

**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

BE6603 Preaching and Culture, 3 credit hours

### Course Description

This course equips preachers to conceive of preaching in particular as sites for cultural engagement. This course invites them to fuse exegetical competency with cultural competency by using the insights gained in Church and Culture. In dialogue with the shifts in contemporary culture, students preach sermons designed to enhance theirs and that of their congregation's ability to engage with a diverse world. Emphasis will be on preaching as a means to transform the culture.

*Prerequisite:* BE-5502 Communicating Scripture

### Course Objectives

1. **Argue** for a philosophy of preaching as a tool for cultural engagement
2. **Modify** their use of language to strengthen their work of "enculturating"
3. **Deconstruct** dominant cultural narratives by identifying the core tenants/messages rather than the enculturated products
4. **Compose** messages that both criticize dominant cultural narratives and energize communities to live according to an alternative cultural narrative

### Course Textbook(s) and/or Supporting Information

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

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

**Assignments** (*what student does for a grade*)

**Guideline for the Discussion Board:** Post your initial response to the discussion question by mid-week (Friday, 11:59pm CST). Then read and respond to at least **TWO** of your classmates' initial posts by the end of the week (Monday, 11:59pm CST). **Note:** In Week 2, you only have to respond to **ONE** other classmate for each of the two discussions.

**Standard for Written Papers:** All papers must be in Turabian style. Each page should be approximately 300 words, 12-pt. Times New Roman font on double-spaced lines with 1" margins. (Therefore, a 2-page paper is approximately 600 words; a 3-page paper is approximately 900 words, etc.) Here is a guide to Turabian style: [http://www.press.uchicago.edu/books/turabian/turabian\\_citationguide.html](http://www.press.uchicago.edu/books/turabian/turabian_citationguide.html)

**Part 1 - Regular Assignments:**

**1-1 Philosophy of Preaching as Cultural Engagement [Part One] - Paper:** 1-1 Philosophy of Preaching as Cultural Engagement [Part One] - Paper: In this course, students will be writing a "Philosophy of Preaching as Cultural Engagement" paper that takes time and thought, so it will be developed in parts over the 8 weeks of this course.

In this first week, write a TWO-page research paper that examines the biblical warrant for sermonic engagement with culture. At this point in your writing, you are not arguing for a particular form of engagement, but rather surveying the Biblical data for passages that may be used in your later argument. The objective at this stage is to explain how the Bible (specifically the passages you select) can be used in developing a philosophy of preaching and culture. In other words: What does the bible have to say about preaching toward cultural issues? Is there a "biblical way" to preach sermons addressing the times of the preacher?

Once you select the passages and write your two-page paper, write a final (third) page that answers the questions: "How did I use these passages? What assumptions am I making when I use them? What justifies me in using these passages of the Bible in this way?" (It might help you to make a list of "rules" about what you believe.) Include this third page as an appendix to your paper. (Paper will be a total of THREE pages with the appendix.)

NOTE: Passages from the study assignments can be used as starting points, but they should not be the primary text for your research. Explain the relevance of each passage suggested in your work. For more explanation of this assignment, please read: An explanation of Assignment 1-1 by an instructor.

**2-1 Metaphors and Narratives Paper (Reflection Paper):** Using the insights from reading "Metaphors We Live By," and your studies in Church and Culture, identify metaphors that are key to your church community. **Note:** This is not a paper on platitudes. Find the truly crucial, consistent, and unique metaphors for your community. Ask questions about the way metaphor is employed to describe the space, story, and rhythm of life. How does the community identify itself? Finally, complete the paper with an examination of the relationship between these metaphors and the community story. This should be a **THREE page double-spaced reflection paper**. (See the definition of "reflection paper" in *Course Resources* folder in the menu.) Please adhere to Turabian style.

**Example:** Some traditions may lean on the metaphor of "fire" for the Holy Spirit. This metaphor can be key to the story, and it affects the understanding of the space, making it more appropriate to use language like "tabernacle" and "altar" to describe the place of worship.

**3-1 Philosophy of Preaching as Cultural Engagement [Part Two] - Chart:** Thus far, you have been introduced to (1) Tim Keller's method of cultural engagement, (2) Brueggeman's image of prophetic preaching, and (3) Vanhoozer's method for biblical interpretation. In the provided chart, evaluate the

way each of these employs Scripture and understands culture by filling in your **2-4 sentence responses** these 5 questions:

1. What is the Bible according to the way each one of these authors use it?
2. What is “culture” according to the way they engage it?
3. How do the two (Scripture and Culture) relate according to each author?
4. What role, according to these authors, does the act of preaching play in the relationship between Scripture and culture?
5. How do you feel about each author’s method?

**NOTE:** The use of other sources by these authors would be helpful. Feel free to include additional material beyond the material provided in this course.

**4-1 Philosophy of Preaching as Cultural Engagement [Part Three] - Paper:** Up to this point in your developing philosophy of preaching and culture, you have completed the following:

1. Surveyed the biblical text on preaching and culture
2. Provided source material for discovering the world of dominant culture
3. Analyzed the nature of Scripture, culture, and their relationship.

Now, in light of your findings, give FIVE methodological principles on **ONE page** that would guide your use of Scripture to criticize and/or energize an alternative cultural world. Then, include a brief methodological reflection of **TWO pages** to identify more explicitly the way these principles would guide you in developing a sermon. Here Keller’s sermon, “The Gospel and Idolatry” from Week 1 serves as an excellent example of principles guiding his sermon writing. Total paper should be **THREE pages**.

**5-1 Exegetical Summary of 1 Corinthians 6:12-20:** Using skills acquired in BE5502 Communicating Scripture, prepare a THREE-page summary of your exegetical conclusions. When you quote a source or share an idea that you learned from a source, please put a simple citation after it in parentheses (Fee, 38). Include a bibliography at the end of your summary using Turabian style.

*Please organize your work around the following headings:*

- **Mechanical Layout-** See *Preparing a Mechanical Layout* by Dr. Steve Mathewson attached.
- **Observations—** (Form, Art, Context, Terms, Structure) You should have at least twenty-five observations. NOTE: Keep in mind the insight provided in week 3 on metaphors when working on the section “Art.” What metaphors should guide God’s people in the holy improvisation of this text?
- **Vision of God—**In a sentence or two, describe what attribute or aspect of God’s character is prominent in the biblical passage. NOTE: What story is the community being called to live into? How is this text transfiguring the people?
- **Depravity Factor** (or Fallen Condition Focus)—In a sentence or two, describe what sinful tendency works against this aspect of God’s character.
- **Exegetical Idea—**Identify the “Subject” and the “Complement.” Then, combine these into a one sentence exegetical idea.

**Note:** When writing on the sections of the “Vision of God” and the “Depravity Factor,” include commentary of the *story* or cultural narrative informing the Christian sexual ethic. “What story guides the behavior being suggested in the text?” Follow the principles you developed in Assignment 4-1, “Philosophy of Preaching as Cultural Engagement Paper” when answering these questions.

**6-1 Sermon Manuscript for 1 Corinthians 6:12-20:** Prepare a **FIVE-page manuscript** (*single-spaced*) of your sermon. The production of this manuscript assumes the completion of the work necessary for sermon prep as taught in BE5502 Communicating Scripture. Remember, this manuscript should read like an oral transcript of your sermon and should NOT have outline points.

**6-2 Sermonic Rationale (Reflection Paper):** In a second TWO-page reflection paper (see definition of “reflection paper” from Assignment 2-1), provide the sermonic/discursive mechanics employed to both criticize the dominant cultural narrative summarized last week (in Assignment 5-1) and energize the community to improvisational living according to the text. What metaphors did you employ? How did you use them? What worlds did you create? How did you create them? (**Review the instructions in Week 2 about writing a reflection paper.**)

**NOTE:** Your sermon will be graded primarily on its ability to engage the cultural world so as to energize God’s people and criticize the dominant culture in appropriate and “demythologizing” ways.

**7-1 Previous Sermon Manuscript Revision:** Choose any sermon preached in a previous course taken as part of your degree program and edit the manuscript according to the principles of engagement developed in your paper. Any edits should be marked in red by using the “track changes” review tool in your word processing software. Upload BOTH the original and revised sermon manuscript. (This should take you no more than TWO hours.)

**^How to Track Changes in a Word Document:** See the first 1½ minutes of this video to learn how to turn on the “track changes” feature in MS Word, if you do not know how to do this:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SuUDyRx429E>

**7-2 Revisions Rationale Paper (Reflection Paper):** As you did in week 6, write a FIVE-page reflection paper (using the instructions from Assignment 3-1 on how to write a reflection paper) providing the rationale for sermonic/discursive mechanics revised or added in Assignment 7-1 to improve the sermonic cultural engagement. Identify how these revisions will better criticize the dominant cultural narrative summarized last week and energize the community to improvisational living according to the text. What metaphors did you employ? How did you use them? What worlds did you create? How did you create them? (**Review the instructions in Week 2 about writing a reflection paper.**)

**NOTE:** In this paper, provide a summary of the dominant cultural narrative being criticized by the text being preached, and the alternative cultural narrative being developed by the text.

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**Part 2 - Discussion Assignments** (you will also have to reply to other students’ posts):

**Week 1:** Describe Tim Keller’s method for cultural engagement through sermon form. What are some of the strengths in his method? What are the weaknesses? Share the elements of his approach you would appropriate and why.

**Note for Week 2:** You only have to respond to ONE other classmate for each of these discussions. However, feel free to respond more often, if you have the time and inclination.

**Week 2A:** Brueggeman writes, “The task of prophetic ministry is to nurture, nourish, and evoke a consciousness and perception alternative to the consciousness and perception of the dominant culture around us... The alternative consciousness to be nurtured, on the one hand, serves to criticize in dismantling the dominant consciousness... On the other hand, that alternative consciousness to be nurtured serves to energize persons and communities by its promise of another time and situation toward which the community of faith may move”

Why is this framework and definition of the prophetic ministry helpful when thinking of preaching and culture? Why do you think he associates criticism with liberal tendencies and energizing with conservative tendencies?

**Week 2B:** Identify other idols that “reign” today, and “demythologize” them. In others words, identify the ways these idols are corruptible, untruthful, or vain.

In your reply to another student, comment on their post by choosing a passage of Scripture and employing it to create an “alternative consciousness” to the one formed by the Idol they have presented. Keep in mind the language of **criticizing** and **energizing**.

**Week 3:** Discuss how preaching can help energize the congregation toward good acts of improvisation. In other words, how can a preacher’s words help elevate people into the world of the “alternative consciousness”? Provide examples, if you are able.

**Week 4:** Read the article “Why Generation Y Yuppies are Unhappy.” Now, share generational narratives that you believe have taken form in your generation. The article provides three points of advice to “Generation Y.” Using the methods from previous weeks (Keller and Brueggeman), formulate a biblical response to Generation Y. How would you criticize this generational narrative in a sermon?

Note: There are many passages that can be useful to this discussion. Therefore, in writing your biblical response, try not repeat passages from other students. (Therefore, the sooner you post in the discussion board, the better.)

**Week 5:** After listening to “Song of Creation,” tell your peers how you see Keller using Scripture to confront cultural idols. Do you see Keller using Scripture to energize, criticize, or both? Provide your reasoning.

*No Discussions in Weeks 6 & 7.*

## BE6603 Preaching and Culture – Course Syllabus

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### Assessments

Assessments	% of Total
<b>TOTAL</b> Discussions (6)	15
“Philosophy of Preaching” Parts 1, 2 & 3 (Assignments 1-1 / 3-1 / 4-1)	20
2-1 Metaphors and Narratives Reflection Paper	10
5-1 Exegetical Summary of 1 Cor. 6:12-20	10
6-1 Sermon Manuscript	15
6-2 Revisions Rationale Paper	10
7-1 Previous Sermon Manuscript Revision	10
7-2 Revisions Rationale Paper	10
<b>Total:</b>	<b>100%</b>

Letter grades are determined by the following scale:

Letter Grade	Percentage Equivalent	Description
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