COMMUNICATIONS 6PT508/10

COURSE SYLLABUS

Fall 2015
Tuesday, 1:00 pm to 5:00 pm
September 1 to December 8

Guest Faculty in Practical Theology (Preaching): Dr. David V. Silvernail, Jr.
Email: dsilvernail@potomachills.org

- **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.

  o **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 preaching / teaching.

  o **Communication lab**
    ✓ To provide opportunities for students to prepare and deliver sermons / lessons.
    ✓ To provide instructor and peer evaluation on sermons / lessons as delivered.

The focus of this course is not on the history and philosophy of preaching/teaching, although there will 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 principial. 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.
### Course Objectives Related to MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes

Course: 6PT508/510  
Professor: Dr. Silvernail  
Campus: Washington DC  
Date: 5/19/15

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes</th>
<th>Rubric</th>
<th>Mini-Justification</th>
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<tr>
<td>In order to measure the success of the MDiv curriculum, RTS has defined the following as the intended outcomes of the student learning process. Each course contributes to these overall outcomes. This rubric shows the contribution of this course to the MDiv outcomes. *As the MDiv is the core degree at RTS, the MDiv rubric will be used in this syllabus.</td>
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| Articulation (oral & written) | Strong | 1. Students will preach two sermons  
2. Students will submit 6 book reports and 11 chapter exercises |
| Broadly understands and articulates knowledge, both oral and written, of essential biblical, theological, historical, and cultural/global information, including details, concepts, and frameworks. |
| Scripture | Strong | 1. Students will preach from an Epistle (Romans) and a Gospel (John). They will have to demonstrate faithfulness to the text in their sermons. |
| Significant knowledge of the original meaning of Scripture. Also, the concepts for and skill to research further into the original meaning of Scripture and to apply Scripture to a variety of modern circumstances. (Includes appropriate use of original languages and hermeneutics; and integrates theological, historical, and cultural/global perspectives.) |
| Reformed Theology | Moderate | 1. Students will read and discuss the Biblical and theological principles of homiletics. |
| Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards. |
| Sanctification | Moderate | 1. Students will not only preach twice, but will hear the Word of God preached approx. 30 times during the course. |
| Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student’s sanctification. |
| Desire for Worldview | Minimal | 1. Students will work on appropriate life application in their preaching. |
| Burning desire to conform all of life to the Word of God. |
| Winsomely Reformed | Embraces a winsomely Reformed ethos. (Includes an appropriate ecumenical spirit with other Christians, especially Evangelicals; a concern to present the Gospel in a God-honoring manner to non-Christians; and a truth-in-love attitude in disagreements.) | Moderate | 1. Students will be critiqued by the class and will have to submit written evaluation of each student sermon. They will learn to do this in an honest but constructive manner. |
| Preach | Ability to preach and teach the meaning of Scripture to both heart and mind with clarity and enthusiasm. | Strong | 1. This is the primary purpose of the course. |
| Worship | Knowledgeable of historic and modern Christian-worship forms; and ability to construct and skill to lead a worship service. | Minimal | 1. As preaching is intricately connected to worship; but the focus is on the preaching process rather than the worship service as a whole.  
2. Student will open and close each class in prayer. |
| Shepherd | Ability to shepherd the local congregation: aiding in spiritual maturity; promoting use of gifts and callings; and encouraging a concern for non-Christians, both in America and worldwide. | Moderate | 1. Most pastoral ministry (shepherding, counseling, etc) begins with the exposition of God’s Word. There will be emphasis on ministering to the congregation through the use of appropriate life application. |
| Church/World | Ability to interact within a denominational context, within the broader worldwide church, and with significant public issues. | Minimal | 1. Students come from a variety of denominational backgrounds, and will learn how to work with others; even though the course is taught within the context of a Presbyterian and Reformed ecclesiology. |
• **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.


2090 Total Pages

• **REQUIREMENTS:**

  o **ATTENDANCE:** Each student is required to attend each class. If you know you cannot make it to a class session, notify me in advance. 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 the other students 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.
• **ALL WRITTEN WORK SHOULD HAVE NAME, DATE, COURSE, AND ASSIGNMENT LISTED IN THE HEADER AS FOLLOWS:**

  Name of Student: Communications 6PT508/10  
  September 1, 2015: Helm Reading Report

• **ALL WRITTEN WORK IS TO BE SUBMITTED IN MICROSOFT WORD (NO PDF’S).**

• **ALL WRITTEN WORK IS TO BE SUBMITTED IN TIMES NEW ROMAN, 12 POINT, DOUBLE-SPACED, ONE INCH MARGINS.**

• **AS THIS IS AN ACADEMIC COURSE, EACH STUDENT WILL FOOTNOTE ALL THEIR WORK (INCLUDING SERMON MANUSCRIPTS) WITH ANY REFERENCES THEY USE FROM ANY OTHER WRITTEN TEXT, AUDIO, OR INTERNET SOURCE.** Plagiarism is a Serious Violation of Academic Standards and will result in a grade of zero for that assignment. A second violation will result in a referral to the Academic Dean for Disciplinary Action.

• **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 (at least one paragraph per question) 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 (approximately three pages) following the form provided below. Students are to answer those questions and turn them in on the date that book is covered in class.

• **FOR THE COMMUNICATIONS LAB….**

  ➢ **Illustration File:** Each student will gather a preaching illustration from events since the last class. These illustrations cannot come from the required reading or any other books related to preaching, 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 one 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 didactic passage in the Epistle to the Romans.

Sermon #2: Student will deliver a sermon/instruction based on a narrative passage in the Gospel of John.

- Each sermon/instruction is to be approximately 25 minutes.
- A two 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 these sermons or instructional settings before the class. The sermon/instruction will be evaluated by the instructor and the other students who will make both verbal and written comments. After grading and review, all written comments will be returned to the student.

Due Dates of Assignments:

- Chapell Reading Report Due September 8 – October 20 (weekly)
- Preaching Books Report Due September 1; October 6; October 27 – December 8 (weekly)
- Romans Sermon / Lesson Due date by sign-up in class
- John Sermon / Lesson Due date by sign-up in class

Total Grade: You will receive two grades, one for the Class, a second for the Lab.

For Communication Class
- Reading Report #1: 40% of total grade
- Reading Report #2: 30% of total grade
- Class Participation: 30% of total grade

For Communication Lab
- Romans Sermon/Instruction: 30% of total grade
- John Sermon/Instruction: 30% of total grade
- Sermon Evaluations: 20% of total grade
- Illustration File: 20% of total grade
• **GRADING SCALE:** The standard RTS grading scale will be used:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Score Range</th>
<th>GPA</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>(97-100)</td>
<td>4.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>A -</td>
<td>(94-96)</td>
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<td>C</td>
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<td>C -</td>
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<td>D -</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>(below 70)</td>
<td>0.00</td>
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• **LATE ASSIGNMENTS:** Late assignments will be dropped one grade on the above scale for each week they are late. For example, an assignment that is four weeks late will be dropped from an A to a B -. Late and Missing assignments are the primary reason for low course grades.

• **OFFICE HOURS:**

  o By appointment at the RTS office or you may contact the instructor to setup a time and place.

• **CONTACT INFORMATION FOR DR. SILVERNAI L:** If you have questions, cannot attend a class, or need any further assistance, please don’t hesitate to contact me.

  Address:    Potomac Hills Presbyterian Church  
                2 Cardinal Park Drive, SE Suite 101A  
                Leesburg, VA 20175

  Office #:   (703) 771-1534

  Home #:     (703) 777-5795 (evenings)

  Email:      dsilvernail@potomachills.org *(best way to reach me)*

A brief biography of Dr. Silvernail is available at  
[http://www.potomachills.org/dr-david-silvernail](http://www.potomachills.org/dr-david-silvernail)
# CLASS SCHEDULE
(Schedule will be adjusted according to the number of students registered for the course)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>September 1</th>
<th>Reading</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Introduction to the Course</td>
<td>Helm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Introduction to Preaching</td>
<td>Ash</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Gathering Preaching Illustrations</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Selection of Sermon Passages</td>
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<tr>
<th>September 8</th>
<th>Reading</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5. Word and Witness</td>
<td>Chapell, chapter 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Preaching Illustrations</td>
<td>Chapell, chapter 2,</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Obligations of the Sermon</td>
<td>Appendices 1-3</td>
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<tr>
<th>September 15</th>
<th>Reading</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8. The Priority of the Text</td>
<td>Chapell, chapter 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. Preaching Illustrations</td>
<td>Chapell, chapter 4</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. Components of Exposition</td>
<td>Chapell, chapter 4</td>
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<tr>
<th>September 22</th>
<th>Reading</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11. The Process of Explanation</td>
<td>Chapell, chapter 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>12. Preaching Illustrations</td>
<td>Chapell, chapter 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Student Sermons – 10 Five Minute Extemporaneous Talks</td>
<td>Chapell, chapter 6</td>
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<tr>
<td>14. Outlining and Structure</td>
<td>Chapell, chapter 6</td>
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<tr>
<th>September 29</th>
<th>Reading</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15. The Pattern of Illustration</td>
<td>Chapell, chapter 7</td>
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<tr>
<td>16. Student Sermons – Romans</td>
<td>Chapell, chapter 7</td>
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<tr>
<td>17. Preaching Illustrations</td>
<td>Chapell, chapter 7</td>
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<tr>
<td>18. Student Sermons – Romans</td>
<td>Chapell, chapter 7</td>
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<tr>
<th>October 6</th>
<th>Reading</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No Class — Reading Week</td>
<td>Pelton (report due Oct. 13)</td>
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<tr>
<th>October 13</th>
<th>Reading</th>
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<tr>
<td>19. The Pattern of Application</td>
<td>Chapell, chapter 8</td>
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<tr>
<td>20. Student Sermons – Romans</td>
<td>Chapell, chapter 8</td>
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<tr>
<td>21. Preaching Illustrations</td>
<td>Chapell, chapter 8</td>
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<tr>
<td>22. Introductions, Conclusions, and Transitions</td>
<td>Chapell, chapter 9</td>
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<tr>
<td>23. Student Sermons – Romans</td>
<td>Chapell, chapter 9</td>
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<th>October 20</th>
<th>Reading</th>
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<tr>
<td>24. A Redemptive Approach to Preaching</td>
<td>Chapell, chapter 10 &amp; 11</td>
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<tr>
<td>25. Student Sermons – Romans</td>
<td>Chapell, chapter 10 &amp; 11</td>
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<tr>
<td>26. Preaching Illustrations</td>
<td>Chapell, chapter 10 &amp; 11</td>
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<tr>
<td>27. Student Sermons – Romans</td>
<td>Chapell, chapter 10 &amp; 11</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
**October 27**
28. Developing Redemptive Sermons #1  
29. Student Sermons – Romans  
30. Preaching Illustrations  
31. Student Sermons – Romans

**November 3**
32. Developing Redemptive Sermons #2  
33. Student Sermons – Romans  
34. Preaching Illustrations  
35. Student Sermons – Romans

**November 10**
36. Preaching in a Post-Modern Culture #1  
37. 5 Five Minute Wedding Homilies –  
38. Preaching Illustrations  
39. 5 Five Minute Funeral Homilies –

**November 17**
40. Preaching in a Post-Modern Culture #2  
41. Student Sermons – John  
42. Preaching Illustrations  
43. Student Sermons – John

**November 24**
44. Preaching to the Heart / Engaging the Imagination  
45. Student Sermons – John  
46. Preaching Illustrations  
47. Preaching to Women  
48. Student Sermons – John

**December 1**
49. Student Sermons – John  
50. Preaching to Multi-Ethnic / Diverse Congregations  
51. Student Sermons – John  
52. Student Sermons – John

**December 8**
53. Student Sermons – John  
54. Connecting to Christ / Answering the Why Question  
55. Student Sermons – John  
56. Student Sermons – John
EXPOSITORY SERMONS

Each student will preach two expository sermons. 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 be 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 being illustrated. Writing out such statements help ensure that you as well as your hearers know what the point is.

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

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 sermons 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. For male students, the context for preaching each sermon is that of a local church worship service. For female students, the context of teaching each lesson is that of a local church women’s retreat. If you have any questions, please see the instructor prior to the presentation of the sermon / lesson.

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.

**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 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 prayers over the course of the semester.**
COMMUNICATIONS 1
PREACHING BOOKS READING REPORT

Standard Header (per example below):

Name of Student
Communications 6PT508/10
September 2, 2014
Helm Reading Report

Title of Book

1. **Overview** – Give a brief overview of the book, including its theme, perspective and approach. (approximately ½ page)

2. **Critique** – Offer a brief critique of the book, including elements of strength and weakness. (approximately 1 page)

3. **Application** – Offer some specific application to your own ministry demonstrating the value and relevance of the material in this book. (approximately 1 page)

4. **Best Quotes** – Write significant quotes (single spaced; note page number in book where quote is found) as you come across them and write a brief paragraph about each quote explaining why you found this to be significant (**minimum of 3 needed**). (approximately ½ page).

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2 This form is an adaptation from the Communications course taught by Professor Larry Kirk of Reformed Theological Seminary in Orlando.
Professor’s Use: Grade for Speaker ________ Grade for Evaluator ________

PREACHING EVALUATION FORM

Speaker: ___________________________ Evaluator: ___________________________
Date: ___________________________ Sermon Title: ___________________________
Text: ___________________________ ___________________________
Start Time: ___________________________ End Time: ___________________________

CONTENT OF THE MESSAGE

Introduction
Did it grab my attention? A  B  C  D  F
Did he read the Scripture clearly? A  B  C  D  F
Did he give me a problem (F.C.F) from the text? A  B  C  D  F
- What was it?

The Preaching Point (“The Big Idea”) 
Was a clear point to the message presented? A  B  C  D  F
Was the point evident throughout the sermon? A  B  C  D  F
Was the sermon what the text is about? A  B  C  D  F

The Content of the Message
What were the major points of the outline? (List them)

How well did he explain the points? A  B  C  D  F
How well did he prove the points? A  B  C  D  F
How well did he point me back to the text? A  B  C  D  F
Did the exegesis aid rather than impress? A  B  C  D  F

Application
How well did he apply the points? A  B  C  D  F
Was the application relevant? A  B  C  D  F
What were the most effective or “life-changing” aspects of this message?

Illustrations
Did the illustrations enhance the points? A  B  C  D  F
What illustrations were used? (List them)
Conclusion
How well did he summarize the message? A B C D F
How clearly did he restate the main point? A B C D F
Was there a definite, purposed, pointed end?
- What was it? (summarize in one phrase)

Delivery
Did he use short, easy to follow sentences? A B C D F
Did he feel/sound natural and conversational? A B C D F
Did he use repetition for clarity and emphasis? A B C D F
Were the transitions smooth? A B C D F
Did he have good gestures? A B C D F
Was he animated? A B C D F

Voice Quality
How was the volume of his voice? A B C D F
How well did he articulate his words? A B C D F
How fluent was he? (“uh,” “ums”) A B C D F
Was there variation in pitch or pace?
   (High/Low; Fast/Slow; Loud/Soft) A B C D F

Audience Response
How well did he relate to the audience? A B C D F
How well did he hold the audience’s attention? A B C D F
Did he have thorough, well-balanced eye contact? A B C D F

Overall Grade: A B C D F

COMMENTS 3

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

Was Jesus Christ central to the ideas and application of this sermon? How so?

How might this sermon be improved?

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3 This form is adapted from Preaching that Changes Lives by Fabarez: “The Homiletics Analysis Sheet” by Chapell; and “The Sermon Feedback Form” in Saving Eutychus by Millar & Campbell.
COMMUNICATIONS 1
STUDENT SURVEY

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
(Do not count youth group or other ministry opportunities).

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 the ministry 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

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

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

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

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