

Austin Graduate School of Theology

**MIN 6303
From Text to Sermon
Spring 2017
Thursdays 4:00-6:40**

SYLLABUS

Instructor:

Dr. Stan Reid
Office #113
512-476-2772 x113 (office)

reid@austingrad.edu
Available by appointment
512-672-9800 (mobile and text)

Course Description from the AGST Catalog:

From Text to Sermon: Intensive examination of exegetical preaching with practice in the identification of a sermon focus from the biblical text, development of the focus into a sermon text incorporating one's exegesis, and delivery of the message in a manner appropriate to the text.

MATS Student Outcomes Supported by the Course

1. The student will interpret passages of the Old and New Testaments in light of their literary, historical, and theological contexts.
2. The student will articulate the fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith, reflecting knowledge of major theological traditions (e.g., Catholic, Lutheran, Reformed, Methodist, Baptist, Stone-Campbell).
3. The student will demonstrate a readiness to serve as a minister or lay teacher as informed by biblical and theological understanding of ministry.
4. The student will prepare papers, sermons, classes, and other assignments, employing research tools such as bibliographic indices and databases in biblical and theological studies (ATLA Religion Index, NT/OT Abstracts, etc.).

Course Objectives:

1. As the capstone course for the MATS program, the student will write a sermon based on an exegesis written by the student that demonstrates mastery of the exegetical, theological, and hermeneutical standards developed through successful completion of other courses in the MATS curriculum.
2. The exegesis for the sermon will be one that was previously submitted and that earned a minimum grade of B in an exegetically intensive course. The student's exegesis for MIN 6303 should incorporate any corrections or suggestions for improvement offered by the professor of the exegetically intensive course. It should also incorporate learning gained from the Craddock and Long reading assignments for MIN 6303 Class Sessions 2 & 3.
3. The student's sermon preparation will be attentive to the interpretative resources found in the major theological traditions, and the sermon will attend to a Christian doctrine found

in the biblical text by drawing on insights gleaned from biblical and systematic theologies.

4. The student's sermon will be used as a measurement of the student's mastery of essential skills for preaching and teaching.
5. The student's sermon preparation will demonstrate that adequate attention has been given to the resources available in a theological library and necessary for responsible sermon preparation and delivery. The student will also be given direction toward the development of a personal theological library, which is critical for a ministry of preaching and teaching in the church.
6. The course will focus on one model of sermon preparation, i.e., Wilson's "Four Pages of the Sermon." That model strives for sermon unity by focusing on one text, developing one theme from that text, attending to one Christian doctrine in the text, identifying one human need based on the text, incorporating one image or refrain to help the listener remember the text and message, and finding how God invites Christians and churches to actively join God's ongoing mission in the world.
7. The student will learn that the gospel carries both a word of judgment and a word of grace, but that it is not gospel unless grace gets the last word.
8. The student will be aware of how easy it is to stumble into moralism and know how to avoid it in the sermon by focusing on God-centered action where the listeners are called to join what God is doing in the world.

Means of Assessment: (Note: All writing assignments are to be typed.)

1. **Reading summaries (20% of grade):** The student will write summaries of designated reading assignments of 2 pages or less and single-spaced.
 - a. The reading summaries are to be in the form of notations and should be presented in outline or bullet point format.
 - b. Template for submitted assignments:
 - i. Name of student.
 - ii. Date and number of the class session on which the assignment is due.
 - iii. A title reflecting the content of the assignment
 - iv. A footer with the page number
 - v. See examples below:
 1. Example 1
 - a. Student name
 - b. January 26
 - c. Class Session 2
 - d. Summary of Wilson "Introduction & Chapter 1"
 - e. (Footer) Page X of X.
 2. Example 2
 - a. Student Name
 - b. February 2
 - c. Class Session 3
 - d. Synthesis and Summary of Long, "Chapter 3" and Craddock, "Chapter 6"
 - e. (Footer) Page X of X.

2. **Preparation Stages (20% of grade):** A rough draft reflecting development of each of the sermon preparation stages (e.g., Getting Started-Monday; Page One-Tuesday; Page Two-Wednesday; Page Three-Thursday; Page Four-Friday) will be submitted. This can be presented as bullet points. It will be a work in progress over the first few weeks and will likely be revised as the student progresses in preparation.
3. **Class participation (10% of grade):** Class participation is a vital aspect of this learning experience. There can be too much as well as too little participation. Discussion should add a constructive dimension to the learning experience.
4. **Final Sermon Manuscript (25% of grade):** The final sermon will be a manuscript of no more than 10 double-spaced pages. It will be organized with an Introduction (1 page or less), “page one” (2 pages or less), “page two” (2 pages or less), “page three” (2 pages or less), “page four” (2 pages or less), a Conclusion (1 page or less).
5. **Oral Presentation (25% of grade):** The final sermon will be presented before a panel of evaluators and cannot be longer than 20 minutes.

Textbooks: Paul Scott Wilson, *The Four Pages of the Sermon*; Shirley Guthrie, *Christian Doctrine* (revised edition).

Library: No books have been put on reserve in the library. If a book you need is checked out, please see Dr. Hall or Mrs. Byers in the library and they will recall the book.

Note: The student should maintain a personal file of all work submitted for grading.

Class Calendar and Schedule

1. Session 1—JAN 19

- a. Introductions.
 - i. Personal.
 - ii. Course.
 1. The Capstone Course for the MATS Program.
 2. Review the Syllabus and overview the course.
- b. Selection of biblical texts to be assigned as the preaching text.
 - i. An exegesis of the passage should be submitted (TBD).
 - ii. Review the AGST “Guide for Writing an Exegesis.”
http://austingrad.edu/images/Resources/student/Exegesis_Guide.pdf
 - iii. Review the AGST “QEP Exegesis Scoring Rubric.”
<http://austingrad.edu/images/Resources/student/AGST%20Exegesis%20Scoring%20Rubric-1.pdf>
 - iv. Review the AGST “Message Scoring Rubric.”
<http://austingrad.edu/images/Resources/student/AGST%20Message%20Rubric.pdf>
- c. Reference to Session 8, Assignment (iii) in order to start preparing for that assignment.
- d. Lecture about Preaching.

2. Session 2—JAN 26

- a. Assignments.
 - i. Paul Scott Wilson, *Preaching and Homiletical Theory*—Introduction + Chapter 1 (Note: This is a supplemental reading (a PDF will be provided) and is not from the textbook for this course, *The Four Pages of the Sermon*).
 - ii. Written synthesis and summary of reading assignments emphasizing key learning points (See “Means of Assessment” #1 above on page 2).
- b. Continuation of Lecture about Preaching.
- c. Discussion of reading assignment.

3. Session 3—FEB 2

- a. Assignments.
 - i. Thomas Long, *The Witness of Preaching* (2nd edition) (Chapter 3—“Biblical Exegesis for Preaching”).
 - ii. Fred Craddock, *Preaching* (Chapter 6—“Interpretation: The Text”).
 - iii. Written synthesis and summary of reading assignments emphasizing key learning points (See “Means of Assessment” #1 above on page 2).
 - iv. Bring exegesis to class that will be used for preparation of the sermon.
- b. Discussion of reading assignments.

4. Session 4—FEB 9

- a. Assignments.
 - i. Thomas Long, *The Witness of Preaching* (Chapter 4—“The Focus and Function of the Sermon”).
 - ii. Fred Craddock, *Preaching* (Chapter 5—“Interpretation: The Listeners” and Chapter 7—“Interpretation: Between Text and Listener”).
 - iii. Written synthesis and summary of reading assignments emphasizing key learning points (See “Means of Assessment” #1 above on page 2).
 - iv. Start developing your theme/focus statement. This will probably be refined when you get to the Wilson reading assignment for Session 6 (especially pp. 42ff.).
- b. Discussion of reading assignments.
- c. Continuation of Lecture about Preaching.
- d. Review of exegesis.

5. Session 5—FEB 16

- a. Assignments.
 - i. Wilson, *The Four Pages of the Sermon* (Chapter 1).
 - ii. Written summary of reading assignment (See “Means of Assessment” #1 above on page 2).
 - iii. Submit a list of four commentaries that you have used or plan to use in the preparation of this sermon.
- b. Discussion of reading assignments.
- c. Review of Bibliography.

6. Session 6—FEB 23

- a. Assignments.
 - i. *Four Pages* (Chapters 2 & 3).
 - ii. Written summary of reading assignment with application to the sermon in progress.
- b. Discussion of reading assignment.
- c. Submit a typed page/s with your notes from your reading of your biblical sermon text (e.g., the questions raised as you read and resources to use in answering the questions, general observations and notes, etc.).

7. Session 7—MAR 2

- a. Assignments.
 - i. PREPARATION STAGE (MONDAY)
 - 1. Submit a list of the “signs” on the “homiletical highway” (i.e., what is your one text, one theme, one doctrine, one need, one image/refrain, one mission. Under each sign, except for the first one (one text), write down and submit several ideas for the possible doctrines, needs, images/refrains, and missions that you see the text pointing to. In bold print identify the one that best supports the theme statement. This can be revised as you move forward with sermon development. NOTE: For the “one doctrine,” check your commentary introductions to see if the author has a section identifying the theological themes in the biblical book/letter your sermon passage is drawn from. See Session 8, Assignment (iii) below.
 - 2. Write a tentative manuscript of the “Introduction” to your sermon (no more than one double-spaced page). Please bring copies for the instructor and fellow students (Note: this will apply to all future rough drafts of the sermon).
 - 3. Review of resources (especially commentaries) for sermon preparation.
 - ii. Discussion of assignments.

8. Session 8—MAR 9

- a. Assignments.
 - i. *Four Pages* (Chapters 4 & 5)
 - ii. Written summary of reading assignment with application to the sermon in progress (See “Means of Assessment” #1 above on page 2).
 - iii. A one to two page double-spaced summary of the doctrine that is the focus of your theme statement (see *Four Pages*, pp. 44-47, especially the chart on p. 47). The paper should have footnotes and a bibliography.
 - 1. Read the section in Guthrie, *Christian Doctrine*, that covers your chosen *one doctrine*. Check the “Table of Contents” at the beginning, and the “Index of Scripture” and the “Index of Subject” at the end of the book.

2. Also read about the *one doctrine* in your text that the sermon will focus on in at least one of the following systematic theologies (Colin E. Gunton, *The Christian Faith: An Introduction to Christian Doctrine* and/or Alister McGrath, *Theology: The Basics* (3rd edition)). This/these book/s should also be referenced in your paper.
 3. Reference the article on your doctrine in *Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the Bible*.
 4. If you are preaching on a text from the NT, select the appropriate volume in the *New Testament Theology* collection by Cambridge. Go to the “Index of References” at the back of the volume, and find the page references for your sermon text. The *IVP Dictionary of the NT* series is also a good reference. For the latter, see and compare the directions given in #5 below.
 5. If you are preaching on a text from the OT, reference the appropriate volume in the *IVP Dictionary of the OT* series. Look at the article on the book your passage is from, and look for an article on the doctrine you are focusing on.
 6. Read the section about your passage from *The Ancient Commentary on Scripture* and the *Reformation Commentary on Scripture*.
 7. See if your sermon text is a selection in the *Revised Common Lectionary*. If it is, then go to the *Feasting on the Word* commentary series to find its treatment of your passage.
- b. Discussion of reading assignment.

SPRING BREAK—MAR 16

9. Session 9—MAR 23

- a. Assignment: PREPARATION STAGE (TUESDAY). Write a rough draft of Page One/Trouble in the Bible (no more than two double-spaced pages).
- b. Presentation, discussion and evaluation of rough drafts for Page One.

10. Session 10—MAR 30

- a. Assignments.
 - i. *Four Pages* (Chapters 6 & 7).
 - ii. Written summary of reading assignment with application to the sermon in progress (See “Means of Assessment” #1 above on page 2).
- b. Discussion of reading assignment.

11. Session 11—APR 6

- a. Assignment: PREPARATION STAGE (WEDNESDAY). Write a rough draft of Page Two/Trouble in the World (no more than two double-spaced pages).
- b. Presentation, discussion and evaluation of rough drafts for Page Two.

12. Session 12—APR 13

- a. Assignments.
 - i. *Four Pages* (Chapters 8 & 9).
 - ii. Written summary of reading assignment with application to the sermon in progress (See “Means of Assessment” #1 above on page 2).
- b. Discussion of reading assignment.

13. Session 13—APR 20

- a. Assignment: PREPARATION STAGE (THURSDAY). Write a rough draft of Page Three/Grace in the Bible (no more than two double-spaced pages).
- b. Presentation, discussion and evaluation of rough drafts for Page Three.

14. Session 14—APR 27

- a. Assignments.
 - i. *Four Pages* (Chapters 10 & 11).
 - ii. Written summary of reading assignment with application to sermon in progress (See “Means of Assessment” #1 above on page 2).
- b. Discussion of reading assignment.

15. Session 15—MAY 4

- a. Assignments.
 - i. PREPARATION STAGE (FRIDAY). Write a rough draft of Page Four/Grace in the World (no more than two double-spaced pages).
 - ii. Write a rough draft of the sermon “Conclusion” (no more than one page double-spaced).
- b. Presentation, discussion and evaluation of rough drafts for Page Four.

16. Session 16—MAY 11 (possibly another date in finals week, but notification will be given well in advance)

- a. Assignment: Make final adjustments and revisions for final sermon manuscript (submit a copy of the sermon manuscript to the instructor no later than noon, May 10. The AGST office will provide copies for the evaluators).
 - b. Prepare for oral presentation of sermon before panel of evaluators.
 - c. Oral presentation of sermon—it is not necessary for the student to read the sermon manuscript; it can be presented from memory or using notes and/or an outline.
 - d. Successful completion of the class!
-