EMP 5354HF  PREACHING AND CULTURES   Thursdays 10-12

The church in many quarters has lost the ability to communicate with the cultures around it. The problem in part may be modernism, not postmodernism. Students will be encouraged creatively to engage cultures through theological engagement with the news and with two sets of arts: the arts needed to proclaim the gospel (often beyond the biblical text) and the arts of using cultural arts (paintings, sculpture, dance, architecture, movies, and theatre) and artifacts in the sermon. This class will function as a preaching seminar and laboratory where discussions will cover required readings, writing assignments, and issues raised in class.

Course Outcomes: Students will gain the ability to:
1. Discern the gospel using biblical texts.
2. Demonstrate greater awareness of multiple cultures/perspectives.
3. Identify the continuing impact of modernist thought on the church.
4. Speak to the challenges and opportunities of postmodernity in much western culture.
5. Increase creativity through engaging news and the arts.
6. Link the biblical message with culture/s.
7. Identify theological themes in culture/s.
8. Preach more effectively.
9. Develop controlling images to assist the theme.
10. Offer positive, caring, and frank response to peers.
11. Teach using a non-lecture style.

Requirements: attendance, readings, assignments, contributions to the class (50); one sermon (100); two teaching assignments (see below), plus a major essay (15 page minimum) on a topic to be approved in consultation with the instructor, due examination week. Students will be required to teach two 20 minute sessions normally to the entire class on an assigned book (not lecturing but rather teaching and engaging, helping the class put to use some learning, perhaps through a brief exercise).
Teaching assignments: Define your key terms. Explain one main idea from the book, show how it relates to the whole. [5 min. maximum] Connect the idea with preaching and culture. [5 min. max] Provide some exercise for the class to practice. [5 min.] Allow for conversation throughout.

Textbooks:
Photocopies of relevant articles/chapters PLUS:

**Recommended:**
Arbuckle, Gerald A. *Culture, Inculturation and Theologians: A Postmodern Critique*, Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2010

**COURSE OUTLINE**
**Week 1** Introduction. Why Preach? What Gospel? In What Culture/s? What Role Has Creativity?

*Please NOTE: Prof. Wilson is lecturing in Texas and Virginia on the Thursdays of weeks 2 and 3 of the term so alternate meeting times will need to be found. Students are encouraged to work ahead on their two “teaching” assignments.*

**Week 2**
**Theory:** What has changed since Niebuhr’s *Christ and Culture*? Re-examine what he said and considering options for our day, given that in his five models he assumed the gospel was accepted truth. Are there better models for our day, like Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology*?

**Practical Issue:** Following the Biblical Text: to Remember or Not to Remember and by What Means? In homiletical preparation, are scholarly exegetical tasks separate from creatively engaging the cultures around us. How might we link them?

**Reading:** Niebuhr, 27-44; Bevans, Chapters 2 & 3; Tanner, Chapters 2 & 3. Optional reading on cultural and biblical exegesis: Stephen Farris, *Preaching that Matters*, 75-124, and Wilson, *Practice of Preaching* (2007), 18-25.

**Teaching:** Eunjoo Mary Kim, *Preaching in an Age of Globalization*.

**Week 3**
**Theory:** *Culture and Postmodernity I.*

What are the opportunities and challenges to preaching from postmodernity and how might we respond?

**Reading:** James A. K. Smith, *Who’s Afraid of Postmodernism?* 1-80.


**Week 4**
**Theory:** *Culture and Postmodernity II.*

**Reading:** James A. K. Smith, *Who’s Afraid of Postmodernism?* 80-end

**Teaching:** Tickle, Phyllis. *Emergence Christianity: What it is, Where it is Going, and Why it Matters*.

**Week 5** Is Thinking in Pictures Transcultural?

**Reading:** Peter Jonker, *Preaching in Pictures: Using Images for Sermons That Connect*

**Week 6**
**Theory:** *Community and Interpretation I*

**Reading:** Merold Westphal, *Whose Community? Which Interpretation?* 1-87

What is good in one culture from an ethical perspective is not necessarily good in another. How do preachers avoid mere relativity on moral or ethical issues yet gain a hearing with the people? How might preachers relate to people from different cultural perspectives? How does the gospel relate

**Week 7**
**Theory:** *Community and Interpretation II*
What’s Narrative Got to Do with Contextuality? Devices for narrative include: plot, character, point of view, atmosphere, and ethics. “Thick description” as a way of focusing on practices.

**Reading:*** Merold Westphal, *Whose Community? Which Interpretation?* 87-152.


**Week 8**

**Theory:** Prophetic Preaching may stand against the dominant culture. What is the difference (if any) between preaching a political party and preaching as prophecy?

**Practice:** *Linking the Text to the News.*

**5000 Additional Reading:** Tisdale *Prophetic Preaching: A Pastoral Approach* (to p. 62)

**3000/5000 Assignment:** Come to class with 125 words written on a news item that you might include in a sermon.

**Week 9**

**Theory:** *Preaching Using Sculpture, Dance, and Architecture.* Art in sermons may function as symbol (the thing itself), sign/illustration (of something else like a point), simile, and metaphor. Similar skills are needed in each to connect with biblical texts. Connections to our world between then and now can be made in various ways including: Idea, Image, Simile/Analogy, Metaphor (Identity), and Metonymy (Sequence). Assuming that preaching today needs to be more than good ideas, how may we practice and assess the adequacy of these bridges for our listeners?

**5000 Reading:** Tisdale *Prophetic Preaching: A Pastoral Approach* (to end)

**Assignment:** Come to class with 125 words written on a work of sculpture, dance or architecture.

**Week 10**

**Theory:** Preaching Using Movies and Film Clips/UTube Technology

**Practice:** Using Stories: Living the faith, Images of the Saviour, God Renewing the Church/World.

**Week 11**  Class Sermons

**Week 12**  Class Sermons

**Week 13**  Exam Week—5000 level essays are due.

**ADDITIONAL BIBLIOGRAPHY**

**Aesthetic Theory/ Theology**


**Culture**


**Homiletics**


______________.* Ten Strategies for Preaching in a Multi Media Culture*. Abingdon Press, 1996.


**Movies and the Arts**


