

BOT 692 Preaching the Old Testament: Narratives, Law, and Prophets

Mark D. Wessner, PhD
Fall 2017
3 credit hours
Prerequisites: n/a

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September 12 - November 13, 2017
Eight Tuesday mornings, 9:00-12:00
TWU Richmond and MyCourses (online)

1. Course Description

This course prepares students to carefully discern the message and meaning of Old Testament texts, and effectively preach them in the student's church and cultural contexts. This course focuses on preaching the narrative, law, and prophetic sections of the Old Testament. Students will prepare and preach in class on specific texts, and will explore methods of public communication, audience analysis, leadership through preaching, and other significant aspects of the preaching experience.

This course will be taught in-class at the TWU Richmond campus for eight weeks, as well as online through MyCourses both prior to and after the in-class sessions.

2. Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, each student should be able to:

- Understand and articulate the message and meaning of Old Testament narrative, legal, and prophetic texts, within their Ancient Near Eastern contexts.
- Effectively and accurately relate and communicate the message and meaning of Old Testament texts within the student's cultural and church contexts.
- Develop and implement effective public communication techniques, both verbal and non-verbal.
- Understand how to create an effective and engaging outline for an Old Testament sermon series.
- Describe the powerful relationship between preaching and leadership, and give evidence of being sensitive and responsive to the Spirit's leading throughout sermon preparation and delivery.

3. Course Textbooks

Alter, Robert. *The Art of Biblical Narrative*. Rev. & updated ed. New York: Basic Books, 2011.

Anderson, Chris. *TED Talks: The Official TED Guide to Public Speaking*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2016.

Reid, Robert Stephen. *The Four Voices of Preaching*. Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2006.

Wright, Christopher J. H. *How to Preach and Teach the Old Testament for All Its Worth: A Follow-up to How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2016.

A modern English translation of the Bible.

4. Course Outline

Week	Dates	Learning Objectives	Readings	Assignments
Pre-class due Sep 11 (online)		• Finding Your Voice	• Reid, ch 1-6	• Book Review
1	Sep 12	• Why Preach?	• Genesis • Wright, ch 1-5	• Reflection Paper #1 and Replies
2	Sep 19	• OT Narratives	• Judges • Alter, ch 1-9	
3	Sep 26	• OT Law	• Deuteronomy • Wright, ch 9-10	
4	Oct 3	• OT Prophets	• Ezekiel • Wright, ch 11	• Biblical Exegesis
5	Oct 10	• Spiritual Leadership by Preaching		
6	Oct 17	• The Art of Speaking	• Anderson, ch 1-13	• Preaching #1
No class on Oct 24 or Oct 31				
7	Nov 7	• The Art of Speaking	• Anderson, ch 14-18	• Preaching #2
8	Nov 14	• Preaching through all Seasons of Ministry		• Reading Report
Post-class due Nov 27 (online)		• Spiritual Health and Preaching		• Reflection Paper #2 and Replies

5. Course Assignments

Course assignments and weighting are as follows. There are no extra credit assignments available.

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| • Two Reflection Papers and Replies | 10% |
| • Book Review of <i>The Four Voices of Preaching</i> | 20% |
| • Biblical Exegesis of the preaching text | 20% |
| • Preaching Experience #1 | 20% |
| • Preaching Experience #2 | 20% |
| • Reading Report and Summary of Learning | 10% |

Reflection Papers and Replies (5 points each)

Each of the two Reflection Papers is a brief assignment through which you express your personal thoughts and interaction about your own experience with preaching. For each Reflection Paper assignment:

1. Write a 500 word posting that explores the following (be sure to answer all of the questions):
 - a. Reflection Paper 1 – Why Preach?
 - i. Discuss your personal experience with hearing others preach; discuss what makes a sermon good or bad, and how you discern the difference.
 - ii. Describe someone whom you think is a great preacher; describe what you believe makes them a great preacher.
 - iii. Discuss why you want to preach and what your preaching goals are.
 - b. Reflection Paper 2 – Preaching for the Long Term
 - i. Discuss your understanding of the relationship between personal spiritual health and effective biblical preaching.
 - ii. Specifically, what intentional practices do you have in place (or will you put in place) to help your spiritual health remain vibrant as you preach now and in the future?
2. Reply to two other students Reflection Papers, with a minimum of 250 words each.

Grading is based on both quantity and quality of insightful, substantive messages posted. Students who desire full marks for discussions will make well-thought contributions to the discussion that indicate careful reading of the course materials as well as careful thought about their fellow classmate's comments.

High quality comments reflect keen insight and analytical skills as well as original thinking and interpretation of the issues. Don't be afraid to disagree with someone but be sure to explain your own reasoning behind your disagreement. Better yet, take someone else's observations to the next level – apply your own unique insight to the points being made, add something beyond what someone else has said.

Book Review (20 points)

A 8-10 page book review of *The Four Voices of Preaching*, following the standard guidelines below (important: the assignment is to write a book review, not a book report):

1. Introduction (4 points):
 - a. A general description of the book: title, author, subject and format. Here you can include details about who the author is and where he/she stands in this field of inquiry. You can also link the title to the subject to show how the title explains the subject matter.
 - b. A brief summary of the purpose of the book and its general argument or theme. Include a statement about who the book is intended for.
 - c. Your thesis about the book: is it a suitable/appropriate piece of writing about the problem for the audience it has identified?
2. Summary of Content (2 points):
 - a. This can be done in the same way that it is done for a simple book report (do not write more than one page on this section, as the analysis and evaluation of content is more important than a simple summary).
3. Analysis of Text (5 points):
 - a. What is the writer's style: simple, technical, persuasive, logical, etc?
 - b. How well does the organizational method develop the argument or theme of the book? (Give examples to support your analysis.)
 - c. What evidence does the book present to support the argument? How convincing is this evidence? (Select pieces of evidence that are weak, or strong, and explain why they are such.)
 - d. How complete is the argument? Are there facts and evidence that the author has neglected to consider? (You may need to refer to other relevant material)
4. Evaluation of the Text (5 points):
 - a. Give a brief summary of all the weakness and strengths you have found in the book. Does it do what it set out to do?
 - b. Evaluate the book's overall usefulness to the audience it is intended for.
5. Personal Application (4 points):
 - a. Where would you place your own "preaching voice" within Reid's matrix? Why?
 - b. Which elements of Reid's descriptions resonate or seem out of sync with your own preaching experience?
 - c. How might this book positively influence your development as a preacher?

Biblical Exegesis (20 points)

A 10-12 page paper that carefully explores the "original" context, message, and meaning of a specific narrative, legal, or prophetic passage within the Old Testament. Generally, a passage is longer than just a verse or two, but is not longer than a chapter. The instructor must approve the specific text prior to the start of research. At a minimum, the paper will consist of:

1. The correct identification of the passage (where the passage starts and stops, its placement within the book, its placement within the Bible, etc), giving specific reasons for each of your conclusions, and a specific thesis statement about the passage being studied. (3 points),
2. An analysis of the literary style and characteristics of both the book and the specific passage. (3 points)
3. The cultural and historical background of the passage. (3 points)
4. A detailed and thoughtful application of the appropriate exegetical approach for a narrative, legal, or prophetic passage. (10 points)
5. Specific references from at least five academic sources. (1 point)

Preaching Experience #1 (20 points)

Prepare a 10-15 minute sermon based on the specific text used for the Biblical Exegesis assignment. Elements of this Preaching Experience assignment include:

1. A detailed and complete sermon outline, storyboard, or manuscript for the sermon. The difference between these three approaches will be explained in class. (10 points)
2. A presentation of your exegesis, how you would preach this text, and why you chose the approach that you did. Note that you will not actually preach the sermon for this assignment. Instead, there will be a group discussion about your exegesis, preparation, methodology, illustrations, etc. (10 points)

Preaching Experience #2 (20 points)

Prepare and deliver a 20-25 minute sermon for the class. The sermon will be based on both the work done toward the Biblical Exegesis assignment and the Preaching Experience #1 assignment, and will represent the culmination of your learning in this class. This assignment will be evaluated in two key areas:

1. Content – the words you use, faithfulness to the biblical text, clarity, simplicity, appropriate language for the audience, etc. (10 points)
2. Communication – verbal communication, body language, preaching aids, etc. (10 points)

Reading Report and Summary of Learning (10 points)

This concluding assignment has two elements:

1. You must indicate how much of the required reading you thoughtfully read (not skimmed) during the course, as a percentage (eg. 50%, 90%, etc). The required reading includes the textbooks as well as the specified books of the Bible.
2. 500-1,000 word summary of your key learnings regarding the pathway from the exegesis of an Old Testament text to sermon delivery.

Grading Scale

Letter Grade	Percentage	Grade Point
A+	97-100	4.30
A	93-96	4.00
A-	90-92	3.70
B+	87-89	3.30
B	83-86	3.00
B-	80-82	2.70
C+	77-79	2.30
C	73-76	2.00
C-	70-72	1.70
F	Below 70	0.00

6. Miscellaneous Notes/Policies

Writing Expectations:

- All assignments must be submitted online through the MyCourses website.
- Papers must be .doc, .docx, or .pdf files, and must adhere to the following format:
 - 11 or 12 point font in either Arial, Times New Roman, or Calibri style,
 - Top, bottom and side page margins of 2.5cm (1 inch),
 - Double-spaced, and
 - Current Chicago Manual of Style or Turabian guidelines.

Late Assignments:

- Manage your time well. Review the required assignments and write out a realistic schedule for completing each assignment's research and writing.
- Assignments can be submitted prior to their due dates (often, it is better time management to do so).

- Late assignments will be deducted 10% per day, to a maximum of five days. Any assignment submitted more than five days late will not be accepted.
- Please note that any assignment submitted after the last day of class will not be counted toward your final grade – there will be no exceptions. It is your responsibility to ensure that all assignments are submitted on time. If you have requested and been approved for a formal course extension, it is your responsibility to submit all assignments before the expiry of the extension.

7. Supplement: Important Academic Notes from ACTS

Web Support – Student Portal <https://www1.twu.ca/services>

- All students at TWU have a TWUPass username and password. This is determined at the time of an online application or can be managed through the computing services help desk or the link on the student portal. Your student email account is also available through this student portal and is vital for communication about grades, account statements, lost passwords, sign-up instructions, etc. If you do not know your account or password, there is a link at the login area called “I forgot my password.” When you click on that link, you will be walked through the process of retrieving your account information.

Paper Formatting

- Students are strongly encouraged to use EndNote Basic/Web (to create an account or log in, go to: <http://libguides.twu.ca/EndNote/>) as their bibliographical manager and as a tool for formatting bibliographies. It is free. The link to EndNote from the library home page provides detailed instructions. Students will need to be aware that it is necessary to “clean up” most bibliographies generated by this program. Students are encouraged to view the documents on the following websites for format samples: http://www.press.uchicago.edu/books/turabian/turabian_citationguide.html or www.dianahacker.com/resdoc/. In EndNote Basic/Web the available formatting styles are those of Turabian Bibliography, and APA 6th edition. For Turabian, there are two formats – Notes (Bibliography) and Reference List (a short format citation style). ACTS uses the Notes (Bibliography) format, not Reference List.
- For free online programs that will enable students to create properly formatted bibliography citations, go to <http://www.eturabian.com/turabian/index.html> or <http://www.calvin.edu/library/knightcite/> (“Chicago” stands for “Turabian”).

Course Evaluations

- Course evaluations are important for improving teaching outcomes, faculty professional development, and the student learning context. Completion of course evaluations is, therefore, considered to be a course expectation. Information about how to access

online evaluation forms will be provided to the faculty and students prior to the last week of classes by the ACTS Administration.

Research Ethics

- Please note that all research projects involving human participants undertaken by members of the TWU university community (including projects done by ACTS students to satisfy course or degree requirements) MUST be approved by the Trinity Western University Research Ethics Board. Information and forms may be found at <http://www.twu.ca/research/research/research-ethics/default.html>. Those needing additional clarification may contact the ACTS Academic Dean's office. Please allow at least three (3) weeks from the date of submission for a review of the application.

Academic Integrity and Avoiding Plagiarism at TWU

- Christian scholars at TWU regard academic integrity to be a core value. Students are invited into this scholarly culture and are required to abide by the principles of sound academic scholarship. This means that all members of the TWU academic community must avoid all forms of plagiarism and cheating in scholarly work. ACTS uses the TWU Student Handbook as a guide for our seminary students. Though some features in the handbook are focused on the university's undergraduate population, it provides the essential student life information for ACTS students as well. It can be found online at: <http://www.twu.ca/studenthandbook/>.
- Learning what constitutes plagiarism and avoiding it is the student's responsibility. An excellent resource in this regard has been prepared by TWU Librarian William Badke and is freely available for download (PPT file) or can be viewed in flash (self-running) tutorials of different lengths:
<http://williambadke.com/plagiarism.ppt>
<http://williambadke.com/Plagiarism.swf> (14 minute flash tutorial)
http://williambadke.com/Plagiarism_Short.swf (8 minute flash tutorial)

Equity of Access

- Students with disabilities who need assistance are encouraged to contact the Equity of Access Office upon admission to TWU to discuss their specific needs. All disabilities must be recently documented by an appropriately certified professional and such documentation should include a statement regarding the educational impact of the disability along with recommended accommodations. Within the first two weeks of the semester, students must meet with their professors to agree on accommodations appropriate to each class. Students should follow the steps detailed by the Equity of Access Office outlined on the TWU website at <http://twu.ca/life/wellness/learningresources/disabilities-and-equity-of-access/steps-to-attaining-disability-services.html>.

Policy Information and Student Concerns

- Information on academic and community life policies and procedures that affect students can be found in the ACTS Academic Catalogue, which is available on the ACTS website (www.actsseminaries.com) under the Academics tab. Students who wish to communicate concerns or to lodge academic appeals are welcome to contact the appropriate faculty or staff member directly, or to fill out and submit the relevant Concerns & Grievances or Appeals form found on the Files & Forms page of the Current Students section of the ACTS Website.