

AUSTIN GRADUATE SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

MIN 6303: From Text to Sermon

Spring 2018

Thursdays 7:00-9:40

SYLLABUS

Instructor:

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Course Description from the AGST Catalog:

MIN 6303 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 lectures and reading assignments for MIN 6303 class sessions.
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.
9. Videos of selected sermons by preachers will be viewed and critical reflection will be applied in class discussions.

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

1. **Reading Summaries (15% of grade):** The student will write summaries of designated reading assignments of 3 pages or less and single-spaced.
 - a. The reading summaries are to be in the form of notations and may be presented in outline or bullet point format.
 - b. *Template* for submitted assignments:
 - i. In the *header*: Name of student + Class Session/Date
 - ii. In the *body* of the text: Sections should have headings that reflect the titles of the assigned readings.
 - iii. In the *footer*: Page x of x.
2. **Preparation Stages (20% of grade):** Drafts of the sermon manuscript and oral presentations reflecting development of each of the sermon preparation stages will be submitted (e.g., *Getting Started-Monday; Page One-Tuesday; Page Two-Wednesday; Page Three-Thursday; Page Four-Friday*). It will be a work in progress over the first few weeks and will likely be revised as the student progresses in preparation.
3. **Doctrine Paper (10% of grade):** See Session 6—Mar 1, Assignment (ii).
4. **Class Participation (5% 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.

5. **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).
6. **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* (FPS); *New Interpreter’s Handbook of Preaching* (NIHOP); 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 18

- 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 sermon text.
 - i. An exegesis of the passage should be submitted during Session 2.
 1. This should be an exegesis that was submitted to an AGST professor.
 2. The grade must be a minimum of a “B.”
 - 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. Discussion of sermon text to be assigned and the exegesis it is to be based on.
- d. Lecture about Preaching.

2. Session 2—JAN 25

- a. Assignments.
 - i. Fred Craddock, *Preaching* (Chapter 5—“Interpretation: The Listeners” and Chapter 7—“Interpretation: Between Text and Listener”).
 - ii. Essays from NIHOP.
 1. “Hermeneutics,” 31.

2. “Exegesis of the Congregation,” 266f.
 3. “Exegesis of the Self,” 267f.
 - iii. Reading summary (See “Means of Assessment” #1 above on page 2).
 - iv. Write an “exegesis” of your sermon audience (no more than two double-spaced pages).
 - v. Bring to class a graded copy of the proposed exegesis for the sermon text.
- b. Class Session.
- i. Discussion of reading assignments.
 - ii. Lecture about preaching continued.
 - iii. Submit reading summary (See “Means of Assessment” #1 above on page 2).
 - iv. Submit the draft of your exegesis of your sermon audience.
 - v. Approval of exegesis to be used for sermon text.

3. Session 3—FEB 1

- a. Assignments.
- i. Fred Craddock, *Preaching* (Chapter 6—“Interpretation: The Text”).
 - ii. Essays from NIHOP
 1. “Exegesis,” 17ff.
 2. “Exegetical,” 380f.
 3. “Expository,” 381ff.
 4. “Focus and Function,” 187ff.
 - iii. Write reading summary.
 - iv. Write and submit your theme/focus statement. This will probably be refined when you get to the Wilson reading assignment for Session 6 (especially pp. 42ff.).
 - v. Submit a list of four additional commentaries than those used for the original exegesis that will be used for the sermon preparation (two should be critical commentaries and two should be homiletic or pastoral).
 - vi. 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. Class Session.
- i. Discussion of reading assignments.
 - ii. Review of exegesis and assignment of sermon text.
 - iii. Demonstration of the *Feasting on the Word* software.
 - iv. Submit reading summary.

4. Session 4—FEB 8

- a. Assignments.
- i. FPS Chapter 1, “Movies, Pages, and God.”
 - ii. Essays from NIHOP
 1. “Rhetoric. Introduction: Seeking a Response,” 343ff.
 2. “Ethos,” 350.
 3. “Logos,” 353f.
 4. “Pathos,” 358ff.

5. “Persuasion,” 360ff.
 6. “The Preacher’s Performance,” 213ff.
 7. “Appearance,” 218.
 8. “Performing the Manuscript,” 236ff.
- iii. Write reading summary.
- b. Class Session.
 - i. Discussion of reading assignments.
 1. FPS Chapter 1.
 2. Rhetoric, Channels, and Embodiment.
 - ii. Oral presentations
 1. Reading of the sermon text.
 2. Description of the sermon audience.
 - iii. Overview of Biblical Theology and Systematic Theology
 - iv. Submit reading summary.
 - v. Submit list of four additional commentaries to be used for sermon preparation.

5. Session 5—FEB 15

- a. Assignments.
 - i. FPS Chapter 2, “Ensuring Sermon Unity.”
 - ii. NIHOP Essays
 1. “Deductive,” 375ff.
 2. “Inductive,” 390ff.
 3. “Theme Sentence,” 207ff.
 4. Review and possibly revise your theme sentence based on Wilson’s leads (FPS pp. 42-44).
 - iii. Write reading summary.
 - iv. Preparation Stage: MONDAY—This assignment will be submitted with two parts.
 1. Develop and 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), list several ideas for the *theme, doctrine, need, image/refrain,* and *mission* that you see the text potentially 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.
 2. 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.). Cf. Craddock, *Preaching* (Chapter 6).
- b. Class Session.
 - i. Discussion of reading assignments.

- ii. Submit reading summary.
- iii. Submit your theme sentence (this can be revised as you move forward).
- iv. Submit your questions and notes from your study of the sermon text (Assignment iv. above).
- v. Submit your list of "signs" on the "homiletical highway."
- vi. Review of Bibliography.

6. Session 6—FEB 22

a. Assignments.

- i. Richard Lischer, *A Theology of Preaching: The Dynamics of the Gospel* (Chapter 3, "How Law and Gospel Work in Preaching."
[www.austingrad.edu/ministry/How Law and Gospel Work_Lischer.pdf](http://www.austingrad.edu/ministry/How%20Law%20and%20Gospel%20Work_Lischer.pdf)
- ii. Establish the "One Doctrine": **Write** a one to two page double-spaced summary of the doctrine that is the focus of your theme statement (see FPS, 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 the one doctrine you selected from your sermon text. 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 find the one doctrine that the sermon will focus on in NIHOP (check the "Alphabetical List of Articles" on pp. xxi-xxiii).
 - 3. 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.
 - 4. 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.
 - 5. Read the section about your passage from The Ancient Commentary on Scripture.

b. Class Session.

- i. Discuss reading assignment.
- ii. Discuss research on "One Doctrine."
- iii. Submit reading summary.
- iv. Submit essay on your one doctrine.

7. Session 7—MAR 1

a. Assignments.

- i. FPS Chapter 3, "Introducing the Sermon."
- ii. Write a tentative manuscript of the "Introduction" to your sermon (no more than one double-spaced page).
- iii. Essays from NIHOP.

1. “African American Preaching Perspectives,” 293ff.
2. “Call and Response,” 297.
- iv. Lischer, *Open Secrets* (Chapter 7, “Help Me, Jesus”).
[www.austingrad.edu/ministry/Help Me Jesus_Lischer.pdf](http://www.austingrad.edu/ministry/Help%20Me%20Jesus_Lischer.pdf)
- v. Write reading summary.
- b. Class session.
 - i. Discussion of reading assignments.
 - ii. Oral presentation of the sermon “Introduction.”
 - iii. Submit reading summary.

8. Session 8—MAR 8

- a. Assignments.
 - i. FPS Chapter 4, “Trouble in the Bible”.
 - ii. NIHOP
 1. “Sin and Evil,” 477ff.
 2. “The Big Idea (Fallen Condition Focus),” 424ff.
 - iii. Identify the trouble/sin in your sermon text.
 - iv. Write reading summary.
- b. Class session.
 - i. Discuss reading assignments.
 - ii. Discuss the trouble/sin in sermon passage.
 - iii. Submit reading summary.

SPRING BREAK—MAR 15

9. Session 9—MAR 22

- a. Assignment: PREPARATION STAGE (TUESDAY). Write a rough draft of Page One/Trouble in the Bible (no more than two double-spaced pages). Give an extra copy to the instructor (this will apply to all future presentations). Include the sermon “Introduction” at the beginning of the draft.
- b. Class Session.
 - i. Oral presentation of Introduction and Page One.
 - ii. Discussion and critical review of presentations.
 - iii. Submit a copy of the rough draft of sermon.

10. Session 10—MAR 29

- a. Assignments.
 - i. FPS Chapter 6 (Trouble in the World).
 - ii. Barbara Brown Taylor, *Speaking of Sin*, 1-39.
[www.austingrad.edu/ministry/Speaking of Sin_Brown Taylor.pdf](http://www.austingrad.edu/ministry/Speaking%20of%20Sin_Brown%20Taylor.pdf)
 - iii. Write reading summary.
- b. Class session.
 - i. Discussion of reading assignment.
 - ii. Submit reading summary.

11. Session 11—APR 5

- a. Assignment: PREPARATION STAGE (WEDNESDAY). Continue revision of the sermon manuscript and add a rough draft of Page Two/Trouble in the World (no more than two double-spaced pages).
- b. Class Session.
 - i. Oral presentation of Introduction, Page One and Page Two.
 - ii. Discussion and critical review of presentations.
 - iii. Submit a copy of the rough draft of the sermon.

12. Session 12—APR 12

- a. Assignments.
 - i. FPS Chapter 8 (Grace in the Bible).
 - ii. Write reading summary.
- b. Class Session.
 - i. Discussion of reading assignment.
 - ii. Submit reading summary.

13. Session 13—APR 19

- a. Assignment: PREPARATION STAGE (THURSDAY). Continue revision of the sermon manuscript and add a rough draft of Page Three/Grace in the Bible (no more than two double-spaced pages).
- b. Class session.
 - i. Oral presentation of Introduction, Page One, Page Two, and Page Three.
 - ii. Discussion and critical review of presentations.
 - iii. Submit a copy of the rough draft of the sermon.

14. Session 14—APR 26

- a. Assignments.
 - i. FPS Chapter 10 (Grace in the World).
 - ii. Write reading summary.
- b. Class Session.
 - i. Discussion of reading assignment.
 - ii. Submit reading summary.

15. Session 15—MAY 3

- a. Assignments.
 - i. PREPARATION STAGE (FRIDAY). Continue revision of the sermon manuscript and add 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. Class session.
 - i. Oral presentation of Introduction, Page One, Page Two, Page Three, Page Four, and the Conclusion discussion and evaluation of rough drafts for Page Four.

- ii. Discussion and critical review of presentations.
- iii. Submit a copy of the rough draft of the sermon.

16. Session 16—MAY 10 (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 Monday, May 8. 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!