

# Homiletics

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The Apostle Paul explained the challenge with uncharacteristic clarity and brevity—“How are they to believe in one of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone to proclaim?” (Romans 10:14). Homiletics trains believers to be proclaimers. Building on the foundation of theology, ethics, Church history, and Biblical studies, students learn how to have something to say that is worth hearing, and how to say it well enough to be truly heard. Two courses in homiletics are required in the Master of Divinity curriculum, one in the Middler and one in the senior year. Each course is a mix of lecture and preaching groups, during which students offer sermons of their own for feedback and critique.

## Courses

### **HOML 510 Advanced Preaching (3)**

Advanced Preaching builds the student's capacity to preach effectively in the context of Anglican worship, refine her or his voice, and expand the student's homiletical repertoire. Along with extensive opportunity for practice and critique, the course introduces students to classic and contemporary rhetorical and homiletical theories and models. Particular attention is paid to homiletical form, style, and delivery, and to the various special occasions outside the Sunday Eucharist at which homilies are delivered.

### **HOML 530 Fundamentals of Preaching (3)**

Fundamentals of Preaching introduces students to the basic theory and practice of homiletics in the Anglican Tradition. The course assists the student in the discovery of her or his preaching voice, and provides the student with significant occasions for exploration of varied expressions of excellent preaching, while also affording multiple opportunities to recite, speak, and preach before fellow students and the professor. Particular attention is given to homiletical exegesis, homiletical form, preaching style, and sermon delivery, with concentration primarily on preaching for the principal Sunday service.

### **HOML 531 History of Anglican Preaching (3)**

The History of Anglican Preaching explores the tradition of preaching in the Church of England, the Episcopal Church, and across the Anglican Communion from the English Reformation to the present day. The course will use basic texts in church history and works on social history and on reception theory, in addition to the sermons of important figures in Anglican history. The student will learn the place and practice of preaching in the Anglican Communion, the changes in the practice of preaching over time, and how those changes reflect and shaped history.

### **HOML 534 Parables and Preaching (3)**

Parables and Preaching explores the parables of Jesus, the rabbis, the desert fathers and mothers, and world literature (Kafka, Borges, Kierkegaard, and others) as texts to be interpreted and texts to be proclaimed. Particular attention is given to preaching the parables of Jesus, and examining the implications of Jesus' parables for preaching in general. Texts include works by Dodd, Scott or Hultgren, Brosend, and Lowry.

### **HOML 535 History of Modern Preaching (Truth through Personality: The Beecher Lectures and American Preaching) (3)**

Beginning with excerpts from the lectures of Henry Ward Beecher and Phillips Brooks, this seminar uses the Beecher Lectures of Yale Divinity School as a basis for examining the history and practice of preaching in the United States, with emphasis on the post-war period, to expose students to the richness and diversity of homiletical theory and equip them to incorporate this wisdom into their practice. The lectures of Fosdick, Craddock, Buechner, Tribble, Brueggemann, Proctor, the Buttricks, and Taylor will be read and discussed, and sermons by most of the lecturers reviewed and examined.

### **HOML 536 Preaching the Old Testament (3)**

Preaching the Old Testament focuses on homiletical exegesis of Old Testament texts, and the faithful proclamation of the Word of God from a foundation of texts from the Torah, the Prophets, and the Writings. The work of Davis, Brueggemann, Harrelson and others will be examined from a theoretical and practical perspective, and students will offer a set of sermons exploring critical themes, characters, and issues from the Old Testament.

### **HOML 537 Rowan Williams, Preacher and Theologian (3)**

This seminar will explore the theological themes, concepts and events in the sermons and occasional writings of Rowan Williams. The course traces a trajectory informed by the liturgical calendar and christology: incarnation, transfiguration, crucifixion, resurrection and the empty tomb, ascension, eucharist, ecclesiology and eschatology. Assigned readings will be a mixture of preaching documents (sermon manuscripts and video recordings) and published theological writings: *On Christian Theology*, *Resurrection: Interpreting the Easter Gospel*, *Tokens of Trust*, and *A Ray of Darkness: Sermons and Reflections*.) Careful reading of assigned texts, seminar discussions, leadership of those discussions and written exercises of various lengths will constitute the work of this course.

### **HOML 538 Preaching Against Violence (3)**

The redemption of human violence is at the heart of the Christian belief and practice. This course takes up violence and its transformation through close readings of contemporary homiletic theory and theological discourse. The preparation and delivery of a cycle of sermons on the Triduum (Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and the Easter Vigil) and a theological reflection on those sermons integrates theological reflection with homiletical practice. This course also has the attribute of THEO. *Prerequisite: HOML 530.*

**HOML 539 Language for Preaching (3)**

The difficulty of speaking about God generates and limits homiletical speech. Readings are drawn from linguistics, theology and literature in order to gain perspective on the habits and limits of language. The creation, presentation and revision of weekly writing assignments cultivate writing cognizant of these challenges and shaped for preaching. Sermons preached for the feasts of the Ascension, Pentecost and Trinity Sunday integrate the difficulty of speaking about God with the practice of preaching.

**HOML 594 Directed Readings (1 to 4)**

A Homiletics topic developed by the student and a School of Theology faculty member to meet an educational goal not met through existing courses.

**HOML 601 Preaching in the Liturgical Tradition (3)**

This course will explore the distinctive historical, theological, and homiletical features of preaching within Anglican and other liturgical traditions. Special attention will be paid to key figures and moments in the history of preaching, to the development of the student's own theology of preaching in her or his own tradition, and to the contemporary practice of preaching within those traditions. Students will present sermons in class as a part of their graded work.

**HOML 605 Theology of Preaching for the 21st Century (3)**

How is Christian preaching a theological endeavor? This course will focus upon a theology of preaching - how does Christian theology empower, authorize, and sustain Christian proclamation? There will also be consideration of the function of our theologies in preaching. How do our claims about God inform and give substance to our sermons?.

**HOML 606 The Old Testament in Christian Preaching (3)**

The Old Testament in Christian Preaching focuses on homiletical exegesis of Old Testament texts, and the faithful proclamation of the Word of God from a foundation of texts from the Torah, the Prophets, and the Writings. The work of Robert Alter, Ellen Davis, Walter Brueggemann, and others will be closely read from a theoretical and practical perspective, and students will watch and critique sermons by master preachers, before preaching in class sermons exploring critical themes, characters, and issues from the Old Testament.

**HOML 607 Advanced Liturgical Preaching (3)**

Advanced Liturgical Preaching will focus on contemporary preaching in Anglican and other liturgical traditions. Building on the foundation of "Preaching in the Liturgical Tradition" students will: (1) reflect on the place of the sermon in contemporary eucharistic worship; (2) identify a contemporary preacher whose work they will study; (3a) write a research paper on a figure or topic in contemporary liturgical preaching; or (3b) submit a sermon series of at least three sermons that models an effective approach to preaching in the context of the eucharist.

**HOML 608 The Spirituality of Preaching (3)**

This course will focus on three aspects of the spirituality of preaching. Through lectures, discussions and reflective exercises participants will: Identify and explore their own experience of grace in the exercise of the preaching vocation, considering the question "How is the saving action of God shaping my life through the demands of this calling?" Consider the craft of sermon preparation as an exercise of co-creativity with God, exploring ways to identify images, motifs, metaphors and symbols that are replete with transformative power. Practice will be gained in forms of meditation and reflection that could lead to a deeper engagement of the heart in sermon preparation. Explore the transformative intentionality of their preaching enterprise. Participants will be encouraged to frame preaching in terms of spiritual formation, exploring the kinds of transformations they hope to support and incite in their listeners. How do they want their preaching to contribute to the shaping and reshaping of their congrega.

**HOML 609 Preaching Feasts: A Theological Approach to Holy Days (3)**

The major feasts of the liturgical year offer the preacher extraordinary opportunities to "do theology" from the pulpit. In this course we will discuss major theological themes, from incarnation to eschatology, and develop a homiletical strategy for exploring these themes while preaching on feast days. Students will share leadership for discussion, and preach sermons that apply and demonstrate their own homiletical strategy for preaching feasts.

**HOML 610 Jesus, Paul, and Preaching (3)**

The homiletical task is to proclaim the good news. That is what Jesus and Paul did. But how did they do so? What was the context in which they did so, and how can we best understand their contexts and proclamation, and apply them to our own contexts? New Testament and Homiletics scholars AJ Levine and Bill Brosend join to explore and share their understandings of how Jesus and Paul proclaimed the good news in their Second Temple contexts, and lead participants in imagining how to proclaim the good news today.

**HOML 611 The Art in Preaching: Using Fiction and Poetry in Sermons (3)**

The playwright John Shea says, "We turn our pain into narrative so we can bear it; we turn our ecstasy into narrative so we can prolong it. We tell our stories to live." As humans, we make meaning through narrative. When Jesus was asked questions, he told stories. The objectives of this course are to deepen students' ability to analyze fiction and poetry from a theological perspective and to improve their capacity to incorporate stories and images into their sermons.

**HOML 612 The Rhetoric of Proclamation (3)**

This course is a workshop in sermon preparation and delivery. Each student prepares and presents a minimum of three sermons for class critique and discussion, with particular focus on sermon structure and form, style, and delivery. Attention is given to the development of illustrative material, storytelling, improvisation, and facility with a variety of preaching styles.