

REFORMED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY – WASHINGTON, D. C.

COMMUNICATIONS 6PT508/10  
COURSE SYLLABUS

Fall 2010  
Wednesday, 4:30pm to 7:00pm  
September 1 to December 15  
McLean Presbyterian Church

**Visiting Faculty:** Dr. David V. Silvernail, Jr.  
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- **COURSE DESCRIPTION:** This course addresses communication for pastors with an emphasis on preaching philosophy and style, textual exposition, and sermon structure. Written and oral, verbal and non-verbal communications are included. Communication 1 and Communication Lab 1 are to be taken at the same time.
  
- **COURSE OBJECTIVES:** Objectives are in two parts which parallel the hybrid nature of the course.
  - Communication theory
    - ✓ To understand the biblical and theological principles of homiletics.
    - ✓ To understand basic sermon components and their functions.
    - ✓ To understand the fundamentals of sermon preparation and delivery.
    - ✓ To understand the priority and practice of Christ-centered preaching.
    - ✓ To increase competence in Christ-centered teaching/preaching.
  
  - Communication lab
    - ✓ To provide opportunities for students to prepare and deliver sermons/instructions.
    - ✓ To provide instructor and peer evaluation on sermon/instructions as delivered.

The focus of this course is not on the history and philosophy of preaching/teaching, although there will be some materials on that subject. Rather, we will spend the bulk of our time discussing the mechanics of “Gospel Communication” in relation to the ministry of the Word of God in the local church. The principles discussed in this class will often times seem more testimonial than principal. Students should know that there is more than one correct way to prepare for Scriptural instruction and they will be encouraged to discover their own practices as it is helpful to them.

- **REQUIRED READINGS.** The reading requirement for this course is on par for a Master’s degree course, as is evident below. Students will be responsible for the reading assignment as the requirements of the course will demonstrate.
  - ❑ Chapell, Bryan. *Christ-Centered Preaching: Redeeming the Expository Sermon.* 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005. (386 pages)
  - ❑ Alexander, Eric. *What is Biblical Preaching.* Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 2008. (31 pages)
  - ❑ Ash, Christopher. *The Priority of Preaching.* Scotland: Christian Focus, 2009. (122 pages)
  - ❑ Gibson, Scott. Editor. *Preaching to a Shifting Culture: 12 Perspectives on Communicating that Connects.* Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004. (227 pages)
  - ❑ Gordon, T. David. *Why Johnny Can’t Preach: The Media Have Shaped the Messengers.* Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 2009. (108 pages)
  - ❑ Johnston, Graham. *Preaching to a Postmodern World: A Guide to Reaching Twenty-first Century Learners.* Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001. (175 pages)
  - ❑ Mohler, R. Albert. *He Is Not Silent: Preaching in a Postmodern World.* Chicago: Moody, 2008. (169 pages)

**1218 Total Pages**

- **REQUIREMENTS:**
  - **ATTENDANCE:** Each student is required to attend each class. If you know you cannot make it to a class session, notify me in advance.
  - **ALL WRITTEN WORK IS TO BE TIMES NEW ROMAN, 12 POINT, DOUBLE-SPACED, ONE INCH MARGINS. NAME, DATE, COURSE, AND ASSIGNMENT SHOULD BE LISTED IN THE HEADER.**
  - **FOR THE COMMUNICATIONS CLASS....**
    - Reading Reports:
      - ✓ **Reading Report #1 ~ Chapell Report:** In place of a Midterm exam, each student will turn in a Reading Report on the required reading textbook by Bryan Chapell. At the end of each chapter, there are a series of “Questions for Review and Discussion.” Students are to answer those questions and turn them in on the date that chapter is covered in class.

- ✓ **Reading Report #2 ~ Preaching Books Report:** In place of a Final exam, each student will turn in a Reading Report on **ALL** of the other required reading textbooks. Students will write a brief report following the form provided below. Students are to answer those questions and turn them in on the date that book is covered in class.
  
- *Pastoral Interview:* Students are required to sit and interview their preaching/teaching pastor at their local church and to learn from their preaching practices. Students are to inquire about their weekly preparation time, preaching strategy, how they prepare their sermons, etc. See the “Pastoral Interview” sheet below.
  
- **FOR THE COMMUNICATIONS LAB....**
  - *Illustration File:* Each student will gather a preaching illustration from the events since the last class. These illustrations cannot come from the required reading, but rather from the events of everyday life. Illustrations can come from the news, sports, movies, music, or any other medium. But they must be fresh! (i.e.: since the last class). Illustrations should normally be approximately one half page in length.
  
  - *Preaching in class:* Each student will have **at least** TWO opportunities to preach/teach as part of the communication lab. Time will be spent during class to work on the delivery of public addresses and speaking.
    - ✓ Sermon #1: Student will deliver a sermon/instruction based on a narrative passage in the Gospel of John.
  
    - ✓ Sermon #2: Student will deliver a sermon/instruction based on a didactic passage in the Epistle to the Romans.
      - Each sermon/instruction is to be a length of 25 to 30 minutes.
  
      - A 1-2 page outline and a **full word-for-word manuscript** (Times New Roman, 12 point, double-spaced) of each sermon/instruction are to be provided to the instructor **PRIOR** to their scheduled delivery.
  
      - Students will deliver one of these sermons or instructional settings in their individual church contexts and have it **video recorded** (not audio). **Two** copies on **DVD** are to be provided to the instructor on the given due dates. The sermon/instruction will be viewed by the instructor and one other reviewer who will make comments and return them to the student. Student will also have to do a self-evaluation of your delivery by viewing your own DVD.



## CLASS SCHEDULE

(Schedule will be adjusted according to the number of students registered for the course)

### September 1

1. Introduction to the Course
2. Introduction to Preaching

### Reading

Alexander  
Ash

### September 8

3. Word and Witness
4. Obligations of the Sermon

Chapell, chapter 1  
Chapell, chapter 2,  
Appendices 1-3

### September 15

5. The Priority of the Text
6. Components of Exposition

Chapell, chapter 3  
Chapell, chapter 4

### September 22

7. The Process of Explanation
8. Outlining and Structure

Chapell, chapter 5  
Chapell, chapter 6

### September 29

9. The Pattern of Illustration
10. Discussion of Pastoral Interviews

Chapell, chapter 7

### October 6

No Class — Reading Week

### October 13

11. The Pattern of Application
12. Introductions, Conclusions, and Transitions

Chapell, chapter 8  
Chapell, chapter 9

### October 20

13. A Redemptive Approach to Preaching
14. Student Sermons

Chapell, chapter 10

### October 27

15. Developing Redemptive Sermons
16. Student Sermons

Chapell, chapter 11

**November 3**

- 17. Preaching in a Post-Modern Culture #1
- 18. Student Sermons

Mohler

**November 10**

- 19. Preaching in a Post-Modern Culture #2
- 20. Student Sermons

Johnston

**November 17**

- 21. Preaching to the Heart
- 22. Student Sermons

Gibson

**November 24**

No Class — Thanksgiving Break

**December 1**

- 23. Engaging the Imagination
- 24. Student Sermons

Gordon

**December 8**

- 25. Answering the Why Question
- 26. Student Sermons

**December 15**

- 27. Connecting to Christ
- 28. Student Sermons

## EXPOSITORY SERMONS <sup>1</sup>

Each student will preach two expository sermons; one in their individual church context and one in class. These should be new sermons prepared specifically for this class. Sermons will be evaluated on the following criteria:

1. **Expository** – this does not mean verse by verse commentary, but that the sermon faithfully expounds the authorial intent of a single scripture passage in its context (2 Timothy 2:15)
2. **Application** – since Scripture was inspired by God for the purpose of transforming His people throughout all ages (Romans 15:4; 2 Timothy 3:16-17), the sermon must contain application relevant to the contemporary audience which is reflective of the meaning of the Scripture text.
3. **Redemptive** – since the person and work of Jesus Christ is the hermeneutical key to Scripture and the decisive point of redemptive history (Luke 24; Galatians 4:4-5), exposition and application must point to, draw from, and depend upon His person and work. This may done in numerous ways within a sermon, taking into account the preaching occasion (context, audience, pastoral purpose, etc.) as well as the specific Scripture text. The primary basis to determine your redemptive angle (or “Christ focus”) will be determined by your Scripture text.
4. **Clarity** – choice of words and phrases, appropriate and compelling language, clarity of sermon points or movements, ability to be followed by listeners, elocution, etc. should be clear. Clarity is greatly enhanced by recapitulation and transitional statements.
5. **Delivery** – voice, gestures, eye contact, absence of distracting elements.

Each student is to read his Scripture text, followed by a prayer for illumination, before beginning his sermon. The reading of Scripture is a distinct element of worship, not buried inside the sermon after the introduction or later.

While illustrations are not listed above, good illustrations are great aids to the listener. The best illustrations are ones which further expound the meaning of the text. Illustrations should not drive the exposition, be distracting, cause the listener to stumble, overshadow the exposition of the Scripture text or be emotionally manipulative. Good illustrations are often vivid in life detail, giving just enough to capture the imagination of the listeners, but without too much extraneous detail which would attract more attention to the story than the point being made. Above all, they should actually illustrate the point being made and should be fashioned in such a way that they draw the listeners attention to the point. It’s especially important to formulate a clear tie-in statement to the point

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<sup>1</sup> This page is an adaptation from the Communications course taught by Professor Michael Glodo of Reformed Theological Seminary in Orlando.

being illustrated. Writing out such statements help ensure that you as well as your hearers know what the point is.

Visual aids such as film clips or PowerPoint slides are NOT permitted in this course. The proclamation of the Gospel (*kerygma*) should be distinguished from straight teaching (*didache*) which should both be utterly distinguished from entertainment or from the prioritizing of form over substance. While there is a continuum between *kerygma* and *didache* and while good proclamation contains some teaching and vice-versa, the preacher should always keep in mind that he is God's herald proclaiming the Good News of the Gospel as it's found in Jesus Christ. We must try to remember that it is the medium — the foolishness of the preached Word — which keeps us from voiding the power of God (1 Corinthians 1:17-18).

As this is an academic course, each student will footnote their sermon manuscripts with any references they use from any other written text, audio or internet source.

You should dress appropriately when you preach. I don't prescribe a dress code, but let your appearance reflect your own sense of the task and the context in which you would normally preach. Bear in mind that your sermon video may be of some use in your future candidating.

In that regard, the question of intended audience comes up. A preaching lab is somewhat artificial by nature. Nevertheless, each of us are sinners in need of the grace of God which comes especially through the preached Word (WSC 89, 90). Preach not as to a classroom, but to an assembly of believers needing God's grace.

After each sermon, I'll lead the class in a discussion of the strengths and areas of possible improvement of the sermon. You will also receive written feedback from each classmate and me. Attached is a sample evaluation form that will be used in this class.

## **ATTENDANCE & PARTICIPATION**

Pastors readily reflect that some of the most important lessons learned in seminary were learned from classmates. Preaching labs rely heavily on the range of impressions received by classmates and shared during feedback. Further, seeing more faces in the room is a help to preaching well. You will receive the blessing of feedback from classmates; therefore it is incumbent on you to return that blessing by being present to hear them preach — especially in the weeks before the break and at the end of the semester. Therefore a portion of the final grade will be allotted to attendance and participation in the listening and feedback process.

## **LEADING IN PRAYER**

The ministry of public prayer is rapidly declining in North American worship (this might be so in other contexts, but this is the one with which I'm most familiar). The decline is reflected in ...

1. The absence of purpose for particular prayers and their functions within public worship;
2. The decreasing proportion of time spent in prayer in public worship;
3. The abandonment of public prayer by ministers of the Word and the handing over of that role to musicians and others without adequate understanding or training in the relationship of public prayer to the ministry of the Word;
4. Increased interest in fixed liturgies.

Most RTS students have not experienced practiced, sound ministries of public prayer before or during seminary. This absence of examples further perpetuates the decline without conscious efforts to the contrary.

Each class will open and close with prayer and each student will lead in said prayer over the course of the semester.

## PASTORAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Your Pastor is a great source of resources for the ministry of the Word. The more preaching one does, the more one learns how to be a good communicator of the Gospel. Students preparing for the ministry of the Word should tap into their pastor for patterns, and guidelines on the regular daily, weekly, monthly, even annual ways in which they prepare for their pulpit ministry. Provided below is a list of sample questions that you are to consider for your interview. Prepare your own list of questions before meeting with your pastor.

- **Your Name:**
  - **Your Pastor whom you interviewed:**
  - **Name and address of the Church:**
  - **Denomination:**
1. How far ahead do you plan out your sermons/instruction?
  2. What is your weekly schedule in preparation for the coming Sunday's sermon?
  3. How many hours out of your week do you spend on sermon/instruction preparation? What would be ideal?
  4. Do you rehearse the sermon before Sunday morning?
  5. How much of the material that you research is **not** incorporated into the actual message itself?
  6. What is the rationale for the themes/books (of the Bible) that you choose to preach?
  7. What are some of the struggles that you face as a preaching pastor?
  8. What would make you change your scheduled outline of sermons, if at all?
  9. What were some of the mistakes you have made in your preaching ministry? Successes?
  10. As you assess the needs within the congregation, how much do you try and address these needs in your preparation (application)?
  11. What manuscript/notes do you take up with you onto the pulpit when you preach on Sunday mornings?
  12. How do you assess/evaluate your own preaching ministry?

## COMMUNICATIONS 1 PREACHING BOOKS READING REPORT <sup>2</sup>

- **Your Name:**
- **Title and Author of Book:**
- **Report:**
  1. Overview - Give a brief overview of the book, including its theme, perspective and approach.
  2. Critique - Offer a brief critique of the book, including elements of strength and weakness.
  3. Application - Offer some specific application to your own ministry demonstrating the value and relevance of the material in this book.
  4. Best Quotes – Write significant quotes as you come across them and write a brief paragraph explaining why you found this to be significant (minimum of 5 needed).

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<sup>2</sup> This form is an adaptation from the Communications course taught by Professor Larry Kirk of Reformed Theological Seminary in Orlando.

## PREACHING EVALUATION FORM<sup>3</sup>

Speaker: \_\_\_\_\_ Evaluator: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Sermon Title: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Text: \_\_\_\_\_ Occasion: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Place: \_\_\_\_\_ Start Time: \_\_\_\_\_  
 End Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Total Time: \_\_\_\_\_

### CONTENT OF THE MESSAGE

#### **Introduction**

Did it grab my attention?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Did he give me a reason to listen?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Did he give me a problem (F.C.F) from the text?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Did he read the Scripture clearly?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

#### **The Preaching Point**

Was a clear point to the message presented?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Was the point important?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Was the sermon what the text is about?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

#### **The Body of the Message**

What were the major points of the outline?

What illustrations were used?

How clear were the points?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Were the transitions smooth?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
How well did he explain the points?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Was the exegesis belabored?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Did the exegesis aid rather than impress?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
How well did he prove the points?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
How well did he apply the points?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Was the application relevant?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Was the message tactful?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Was the message clearly rooted in Scripture?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Did the illustrations enhance the points?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Was the message interesting?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Were Christological truths clearly presented?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

<sup>3</sup> This form is taken from Preaching that Changes Lives by Michael Fabarez and the Homiletics Analysis Sheet by Bryan Chapell

**Conclusion**

How well did he summarize the message?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
How clearly did he restate the main point?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Did he end with a punch?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
- was there a definite, purposed, pointed end?										

**Audience Response**

How well did he relate to the audience?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Did he have the material mastered?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Did he stay in control?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Did he have thorough, well-balanced eye contact?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

**Voice Quality**

How was the volume of his voice?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
How well did he articulate his words?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
How fluent was he? (“uhs,” “ums”)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Did he use effective inflections?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Did he use a powerful vocabulary?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

**Body Language**

Did he have good gestures?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
How was his posture?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Was he animated?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

**COMMENTS**

How effective do you think this sermon will be at prompting people to become doers of the Word?

What were the most effective or “life-changing” aspects of this message?

How might this sermon be improved?

# COMMUNICATIONS 1 STUDENT SURVEY<sup>4</sup>

*To be completed and turned in on the first day of class*

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

I have preached in an actual church worship service approximately \_\_\_\_\_ times.

Up to this point in time, I have taught or spoken publicly (counting all opportunities)

Check One:

- Quite a bit
- Several Times
- A Limited Number of Times

At this point in time, Lord willing,

- I have a strong sense of call to a preaching/teaching ministry.
- I expect to preach and teach as a supplemental aspect of what I expect I will be doing after I graduate.
- I'll use my time in seminary to better discern what role public ministry might have in my future.

For me individually, the hardest part of preaching is

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One subject I would like us to discuss some time in class this semester is

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<sup>4</sup>This page is an adaptation from the Communications course taught by Professor Michael Glodo of Reformed Theological Seminary in Orlando.