

Preaching the Word
North Park Theological Seminary
MNST 5115, Fall 2026
3 credit hours
Tues 7:30-9 pm

Instructor: David Bjorlin
Phone: 773-244-5238
*Email: dbjorlin@northpark.edu
Virtual Office Hours: By appointment

**preferred method: barring any unforeseen circumstances, I will respond to any emails within 48 hours.*

Course Description

The student will learn basic skills in oral communication, fundamentals of various methods of sermon preparation, and develop sensitivity to the liturgical, social, and cultural contexts in which preaching takes place.

Course Learning Objectives

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

1. define the purpose of preaching and its place in the liturgy;
2. demonstrate basic communication skills necessary for successful preaching;
3. craft and preach a coherent sermon for Christian worship;
4. faithfully exegete biblical passages for preaching;
5. describe the preaching practices and theology of a culture different from their own;
6. illustrate the connection between the preached word and the ethical engagement of both the preacher and congregation.

Course Structure

As a hybrid, hyflex class, this course is structured with both asynchronous and synchronous learning components:

1. Asynchronous learning (Wednesday-Monday): Preparation for each Tuesday evening session includes completing assigned readings and assignments (e.g., completion of weekly Write Like a Preacher Assignment).
2. Synchronous learning (Tuesday pm): This time will be used to present writer like a preacher assignments, discuss questions raised by the text, and develop ideas further with class and/or group discussion.

Required Texts

1. Teresa L. Fry Brown, *Delivering the Sermon*. Fortress, 2008. (available to borrow on archive.org with free registration)
2. Ursula K. Le Guin, *A Wizard of Earthsea*. Houghton Mifflin, 1968. (available to borrow on archive.org)
3. Thomas Long, *The Witness of Preaching*, 3rd ed. Westminster John Knox, 2016.
4. Otis Moss, III, *Blue Note Preaching in a Post-Soul World: Finding Hope in an Age of Despair*. Westminster John Knox, 2015.
5. Thomas H. Troeger and Leonora Tubbs Tisdale, *A Sermon Workbook: Exercises in the Art and Craft of Preaching*. Abingdon, 2013.
6. Intercultural Preaching Book for review (bibliography below)

Assessments

Feedback/Grading Timeline

For all assessments besides online discussions (which is discussed below), you can expect written feedback and grades within a week of the due date and/or submission.

Grading

Assignment Type:	Weight:
Attendance and Participation	10%
Oral Reflection: Images of God in Everyday Life	10%
Sermon #1 – Recorded	15%
Sermon #2 – In-Person	20%
Preaching Evaluations	10%
Weekly Preaching Assignments	20%
Intercultural Preaching 3-2-1 Book Review	15%

The grading scale for the course will be as follows:

A	100-93%
A-	92.9-90%
B+	89.9-87
B	86.9-83
B-	82.9-80%
C+	79.9-77%
C	76.9-73%
C-	72.9-70%
D+	69.9-67%
D	66.9-63%
D-	62.9-60%

Each of the assignments below will be graded using a rubric (except the practicum element, discussed below). The points you receive will be divided by the total points possible and then multiplied by the weighted percentage for each assessment to give your total for each assessment. For example, if you receive a 10 out of 12 points on your book review (worth 10% of your grade), your total points for that assessment would be 8.3 (10/12 x 10).

Late Policy

With exceptions for sickness and emergencies, assignments turned in late will be penalized 1/3 of a letter grade (e.g., a B will drop to a B-) for each day over the deadline. After a week, the highest score you can receive on an assignment is 50%.

Attendance and Participation (10%)

Regular attendance and participation in class discussion is expected, especially since our synchronous time together will largely be classroom discussion. For those who register to join the class in person, you must attend all classes in person to be counted as present (i.e., no switching between online and in-person attendance). For those joining online, your camera must be turned on for the entirety of the class to be counted as present, and you cannot be multitasking (e.g., driving or cooking). You should have the dedicated space and time for the class. Any absences over two will reduce your participation grade. Note: part of your participation grade will include completing the readings. You will be asked to sign a reading log at the end of the semester detailing the approximate percentage of reading done.

Oral Reflection: Images of God in Everyday Life (10%) – Due: Sept. 18 (in class)

Using the oral/aural format described by Troeger and Tubbs (Ch. 16), you will give a five-minutes reflection (approximately two double-spaced pages) on the following prompt: Describe some crucial aspect of your experience that has shaped or reshaped your understanding of God. The purpose of this assignment is both to reflect on what has shaped you as a preacher and begin to practice the communion skills of public speaking. Part of that grade will also be evaluations of each other's reflection. This assignment will be graded complete/incomplete.

Two Sermons (Recorded: 15%; In Person: 20% = 35%) – Due: Sign Up for Due Date

Every student will develop and deliver two sermons. This will include two components:

1. Record of the event of the sermon including a video recording and manuscript.
2. Self-reflection on sermon based on the experience of preaching, watching the recording, and the feedback of your classmates.

The two sermons must meet the following sermons:

- Both sermons:
 - Must be anchored in Christian scripture.

- Must be proclaimed in a real or imagined context of Christian worship.
- Must be preached for the first time for class.
- One sermon must be submitted as a video recording.
 - Must be intended for the clearly-defined congregation and context of your choice (this could be the worship service of a church you attend, a wedding or funeral, or another context).
 - You should record and deliver the sermon as you would for that particular context (i.e., not in a messy bedroom with pajamas on!). This will be part of your grade.
- One sermon must be preached live:
 - This will be preached on the last two sessions of class, either in-person or online.
 - If online, reflect on your physical and digital setting (i.e., make sure you create a sacred space in some way).
 - Must be 8 minutes long.

You will find the rubric for assessing your sermons on the class Canvas shell.

Preaching Evaluations (10%) - Due: One Week after Each Sermon

Your preaching evaluation grade includes two aspects:

- For other students, you will fill out a simple sermon evaluation form. This is available on the Canvas shell and will be graded complete/incomplete. This is due the day of class after each sermon.
- After each sermon, you will write a 500-word reflection after reading both student and instructor feedback. This will be due one week after your sermon (unless you preach on the last Tuesday of class, in which case it will be due that Friday) and will be graded pass/fail. In it, you will answer the following questions:
 - What you noticed about yourself (body, mind, soul) as you preached? E.g., were you nervous? Confident? Shaking?
 - Did the main point of your sermon line up with what your classmates recorded as the main point? If there is discrepancies, why do you think that is?
 - What went well?
 - What would you like to improve?

Write Like a Preacher Assignment (20%) – Due: As Assigned in Calendar

Each week (after the first week) you will complete a one-page mini-sermon formatted in sense lines (which will be explained the first week) in response to a particular prompt. These will all come from *A Sermon Workbook*. Each session, we will share these in some format (e.g., break up into groups and deliver them to one another), and you will submit them in written form as well. These will be graded complete/incomplete.

Intercultural Book Review (15%) – Due: Oct. 9, 11:59 p.m.

Choosing one book from the list below (or another one approved by the instructor) to write a short review using the following format:

1. Give a summary of the book's main thesis (no more than 200 words)
2. Engage in the 3-2-1 method of review (500 words):
 - 3 main points or concepts from the reading;
 - 2 points of similarity or difference (or one of each) between your culture's preaching tradition and the one studied;
 - 1 lesson you would like to learn from this tradition to strengthen your own preaching practice.

Justo González and Pablo Jiménez. *Púlpito: An Introduction to Hispanic Preaching*. Abingdon, 2005.

Kimberly P. Johnson. *The Womanist Preacher: Proclaiming Womanist Rhetoric from the Pulpit*. Lexington, 2017.

Eunjoo Mary Kim. *Christian Preaching and Worship in Multicultural Contexts: A Practical Theological Approach*. Liturgical Press, 2017.

Eunjoo Mary Kim. *Preaching the Presence of God: A Homiletic from an Asian American Perspective*. Reissued. Wipf and Stock, 2023.

Kenyatta Gilbert. *The Journey and Promise of African American Preaching*. Fortress, 2011.

HyeRan Kim-Cragg. *Postcolonial Preaching: Creating a Ripple Effect*. Lexington Books, 2021.

Cleophus J. LaRue. *The Heart of Black Preaching*. Westminster John Knox, 2000.

Cleophus J. LaRue. *I Believe I'll Testify: The Art of African American Preaching*. Westminster John Knox, 2011.

Tito Madrazo, *Hispanic Preaching and Immigrant Identity*. Baylor University Press, 2021.

Christine Marie Smith, ed. *Preaching Justice and Cultural Perspectives*. Reissued. Wipf and Stock, 2008.

Lisa L. Thompson. *Ingenuity: Preaching as an Outsider*. Abingdon, 2018.

Accommodations

Your experience in this class is important to me. North Park is committed to creating inclusive and accessible learning environments consistent with federal and state law. If you have already established your accommodations, please share your accommodation letter with me so we can discuss how your accommodations will be implemented in this course. If you have not yet established services and have a temporary health condition or permanent disability that requires accommodations, please email the Disability Access Specialist or contact by phone (773-244-5737). Student Engagement facilitates the interactive process that establishes reasonable accommodations.

Title XI

Students who believe they may have experienced sexual misconduct, sexual harassment, domestic violence, dating violence, or stalking should contact the Title IX Coordinator (773) 244-5664 or TitleIX@northpark.edu to learn more about reporting options, resources, and support services.

As members of the North Park faculty, we are concerned about the well-being and development of our students and are available to discuss any concerns. Faculty members are private resources meaning we are legally obligated to share information about the behavior reported above with the University's Title IX coordinator. If you are unsure whether you want your concerns disclosed to the Title IX Coordinator, we encourage you to contact Counseling Support Services at (773) 244-4897 or counseling@northpark.edu.

Please refer to North Park's [Safe Community](#) site for reporting, contact information, and further details.

Academic Honesty

Academic Honesty: In keeping with our Christian heritage and commitment, North Park University is committed to the highest possible ethical and moral standards. Just as we will constantly strive to live up to these high standards, we expect our students to do the same. To that end, cheating of any sort will not be tolerated. Students who are discovered cheating are subject to discipline up to and including failure of a course and expulsion.

Our definition of cheating includes but is not limited to:

1. Plagiarism – the use of another's work as one's own without giving credit to the individual. This includes using materials from the internet.
2. Copying another's answers on an examination.
3. Deliberately allowing another to copy one's answers or work.
4. Using one's own work from previous assignments or other class assignments.
5. Signing an attendance roster for another who is not present.
6. Use of ChatGPT or other AI composition software to impersonate individual assignments.

In the special instance of group work, the instructor will make clear their expectations with respect to individual vs. collaborative work. A violation of these expectations may be considered cheating as well.

For further information on this subject you may refer to the Academic Dishonesty section of the University's online catalog.

Incomplete Grades

If, due to extenuating circumstances (specifically, pregnancy, illness, personal and family issues, military assignment, etc.), a student anticipates they will be unable to complete course work within the allotted time, that student may request a grade of incomplete from the course instructor before the last week of class clearly stating the

reason(s) for this request. Overscheduling and/or lack of self-discipline are not considered extenuating circumstances. If the request is timely and meets the criteria, student and instructor will submit the incomplete grade form and the grade for that class will be listed as "I" until the last day of the following semester. If coursework is not submitted by the last day of the following semester the listing of "I" will automatically be changed to "F." For the full policy, see page 15 of the [Seminary Academic Catalog](#).

Course Schedule

(Reading Key: bold – readings, **orange: assignments due**)

Week 1 (Aug. 25) – Images of Preaching and Its Place in Worship

Read before and after Class:

- *TWoP*, ch. 1
- *Workbook*, ch. 1
- *Wizard of Earthsea*, ch. 1–5
- Brown and Powery, "Preaching as an Act of Worship" (Canvas)
- Hooke, "Real Presence: Sacramental Embodiment in Preaching" (Canvas)

Week 2 (Sept. 1) – Formation of the Preacher

Read before Class:

- *Wizard of Earthsea*, ch. 6-10
- *Workbook*, ch. 11
- Florence, "Waking Up the Preacher"
- *Delivering the Sermon*, ch. 1-2

Activity:

- WLaP Presentations

Due for Class:

1. **Write Like a Preacher (WLaP) – Ch. 19 Prompt**

Week 3 (Sept 8) – Exegeting the Context

Read before Class:

- *Workbook*, ch. 5, 8, and 18
- Nieman, "Tools for Exploring Context" (Canvas)
- Tubbs Tisdale, "Exegeting the Congregation" (Canvas)
- *Delivering the Sermon*, ch. 3-4

Activity:

- WLaP Presentations

Due for Class:

1. WLaP – Ch. 18 Prompt

Week 4 (NO CLASS TUESDAY EVENING – IN PERSON 9 a.m.–5 p.m. Friday, September 18th)– Words, Biblical Preaching, Exegesis of Preaching, and Communication

Read:

- *TWoP*, ch. 2-3
- *Workbook*, ch. 4, 17
- *Delivering the Sermon*, ch. 5-6
- K. Long, “The Mouth: Voice and Speech” (Canvas)
- Lord, “What Preaching Words Do” (Canvas)
- Cressman, “*Lectio* for Preaching” (Canvas)

Activity:

- Creative Biblical Study for Preaching/Lectio Divina
- Oral Presentations: Images of God in Every Day Life

Due for Class:

1. Oral Reflection: Images of God in Every Day Life (Ch. 17) – manuscript and presentation
2. Submit first sermon biblical text (chosen in consultation with instructor)

Week 5 (Sept. 22) – The Main Point

Read:

- *TWoP*, ch. 4
- Wilson, “One Theme Sentence” (Canvas)
- *Delivering the Sermon*, ch. 5–6

Activity:

- WLaP Presentations

Due for Class:

1. WLaP – Ch. 23 Prompt (use your sermon text)

Week 6 (Sept. 29) – Sermon Forms

Read:

- *TWoP*, Ch. 5-6
- *Workbook*, ch. 10
- Allen, “Why Form Matters” and “Unity, Movement, and Climax” (Canvas)

Activity:

-WLaP Presentations

Due During Class:

1. **WLaP – Ch. 21 Prompt**

Week 7 (Oct. 6) – Beginnings, Transitions, and Ending

Read:

- TWoP*, Ch. 7
- Craddock, “Thirteen Ways to End a Sermon” (Canvas)

Due for Class:

1. **WLaP – Ch. 22 Prompt**

Due after class:

1. **Intercultural Book Review – Due Friday, Oct. 9**

Week 8 (Oct. 13) – Fall Reading Week

Week 9 (Oct. 20) – Writing the Sermon

Activity:

- WLaP Presentations (for those not presenting sermon)

-Recorded Sermons #1 _____

-Recorded Sermon #2 _____

-Recorded Sermon #3 _____

Read:

- *TWoP*, ch. 10
- Workbook*, ch. 7

Due for Class:

1. **WLaP – Ch. 26 Prompt (for those not presenting sermon)**
2. **Recorded Sermon #1–3**

Week 10 (Oct. 27) – Using Images and Experiences Well

Activity:

- WLaP Presentations (for those not presenting sermon)

-Recorded Sermons #4 _____

-Recorded Sermon #5 _____

-Recorded Sermon #6 _____

Read:

-*TWoP*, ch. 8

-*Workbook*, ch. 9

Due for Class:

1. WLaP – Ch. 24 Prompt (for those not presenting sermon)
2. Recorded Sermons #4–6
3. Sermon Reflections: Preachers #1–3

Week 11 (Nov. 3) – The Ethics of Preaching, Preaching as Ethics

Activity:

-WLaP Presentations (for those not presenting sermon)

-Recorded Sermons #7 _____

-Recorded Sermon #8 _____

-Recorded Sermon #9 _____

Read:

-*TWoP*, ch. 9

-“Preaching Ethically” (Canvas)

=

Due for Class:

1. WLaP – Ch. 24 Prompt (for those not presenting sermon)
2. Recorded Sermon #7-9
3. Sermon Reflections: Preachers #4–6

Week 12 (Nov. 10) – Preaching and the Imagination

Read:

-*Workbook*, ch. 6

-Brueggemann,

-Taylor, “Imagination” (Canvas)

-Kim-Cragg, “Imagination” (Canvas)

Activity:

- WLaP Presentations

Due Before Class:

1. WLaP – Prompt ch. 20
2. Sermon Reflections: Preachers #7–9
3. Sermon Text for final sermon

Week 13 – (Nov. 17) Preaching Justice

Read:

- Workbook*, ch. 20
- Brueggemann, “Prophetic Preaching as Sustained, Disciplined, Emancipated Imagination,” Canvas
- Jennings, “Speaking Gospel in the Public Arena”
- Troeger and Wilbanks, “Preaching on Ethical Issues”
- Moss, Ch 2, 3; Sermons 1 & 4

Due Before Class:

1. WLaP – Prompt ch. 20

Week 14 (Nov. 24) – Preaching the Hard Things

Read:

- Workbook*, Ch. 13-14, 25
- Moss, Ch. 1, Sermons 2 & 4

Activity:

- WLaP Presentations

Due Before Class:

1. WLaP – Prompt ch. 25

Week 15 (Dec. 1) – Preaching at Weddings, Funerals, and other Occasional Services

Read:

- Donna Giver-Johnson, “Funerals” and “Weddings and Divorces” (Canvas)

Activities:

-Sermons #1 _____

-Sermon #2 _____

-Sermon #3 _____

-Sermon #4 _____

Due Before Class:

1. Sermon manuscript for those preaching.

Week 16 (Dec. 8) – Preaching Lab

Activities:

-Sermons #5 _____

-Sermon #6 _____

-Sermon #7 _____

-Sermon #8 _____

-Sermon #9 _____

Read:

-Long, ch. 9

Due Before Class:

1. Sermon manuscript for those preaching.
2. Sermon reflections for preachers #1–4.

Due After Class:

1. Sermon reflections for preachers #5–9 (Friday, Dec. 11)

Class Resource Bibliography

Allen, Jr., O. Wesley. *Determining the Form: Structures for Preaching*. Fortress, 2008.

Brown, Sally A. and Luke A. Powery. *Ways of the Word: Learning to Preach for Your Time and Place*. Fortress, 2016.

Craddock, Fred B. *Craddock on the Craft of Preaching*. Edited by Lee Sparks and Kathryn Hayes Sparks. Chalice, 2011.

Cressman, Lisa. *Backstory Preaching: Integrating Life, Spirituality, and Craft*. Liturgical Press, 2018.

Florence, Anna Carter. *Preaching as Testimony*. Westminster John Knox 2007.

Hooke, Ruthanna. "Real Presence: Sacramental Embodiment in Preaching." In *Preaching and the Theological Imagination*. Edited by Zachary Guiliano and Cameron E. Partridge. Peter Lang, 2015.

Kim-Cragg, HyeRan. *Postcolonial Preaching: Creating a Ripple Effect*. Lexington, 2021.

Long, Kimberly Bracken. *The Worshiping Body: The Art of Leading Worship*. Westminster John Knox, 2009.

Long, Thomas G. and Leonora Tubbs Tisdale, eds. *Teaching Preaching as a Christian Practice*. Westminster John Knox, 2008.

Lord, Jennifer L. *Finding Language and Imagery*. Fortress, 2010.

Nieman, James R. *Knowing the Context*. Fortress, 2008.

Taylor, Barbara Brown. *The Preaching Life*. Cowley, 1993.

Wilson, Paul Scott. *The Four Pages of the Sermon: A Guide to Biblical Preaching*, rev. ed. Abingdon, 2018.

