

Note:

Course content may be changed, term to term, without notice.  
The information below is provided as a guide for course selection  
and is not binding in any form.

**Course Number, Name, and Credit Hours**

BE6601 Preaching Poetic and Prophetic Literature, 3 credit hours

**Course Description**

This course examines the method of preparing and delivering sermons from the poetic and prophetic genres of scripture. Issues related to interpreting these genres will be addressed. Students will prepare sermons from Old Testament poetic and prophetic passages.

*Prerequisites: BE-5501 Hermeneutics for Preaching and BE-5502 Communicating Scripture. (BE-5502 can be taken concurrently.)*

**Course Objectives**

*After completing this course, the student will be able to:*

1. **Discover** the exegetical idea of a given poetic or prophetic text through an exegetical process which pays attention to its poetic devices and literary features.
2. **Apply** a given poetic or prophetic text personally and then to their listeners, locating this application in the text's theological message and connecting it to the storyline of the Bible and the gospel of Jesus Christ.
3. **Construct** from a poetic or prophetic text an expository sermon which communicates its big idea with either poetic flair or a prophetic edge.
4. **Assess** the effectiveness of a given sermon on a poetic or prophetic text to unpack the text with sensitivity to its poetic or prophetic style.
5. **Deliver** the sermon without notes in a clear, compelling way that draws listeners into the poetic or prophetic text.

**Course Textbook(s) and/or Supplemental Information**

Required textbooks for all Moody Online classes can be found on the [Required Textbooks](#) section of the Moody website.

*NOTE: This course requires the videotaping of students giving sermons and uploading their video into YouTube or Vimeo. You will need an account with one of these providers.*

*NOTE: Additional content or links to Internet content may be required and will be provided in the course.*

## Assignments

*See the Syllabus page in the Blackboard course for general assignment instructions.*

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### Part 1. Special Assignment Instructions:

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**Psalm Sermon Exegesis Assignment (1-2)**—You will work on **Psalm 46**. The first part of your sermon preparation will be an exegetical assignment. This assignment must be at least THREE double-spaced pages. Do your own thinking first, and then consult the commentaries by Craigie, Van Gemeren, and Wilson in the Course Resources. When you cite a commentary or another resource, simply put the author, abbreviated title, and page number in parentheses as in the following example (*Craigie, Psalms 1-50*, 78). Use the bibliographic entries in this syllabus to provide your bibliography at the end of your paper for the commentaries you use, such as:

**Craigie**, Peter C. *Psalms 1-50*. Word Biblical Commentary. Vol. 19. Waco, TX: Word Books, 1983. Pages 341-346. [Week 3]

Your paper should be organized around the following headings (note that the first six can be remembered by the acronym “PSALMS”):

- **Parallelism** – Describe the relationships between the lines in each verse, as well as any relationships between verses. You may use either the classical categories (synonymous, synthetic, antithetical, climactic, emblematic, formal relationship) or the categories suggested by Ryken, pages 70-73.
- **Syntax** – Note the unique syntactical or grammatical features, such as verb tenses, clause relationships, etc. For example, the term “for” or “because” (Hebrew, *ki*) will often signal the reason for a statement or a command.
- **Art** – Identify any figures of speech such as simile, metaphor, hyperbole, personification, apostrophe, paradox, merism, symbol, allusion, etc. (see Ryken, chapter 3). Explain the meaning each figure intends to convey.
- **Lexemes** – Identify any key words or terms, particularly those which are repeated or unfamiliar. Take a few minutes to look at the entry for the lexeme in a Hebrew Lexicon (such as Brown/Driver/Briggs or Holladay) or in a theological dictionary (such as *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* or *Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*). A more basic, yet useful, resource is *Mounce’s Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words* (Zondervan, 2006). Describe what the lexeme (word) means in this particular context.
- **Movement** – Analyze the flow and structure. What are the main units or sections of the psalm? You can identify these through changes in content or speaker, the use of refrains or repeated

statements, or “structural markers” (transitions words such as “for, because, therefore,” etc.). Does the psalm follow the format of a psalm of lament (individual or community) or a psalm of praise (descriptive or declarative)? Also, track the emotional movement of the psalm, too. What kind of emotion occurs at the beginning of the psalm—fear, anger, joy, trust, anxiety, etc.? Does this emotional tone change? Is it “resolved” in some way at the end?

- **Setting** – Is there anything in the superscription or within the psalm itself which indicates when, where, and by whom the psalm was written or what were the circumstances behind its writing?

*\*\*The previous items relate specifically to poetry and can be remembered by the acronym “PSALMS.” The following items work with any literary genre.*

- **Vision of God** – In a sentence or two, describe what attribute or aspect of God’s character is prominent in the story. For example, does the story highlight God’s wisdom and understanding? Does it portray God as a warrior who fights for his people? Does it show that God is a talking God who gives commands? Does it emphasize that God shows his love without compromising his justice? Does it stress that God is all-powerful? These are simply a few of the attributes or characteristics of God which might be the focus.
- **Depravity Factor** – In a sentence or two, describe what sinful tendency works against this aspect of God’s character. In some narratives, this is quite obvious. In others, you may have to think more deeply about what sin or problem this narrative is addressing.
- **Exegetical Idea** – Write out the exegetical idea in one sentence. You must also indicate the idea’s “subject” and “complement.”

**Sermon Outlines (2-1, 5-2, 6-1, 8-1):** Prepare a **ONE-page** outline of your sermon. The outline points must be written as *complete sentences*. At the top of the page, include the sermon title (centered) and sermon text (centered). Then, for your main headings, use ‘Introduction,’ I., II., III., etc., and ‘Conclusion.’ Use ‘A, B, C, etc.’ for your sub-points. Make sure to label the “Big Idea.” It should be one of your main outline points. For some sample outlines of psalms, see the “Sample Sermon Outlines--Psalms” in the Week 2 Resources folder. Note: Your outline of Psalm 46 (Assignment 2-1) will be based on your exegetical work in this course (Assignment 1-2). However, you will also prepare outlines for Ecclesiastes 11:9-12:14 (4-2), Song of Songs 8:5-14 (6-1) and Isaiah 40:12-31 (8-1), but no sermon exegesis or manuscripts will be prepared for these last 3 passages due to time limitations. You will want to consult the commentaries in the Course Resources folder for all these assignments.

**Sermon Supporting Materials Assignment (2-2):** Prepare **FIVE pieces** of supporting material for **Psalm 46**—either illustrations, description of poetic features (given with some poetic flair!), factual information (such as historical-cultural background), or application images (a description of what the truth of a biblical passage looks like when lived out in a contemporary situation). Label each of the five pieces of

supporting material (illustration, explanation, factual information, or application image). Then, for each piece, present the material in 5-6 sentences as you would preach it in your sermon. In other words, you are providing a transcript of each piece of supporting material. Word the transcript just as you would present the illustration or explanation (etc.) in the sermon itself.

**Sermon Manuscript (3-1):** Prepare a SIX-to-SEVEN-page (single-spaced) manuscript of your sermon for **Psalm 46**. Work off your sermon outline and the sermon supporting materials you prepared. This manuscript should read like an oral transcript of your sermon and should not have outline points. Break the manuscript down into paragraphs. This breakdown will likely reflect your outline points (even though these will not be visible in your manuscript). For an example of a sermon manuscript, see pages 171-179 of Haddon W. Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition (you do not need to number the paragraphs like Robinson did). Or, see pages 161-226 in Steven D. Mathewson, *The Art of Preaching Old Testament Narrative*. (You might want to add citations and a bibliography for your own reference in case you ever use this sermon again, but they are not necessary for this assignment.)

**Sermon Delivery Assignment - Video (3-2):** Preach a **25-30 minute expository sermon** on **Psalm 46** as your preaching text. Preferably, deliver this in a ministry setting (worship service, youth group meeting, chapel service, etc.). However, you may deliver it to a group of fellow-students or friends in a less formal setting. Record and upload your sermon to YouTube.com. You are required to deliver this sermon without notes. However, you may do the following: you may write the sermon's big idea in your Bible; you may underline or circle words or phrases in the text in your Bible; you may write one-word "triggers" in the margin of your Bible. For example, if you plan to use an illustration about Hurricane Katrina, simply write "Katrina" in the margin.

**Sermon Preparation Assignment—Ecclesiastes (5-1):** You will work on **Ecclesiastes 11:9-12:14**. Spend a half hour reading the text and make some observations about the Parallelism, Syntax, Art, Lexemes (words), Movement, and Setting (these categories are explained in the instructions for Assignment 1-2).

Then, spend another half hour reading Provan's commentary on this section (the PDF is found in the Course Resources folder). Then, prepare a ONE-page paper with SEVEN exegetical insights (each should be 1-2 sentences in length), and ONE application image (a 3-4 sentence description of what it will look like to live out the teaching of the text).

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## Part 2 – Assignments in Order

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**1-1 Poetic Features Chart:** After reading Ryken (Introduction and chapters 1-4), prepare a ONE-page chart of the poetic features which an expositor needs to identify when studying a psalm or a poetic text in the Old Testament. Name each feature (such as "hyperbole") and then provide a one-sentence definition and one biblical reference which contains the particular feature. (Therefore, there will be THREE columns to this chart: (1) Poetic Feature, (2) Definition, and (3) Biblical Reference.)

**1-2 Psalm Sermon Exegesis Assignment:** Prepare a three-page summary of your exegetical work on **Psalm 46** according to the **instructions under Part 1 above**.

**2-1 Sermon Outline:** Prepare a ONE-page sermon outline for **Psalm 46** according to the instructions under Part 1 above.

**2-2 Sermon Supporting Materials:** Prepare five pieces of supporting material for your **Psalm 46** sermon according to the instructions under Part 1 above.

**3-1 Sermon Manuscript:** Prepare a THREE page sermon manuscript on **Psalm 46** according to the instructions under Part 1 above.

**3-2 Sermon Delivery (video):** Deliver your sermon on **Psalm 46** and make a video recording of it according to the instructions under Part 1 above.

**4-1 Sermon Review 1:** Complete a sermon review for another student's 3-2 sermon by filling out the template provided.

**4-2 Sermon Review 2:** Complete a sermon review for a different student's 3-2 sermon by filling out the template provided.

**4-3 Reflection Paper on Proverbs 31:** Write a TWO-page reflection paper on "**Preaching Proverbs 31:1-9**." What do you think the big idea of this text is? How would you outline it (main points only)? How might you preach this on Mother's Day? Note: You are not required to use any commentaries or other study helps for this paper. It is simply a reflection on your reading of the passage.

**5-1 Sermon Preparation Assignment - Ecclesiastes:** Complete a Sermon Preparation Assignment for **Ecclesiastes 11:9-12:14** according to the instructions under Part 1 above.

**5-2 Sermon Outline:** Prepare a ONE-page sermon outline for **Ecclesiastes 11:9-12:14** according to the instructions under Part 1 above.

**6-1 Sermon Outline:** Prepare a ONE-page sermon outline for **Song of Songs 8:5-15** according to the instructions under Part 1 above.

**8-1 Sermon Outline:** Prepare a ONE-page sermon outline for **Isaiah 40:12-31** according to the instructions under Part 1 above.

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### Part 3 - Discussions

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**Week 1, 3, 5: NO DISCUSSIONS**

**Week 2:** One of the commitments of an expository preacher is to proclaim a Bible-shaped word in a Bible-shaped way. This means a sermon on a Bible story will have a story-like quality to it, and a sermon on a logically argued discourse (like Romans 3) will have a logical argument to it. Similarly, a sermon on biblical poetry should have a poetic flair to it. How might you preach a psalm with a bit of poetic flair?

While you will obviously not preach in parallel lines of poetry (!), what might you do to give your sermon a poetic feel rather than the feel of constructing an argument? How will you touch your listener's emotions with the truth in the way that a psalm does as opposed simply to offering an explanation of the truth?

**Week 4 (Sermon Link)** - Follow these instructions in Blackboard to submit your sermon from Assignment 3-2 for others to review.

**Week 6:** Discuss your view on the following four issues related to the **Song of Songs** (one paragraph per question). 1. Does the book describe human love or God's love? 2. Is Solomon portrayed positively or negatively in the book? 3. How is Song of Songs structured—a series of poems, a drama, etc.? 4. What benefit will followers of Jesus gain from hearing this book preached?

**Week 7:** First, based on your reading of Greidanus, what are some of the key features (literary, thematic, etc.) of **prophetic literature** to which interpreters must pay attention in order to understand the Old Testament prophet's message?

Second, based on viewing the video sermon by Allen, how can a preacher proclaim a prophetic text in a way that captures its prophetic spirit and lets the prophetic elements of that text shape its language and tone? Specifically, what did Allen do to bring out the prophetic features and tone found in Isaiah 53?

**Week 8:** Looking back over all your study and written assignments, discuss **THREE** of the most important ideas you have learned in this course. Make a brief reply to at least **TWO** of your colleagues who mention ideas you did not.

## Assessments

Assessments (# in parentheses)	% of Total
<b>Discussions (Weeks 2, 6, 7, 8)</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Sermon Outlines (2-1, 5-2, 6-1, 8-1)</b>	<b>20</b>
1-1 Poetic Features Chart	<b>5</b>
1-2 Sermon Exegesis Assignment	<b>10</b>
2-2 Sermon Supporting Materials Assignment	<b>10</b>
3-1 Sermon Manuscripts	<b>10</b>
3-2 Sermon Delivery	<b>15</b>
4-1 Sermon Review 1	<b>5</b>
4-2 Sermon Review 2	<b>5</b>
4-3 Reflection Paper on Proverbs 31	<b>5</b>
5-1 Sermon Preparation Assignment - Ecclesiastes	<b>5</b>
<b>Total:</b>	<b>100%</b>



Letter grades are determined by the following scale:

<b>Letter Grade</b>	<b>Percentage Equivalent</b>	<b>Description</b>
A	96 – 100	Exceptional work
A-	94 – 95	Excellent work
B+	92 – 93	Very good work
B	89 – 91	Good work
B-	87 – 88	Above average work
C+	83 – 86	Average work
C	79 – 82	Work needs improvement
C-	75 – 78	Minimally acceptable work
F	< 75	Unacceptable work