

UNIVERSITY OF DUBUQUE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

MN774D: Preaching the Passion Narratives

Monday through Thursday 9-11:50 AM; January 4-7, 2010

Instructor: Timothy M. Slemmons

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1 Credit; Letter grade or Pass/Fail

Prerequisites: MN540D - Foundations of Preaching

Course Description

This advanced course in preaching, which builds on the skills and knowledge acquired in Foundations of Preaching (MN540D), examines the unique literary character of, and the Christological considerations involved in preaching from, the passion narratives. How might the preacher better expound and proclaim the vital significance of the two longest and most complex narratives in each of the gospels? This course invites the preacher to consider and correct a major lacuna in lectionary preaching, and to proclaim the gospel from the perspective of Christ's redemptive suffering on the cross.

Course Objectives

The objectives of this course are (1) to gain greater familiarity with the passion narratives as distinct and essential literary units within the larger genre of gospel; (2) to explore the passion narratives with a view to homiletical discovery; (3) to investigate avenues and angles of Christological interpretation and proclamation that offer greater possibilities for deep personal and congregational transformation in the encounter with the crucified Christ in the preaching moment; (4) to test the viability of preaching the passion narratives by way of continuous reading (*lectio continua*).

M.Div. Curricular Objectives

In order to serve the one God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – and prepare women and men for faithful, compassionate, and effective pastoral ministry, this course contributes to the following curricular goals of the M.Div. program, in that it will enable students to:

- nurture habits and disciplines of study, prayer and reflection that increase their love of God and neighbor and shape their personal and professional lives
- be formed by, live in, and minister out of scripture and the historical and theological tradition of the church
- interpret the Christian Scriptures through faithful exegesis and in light of the Christian tradition
- preach the Word of God with faithfulness and clarity
- lead worship and administer the sacraments with theological integrity and to the glory of God
- educate and equip individuals and congregations to live and minister joyfully and faithfully as part of their own denomination and the ecumenical church

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- provide pastoral care for individuals and congregations in daily life and moment of transition and crisis
- integrate theology and practice in all areas of life and ministry

The Ministry Division seeks to help students develop a capacity to comprehend theories for the practice of ministry, a capacity to develop skills necessary for pastoral tasks, and the capacity to integrate these two. In this way, students begin to devise and articulate a pastoral theology. This course contributes to the following goals in the Ministry Division:

1. to provide knowledge and experiences of the worship and prayer of the people of God.
2. to provide knowledge of, and significant practice in, the ministry of proclamation.
3. to provide skills and capabilities in the discipling, evangelistic, pastoral and governance dimensions of the church's task.
4. to help future pastors develop sensitivity to the contexts in which they are leading congregations.

Requirements/Evaluation

In particular, this course provides knowledge and/or practice in the following areas:

- Theological reflection on the literary nature and function of the passion narratives
- Biblical scholarship focusing on one the passion narratives
- Participation with peers in the formation of homiletical skills
- Practice in homiletical self-assessment for personal and professional growth
- Development of a *lectio continua* preaching plan for use with one of the four passion narratives

Strategies for Assessment

Pre-residency:

One brief devotional based on a short selection from the passion narratives (1-2 pp.) – 10%

One exegesis paper, including a proposed sermon outline (6 pp., double-spaced) – 20%

In residence:

One sermon based on the (pre-load) exegesis of a pericope from the passion narratives – 30%

Attendance and class participation – 5 %

Post-residency requirement:

Lectio continua plan for preaching through a chosen passion narrative (30%)

A brief self-assessment of the sermon and summary of learnings (5%)

Grading Scale: See *UDTS, 2007-2009 Catalog*; pp. 57-59.

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Bibliography

Required Texts:

Sally A. Brown, *Cross Talk: Preaching Redemption Here and Now* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2008)

Fleming Rutledge, *The Undoing of Death: Sermons for Holy Week and Easter* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005)

C. H. Spurgeon, *Spurgeon's Sermons on the Death and Resurrection of Jesus* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2005)

Recommended Text:

Raymond E. Brown, *The Death of the Messiah: From Gethsemane to the Grave: A Commentary on the Passion Narratives in the Four Gospels, 2 Vols.* (New York: Doubleday, 1994)

Technological Requirements:

Electronic Submission of Work: All work will be submitted electronically, unless otherwise indicated by the instructor. See additional instructions below, under "Course Administration" information on page seven.

Electronic Communication: Students are expected to check their UD e-mail accounts regularly for course updates and University announcements. Instructions for forwarding e-mail from a dbq.edu account can be found at the Technology Services link on the UD Web page.

Electronic Devices: Cell phones, pagers, iPods, PDAs and all other electronic devices not medically necessary will be turned off during class time unless permission is given by the instructor.