfere with meaning.	
			Total score	
			Average score	

Rubrics for Final Project

	Outstanding 3	Sufficient 2	Insufficient 1	Score
The sermon is clear	Expression of thought compelling. Delivery crisp and nuanced.	Line of thought followable; no problem understanding words	Unable to follow line of thought; volume or clarity lacking	
The preacher is authentic	Listener feels drawn into relationship with the preacher. Body language enhances the message	No evidence of artificiality; body language does not distract from message	Preacher appears artificial or not invested in message; body language contradicts words	
The preacher is invitational	Theology and delivery both highly inviting	Theology and delivery are accessible	Theology is didactic or delivery is off-putting	
Cognition	Content is superbly crafted to be both interesting and transformative	Content is clear and easy to follow	Meaning is unclear or obfuscated by multiple messages	
Intuition	Listener is deeply drawn into a shared experience with the preacher	Listener is invited into the preacher's thought	The intuitive consciousness is not addressed	
Emotion	Content and delivery provoke a deeply effective emotive response from the listener	Content and delivery elicit an emotive response from the listener	The emotive consciousness is not addressed	
			Total score	
			Average score	

