The following syllabus is the teaching and learning guide for the last time this course was taught. It will give you a good idea of the descriptions of the course, how it was taught, the reading, the papers and other assignments, the intended outcomes, and the workload. By examining this syllabus and others, you will be able to form an impression of what graduate theological education at Phillips Theological Seminary requires of students.

Due to periodic curriculum revisions, course names and/or numbers may be different on this syllabus than what the name and/or number of the current offered course may be.

This syllabus is provided for your information only. The faculty reserves the right to revise the curriculum, and each professor reserves the right to decide how best to meet the learning goals of the curriculum. Therefore, the following syllabus is an historical artifact rather than a promise of how the course will be taught in the future, or that the course will be taught again.

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**Phillips Theological Seminary**  
PR 535 Preaching as a Communicative Art  
Fall 2015

*Emily: Do any human beings ever realize life while they live it—every, every minute?  
Stage Manager: (Quietly) No—saints and poets maybe—they do, some.*

*From “Our Town” by Thornton Wilder*

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**Class Location:** Room 305

**Time:** Tuesday, 2:30pm - 5:15pm

**Course Description:**  
In this course we will explore preaching as a form of ‘aesthetic’ communication. Preaching may be thought of as an artful expression of one’s interpretation of biblical texts and traditions, congregational situations, and personal witness. It draws upon imaginative interpretive strategies that are grounded in experience and tradition; sermons are given form and utterance by means of the preacher’s language and enactment.

By framing preaching as aesthetic communication we establish its kinship with other expressive arts. In this course we will take a closer look at the writer’s craft to learn how we might best catch the ear and open the imagination of a listener. The wager here is that by attending to our language in preaching and how our imaginations work in the design and composition of our sermons, we will open new channels of communication between God’s gospel and our congregations.

**Outcomes:**  
At the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Keep a personal journal for developing the imagination for preaching
- Find connections between ‘real life’ and one’s understanding of God’s gospel
- Make wider use of the language arts in the composition and performance of a sermon
- See a closer relationship between the creative processes of artists and those of preachers
• Engage in ‘creative’ exegesis that is grounded in sound scholarship and theological reflection
• Incorporate the skills developed in this class to enrich their preaching.

Textbooks for purchase:


Requirements:
Each student must fulfill the following requirements:

1. Attend all class sessions and participate fully in class discussion (according to PTS policy, 20% or more absence from class will result in automatic failure of the course—in this case, 2.6 class sessions). Class participation grade reflects absence, non-participation in class discussions and lack of oral evidence that student has read assigned material;

2. Read the required portions of all textbooks;

3. Keep a daily journal four days a week for seven weeks, beginning on September 8 and concluding no later than November 17 (students may choose which seven weeks they will journal within this time frame). At the end of the seven-week period, journals should reflect a balance among the following items:

   • a reflection on scripture readings from a daily lectionary (e.g. the one provided in the back of the *Chalice Hymnal* or the “Daily Office Lectionary” in *The Book of Common Prayer* that including readings from both the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament); in these reflections students should develop
a “knack for noticing” (McKenzie) that occur as scriptures are reflectively read;

- a reflection on any sermon that is read, listened to or watched (including those preached in class)—especially ideas, phrases, structure, central thoughts, illustrations that capture your imagination, etc. At least seven different sermons should be considered.

- a reflection on the assigned reading for the week which can be spread out over all four entries or in one entry.

- a reflection on the assigned chapters of The Artist’s Way

An “A” journal will include at least 28 daily entries that reflect interaction on these items and your daily life. As an example, you may look at our journal entries posted on this course’s Moodle site under “Blog,” beginning September 1.

In order to make sure that students are on the right track, the first week of the journal should be submitted to the professors beginning September 15 and no later than September 29. The entire journal is due November 17; it should be submitted electronically to both professors in a word document entitled “Student’s last name, final journal.”

4. Preach two original sermons on the assigned dates on the schedule below that will be recorded.

**Please note: For the first preaching event**, each student must submit an exegetical outline based on Ch. 4 of *A Sermon Workbook* and a written manuscript on the day on which she or he preaches. This first set of sermons will be based on one of the lectionary texts for the Sunday following the chosen preaching event.

**For the second preaching event**, a completed exegetical outline, though not required, is strongly recommended. A written manuscript is also required unless otherwise cleared by the professor. Students may choose a topic, based on a particular scriptural text, or a text for this second set of sermons.

*A recording and manuscript of one of these sermons will be included in your student portfolio; in other words, this is the “portfolio assignment” from this class for your assessment course.*
The sermons should **not exceed 20 minutes or be less than 10 minutes** in length, due to time constraints and other issues discussed in class. At 20 minutes the preacher will be stopped by the professor.

5. Serve twice as lector during the preaching sessions. As a lector the student will read the chosen lections of the preacher and offer a pastoral prayer (to be discussed in class) not to exceed one and a half minutes. Prayers exceeding that time length will receive no grade point value. The preacher is responsible for informing the lector of the specific text or texts to be read, no later than the class session prior to the one in which she or he is reading. Students should prepare to read the scriptures with love, respect, and attention to the text’s value as aesthetic communication.

*Please note:* Students are strongly encouraged to attend PTS worship when they are on campus.

**Course Grade:**

The grade for this course will be determined according to the following percentages:

- Class Participation: 10%
- Journal: 40%
- Preaching Events: 40% (20% each sermon)
- Reading Scripture/Praying: 10% (5% each session)

The professor retains the right to change elements of this syllabus if necessary to achieve the learning goals for this course.

Phillips Theological Seminary is committed to providing equal access to its programs of graduate professional education for all qualified students with learning, physical, medical, or psychological disabilities. The Seminary aims to provide reasonable accommodation for qualified individuals with a disability (based on clinical documentation) to ensure their access and participation in Seminary programs. For details, see “Disabilities Policies and Procedures” in the 2015-2016 Student Handbook posted on the Phillips website.
Course Schedule

August 25  Welcome to the Course!
Preparation:
Listening to and/or Discussions of sermons by Alyce McKenzie (print in Chapter 6 of Novel Preaching), Jana Childers (on moodle page in Aug 25-31 folder), Ron Allen (print in “Sample Sermon” in Preaching: An Essential Guide)
“Hallmarks of Good Preaching” and “Diversity in Preaching” in A Sermon Workbook
Fred Craddock’s 14 Statements

September 1  Weekly Sermon Preparation Process
Preparation:
“The Role of the Imagination in Preaching” in A Sermon Workbook
At least 5 chapters from Birthing the Sermon (each student may choose which 5)
Part 1: “Cultivating the Imagination” of Novel Preaching

September 8  Approaching the Text I: The Insights of Traditional and Contemporary Biblical Exegesis
Preparation:
“Biblical Exegesis for Preaching” in A Sermon Workbook
“What is the Good News from God in the Sermon?” and “Does the Sermon Honor the Integrity of the Bible or the Topic?” in Preaching: An Essential Guide

September 15  Approaching the Text II: Creative Biblical Exegesis
Preparation:
“Week 1: Recovering a Sense of Safety” in The Artist’s Way (for journal)
“Creative Biblical Study for Preaching” and “The Weekly Sermon Preparation Process” in A Sermon Workbook
Weekly preaching events begin

September 22  What Theological Claims Does the Text Make?
Preparation:
“Week 2: Recovering a Sense of Identity” in The Artist’s Way (for journal)
“Is the Sermon Theologically Adequate?” in Preaching: An Essential Guide
“Images of God in Everyday Life” in A Sermon Workbook
Weekly preaching events
September 29  What Concerns of the Congregation Are Going to Be Addressed in Your Sermon?

Preparation:
“Week 3: Recovering a Sense of Power” in The Artist’s Way (for journal)
“Does the Sermon Relate the Text or Topic to the Congregation in a Responsible Way?” and “What is the Significance of the Sermon for the Congregation” in Preaching: An Essential Guide
“Exegeting the Congregation for Preaching” in A Sermon Workbook

Weekly preaching events

October 6  Forms Patterns, and Designs for Preaching

Preparation:
“Week 4: Recovering a Sense of Integrity” in The Artist’s Way (for journal)
“Sermon Shapes: Fiction Writing Strategies for Sermons” in Novel Preaching
“A Repertoire of Sermon Forms” in A Sermon Workbook

Weekly preaching events

October 13 and 20  No Class

October 27  Focus on Preaching

Preparation: TBA
“Week 5: Recovering a Sense of Possibility” in The Artist’s Way (for journal)

Weekly preaching events 4 sermons preached in whole class (chapel)
Dean Pittman away

November 3  Movement and Pace

Preparation:
“Week 7: Recovering a Sense of Compassion” in The Artist’s Way (for journal)
“Does the Sermon Move in a Way that Is Easy to Follow” in Preaching: An Essential Guide

Weekly preaching events

November 10  Embodiment and Performance Issues

Preparation:
“Week 9: Recovering a Sense of Connection” in The Artist’s Way (for journal)
“Making Theology Incarnate for Preaching” in A Sermon Workbook
“Oral-Aural Communication,” “Performative Language,” and “Performing the Manuscript” by Richard Ward (NIBHOP; to be posted on moodle)

Weekly preaching events
November 17  Focus on Preaching
  Preparation: TBA
  “Week 12: Recovering a Sense of Faith” in The Artist’s Way (for journal)
  Final Journals Due
  Weekly preaching events 4 sermons preached in whole class (chapels)
  Prof Ward away

November 24  No class/Thanksgiving break

December 1  Issues in Pastoral Preaching
  Preparation: TBA
  Weekly preaching events

December 8  Remaining Issues/Evaluations
  Preparation: TBA
  Weekly preaching events