

**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**

BE-7702 Theology and Preaching, 3 credit hours

**Course Description**

This course provides an understanding of the theology of preaching. Students will formulate a philosophy of preaching that integrates theology, hermeneutics, and cultural perspectives and practice. Emphasis will be given to the exploration of the relationship between the divine and human dimensions of the preaching event. As part of this study, students will study the theological content of classic and contemporary sermons.

**Prerequisites:** BE-6603 Preaching and Culture, and BE-7701 Contextualized Preaching; however, both can be taken concurrently with BE-7702.

**Course Objectives**

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

1. **Articulate** the goal and purpose of preaching, as well as the relationship between the preacher and preaching.
2. **Assess** both the transformational power of Scripture on the Christian and how the preacher can channel that potential into the sermon.
3. **Differentiate** between the role of the human and the role of the Holy Spirit in preaching.
4. **Compose** a supplemental reading program that will enhance their ability to relate the Scriptures to life.
5. **Evaluate** the place of the gospel message in preaching.

**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).

**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)

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**Part 1 - Regular Assignments:**

**Note:** All assignments in blue are part of the Final Paper.

**1-1 Theology of Preaching – Part 1 (Biblical Grounds):** In this course, students will work toward a “comprehensive theology of preaching” paper. Upon completion of all the smaller assignments, this paper will contain the student’s complete theology of preaching, covering the rationale for preaching, the authority of preaching, the divine and human roles in preaching, and the relationship between the gospel and preaching.

For this assignment, write a **TWO-PAGE** paper communicating the **biblical grounds** for the act of preaching. What is the basis (both OT and NT) for preaching as one of the central expressions of our faith? Is there justification for the continued use of preaching, or should it be considered a relic of the early church as we opt for more ‘audience-friendly’ teaching styles (group discussions, panels, etc.)? Was preaching directed primarily in Scripture to individuals with the purpose of fulfilling a specific task, or was it a general command as a practice for all to utilize?

Although your paper should have a broader scope, be sure to incorporate **Jonah 3:2, Mark 16:15, and 2 Timothy 4:2.**

**1-2 Reading Engagement Worksheet:** In this week’s reading you are exposed to the “project method” of Harry Emerson Fosdick; the “pastor as minor poet method” of Craig Barnes; and the “reasons for preaching” of Joe Stowell. Each of these approaches intends to define the goal of preaching, and present a method for fulfilling this goal.

Using the “**1-2 Reading Engagement Worksheet**” provided, engage with your reading so as to compare and contrast the different goals and purposes of each author. Either appropriate them into, or reject them from, your own goals and purposes in preaching.

**1-3 Reasons for Preaching (Blog):** Generate a **TWO-to-THREE sentence statement** about the goal of preaching in this blog format. Incorporate both Scripture and your reading in formulating your response. How can we know if the goal has been met? How can a preacher craft each and every sermon in light of this goal? (Please feel free to read and comment on others’ blogs. Comments are not required or graded, but they are a way to communicate your thoughts with the author.)

**2-1 Theology of Preaching Paper – Part 2 (Scripture):** For this assignment, write a **TWO-PAGE** paper detailing the purposes of Scripture in preaching and discipleship. The first half of the paper will cover the authority of Scripture in preaching, and the second half will cover the aim of Scripture in discipleship.

In regards to authority, provide the basis for Scripture as the authoritative source in preaching. Lay out the OT and NT case for God’s Word as the authority by which we guide our lives. Why should we look to Scripture alone? What does it mean that Christ is the Living Word in relation to the written Word? Be sure to interact with Hebrews 4:15 and 2 Timothy 3:16.

In regards to the aim of Scripture in discipleship, Vanhoozer writes that Scripture “forms disciples by transforming the interpretive frameworks by which they lead their lives,” so when it comes to Scripture, “it is better to think in terms of inserting oneself into the world of the biblical text, which is the true story of the world.” How does imagination play a role in the formation of a disciple? What does a sanctified imagination, one which interprets the world ‘as it is in Christ’ look like in everyday life? How does the preacher encourage his listeners to cultivate ‘good canonical habits’? Succinctly, what is the end goal of Scripture in preaching?

**2-2 Eat This Book: Spiritual Reading Self-Reflection (Journal):** Eugene Peterson advocates for “a way of reading that guards against depersonalizing the text into an affair of questions and answers, definitions and dogmas,” and instead “intends the living of the text, listening and responding to the voices of that ‘so great a cloud of witnesses,’ telling their stories, singing their songs, preaching their sermons, praying their prayers, asking their questions, having their children, burying their dead, following Jesus.”

In a **ONE-PAGE (300 words) journal entry**, reflect on your own ‘spiritual reading’ of the text. What do you practice in your own reading of Scripture to avoid a ‘dead’ reading of the text? Interact with each of the four elements of Lectio Divina that Peterson presents. How can you practically change the way you read to promote a reading that infuses the biblical story with your own? How would you recommend for a member in your congregation to emulate the same in their own life?

**3-1 Sermon Evaluation Chart:** One of the objectives for this week is to evaluate and analyze the use of Scripture by preachers throughout history. Using the “**3-1 Sermon Evaluation Chart**” provided, each student will review four sermons, critically assessing the use of Scripture by each preacher.

The four sermons will be Second Clement, “Am I a Sea, or a Whale?” by Charles Spurgeon, “Sermon at Temple Israel of Hollywood” by Martin Luther King Jr., and the Founder’s Week sermon by Crawford Loritts from week 2. Pay special attention to the frequency of reference to Scripture, along with the audience and context the preaching is working in.

**3-2 Scriptural Methodology Outline:** Introducing his chapter on making God supreme in preaching, Piper writes, “I am so convinced of the value of these characteristics for our own day that I am going to call them ten characteristics of good preaching and present them as challenges to you.”

In line with your learning from lesson two, write a **ONE-PAGE outline** in which you formulate a methodology for using the Scriptures in preaching. Model your outline in much the same way as Piper presents characteristics for preaching. What must the preacher do in order to reflect the work that the Scriptures are doing? What steps can the preacher take to adequately communicate the message that each specific text is communicating, along with the whole corpus of the Bible?

**4-1 Response to Readings:** In her piece, “Letting Words Do Their Work,” McEntyre addresses the necessity of the preacher to serve as “Word Stewards” in their congregation: those who “give” their words particularly and purposefully to their congregation.

After reading this article, in addition to your other readings for this week, write a **ONE-to-TWO PAGE** response to this idea. How important are the words which are used by the preacher to communicate the message of God? Do you believe that failure to adequately and accurately express one’s message keeps a congregation from understanding or can God supersede the failure of the preacher?

**4-2 Human & Divine Roles of Preaching Chart:** Using the information provided through course readings for this lesson, fill in the “**4-2 Human & Divine Roles of Preaching Chart**” which identifies and explains both the human and divine roles in preaching. Your chart is broken up into four rows: (1) extended definition; (2) course reading evidence; (3) scriptural support; and, (4) practical application.

**5-1 Various Sources Chart:** Based upon the readings from this week’s lesson, **create a chart** which reveals the different types of sources which can be used within a sermon, as well as for what *purposes* they are used. (i.e. commentary on politics, literature example of love, etc.)

**5-2 Response Paper:** At an alarming rate much of the Church in America is becoming illiterate, and leadership within the church seems to be doing little to combat the problem. In **ONE-to-TWO PAGES** write a response paper\* about why the presence of additional sources within a sermon aid in making a more literate Christian, or why adding too many sources may keep a listener from engaging in the text.

\*A response paper is your chance to communicate in writing your personal viewpoint and personal learning as they relate specifically to this reading, and the ideas and values expressed within it.

**6-1 Theocentric Preaching Model Outlines:** For this assignment, identify **THREE** texts for which you will be creating a sermon outline. Craft **TWO-to-THREE** outlines with big ideas, main points, illustrations and explanations, but through a theocentric focus. At the end of each outline, write a **ONE-paragraph** rationale for why you chose that passage, as well as what your theocentric connection is. [Sermon outlines should contain at least **THREE** main points.]

**6-2 Theocentric Preaching Response:** For this assignment, please write a **ONE-PAGE** response paper to the information that has been covered during this week’s assignments and readings. After interacting with theocentric texts, what do you believe about the idea? Should preaching be focused on “God the Father” - or would another method be more effective?

**7-1 Theology of Preaching Paper – Part 3 (Gospel):** For this assignment, write a **TWO PAGE** paper presenting your view on the relationship between the Gospel and preaching. Be sure to interact with both sides of this discussion, and provide concerns and commendations for both the view you have chosen and the view you have not chosen.

How and when do you appropriately make reference to Christ in preaching? What criteria do you use to decide when to explicitly reference Christ, particularly when interpreting or applying a text from the Old

Testament? What are some warnings or boundary markers to follow when applying the method or model you have chosen? Provide some examples from Scripture to support your points.

**8-1 Theology of Preaching Paper – Part 4 (Practical):** For this assignment, write a **TWO-PAGE** paper presenting your view on how to live as a preacher and preach through difficult times in life and ministry. Cover the practical aspects of life and ministry through your readings and the application of what you have learned through this course.

For instance, what do you do when: Your marriage is falling apart, and you have to preach a sermon on Sunday? When a local school has lost students to a gunman? When it has come out that someone on your staff has had an adulterous affair?

**8-2 Theology of Preaching Paper – FINAL VERSION:** Assemble all parts of your “Theology of Preaching Paper” from previous weeks into one final paper, including **assignments 1-1, 2-1, 7-1, and 8-1**. Be sure to incorporate any comments made by the instructor, add an *introduction* and *conclusion*, then submit the final paper. Please make sure the parts flow together, are cogent and in Turabian format. The final version should be **TEN-to-ELEVEN** pages, including cover page. (See [this site for an example](#) of the cover page.)

The following rubric will be applied when evaluating the paper:

- **Introduction (10%):** Includes thesis statement and summary of how thesis will be proven in the paper.
- **Main Body:** This main section should have these elements:
  1. **Biblical Grounds (15%):** Present the biblical grounds for the act of preaching.
  2. **Authority & Aim of Scripture (20%):** Discuss both the authority of Scripture in preaching, and the aim of Scripture in discipleship.
  3. **Personal Position Defense (20%):** Defend your position on the Gospel and preaching, assessing both ends of the spectrum .
  4. **Difficult Seasons (15%):** Explain how the preacher should live and preach through the difficult seasons in life.
- **Conclusion (10%):** Summarize the main argument and supporting points you have made in your paper.
- **Format (10%):** Cover page & bibliography (8 references minimum), spelling and grammar, clarity, Turabian style standards.

**Part 2 - Discussion Assignments:** *Students will respond to at least TWO other students' entries with a 50-100-word response to each, providing affirmation, asking questions for clarification, or raising any insights that may help the other student develop a more thorough analysis of the discussion topic.*

**Week 1:** Generate a statement about the goal of preaching. Incorporate both Scripture and your reading in formulating your response. How can we know if the goal has been met? How can a preacher craft each and every sermon in light of this goal?

**Week 2:** In the course textbook, we read about Jonathan Edwards' intense devotion to studying the Word of God, leading to a deep affection for the glory of God.

Piper draws two principles from Edwards:

- "The goal of all that God does is to preserve and display His glory."
- "The duty of man is to delight in God's glory."

Using Scripture as your foundation, evaluate Piper's statements with two questions in mind:

1. Do you feel that Piper's principles are reflective of the end goal of life for each believer?
2. What role must Scripture play in orienting the purpose of life in this direction (or the direction you feel Scripture is actually reflecting)?

**Week 3:** In line with your principles for methodology developed in assignment 3-2, what boundary markers would you argue must be kept in the homiletical process (i.e. Scripture should not be used to discuss a specific topic; Scripture must be put above outside sources; etc.) to avoid misuse of the Scriptures? Present your answer to this question by communicating your top one or two principles. Praise AND critique one another's answers.

**Week 4:** In response to this week's focus, take some time responding to the following question: "Preaching is the working together of God and man – and, an occupation which requires participation from both sides." As you have thought about the responsibilities and roles of both God and man, which thought is easier to accept, (1) that it is God who brings the success and clarity to your message, or (2) that you need to put in work in order to be ready to preach? Why?

**Week 5:** In response to the course readings for this week, respond to the following question: Should sermons which are delivered from the pulpit contain additional resources, such as classic literature, secular research, or other types of writing? Why or why not? Use evidence to support your reasoning.

**Week 6:** For this discussion board, each student will be asked to interact with the following statement in light of the information that has been provided through course readings this week: "To stand up before a congregation and preach anything that does not get to Christ is like a doctor seeing a patient without ever giving a diagnosis to heal them." Do you agree? Disagree?

**Week 7:** For this discussion board, each student will be assigned one of three views: **Christocentric**, **Christotelic**, or **Theocentric**. (Click on the Groups link in the menu to see which view you have been assigned.) Your original post will present the reasons why the view you have been assigned is correct - whether you personally agree with that view or not.

You are required to respond both as to why you *disagree* with the view another student has presented and to defend your own post from dissenters.

**Week 8:** For this week’s discussion, students will be asked to interact with Paul’s words to Timothy in 2 Timothy 4:1-5, which states:

In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of His appearing and His kingdom, I give you this charge: Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction. For the time will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths. But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry.

Given the current state of affairs in our world today what do you think preaching the gospel in season and out of season looks like today? How would you preach a sermon and what texts would you use? Why?

**NOTE:** You will only need to reply to ONE of your classmates’ posts this week. The first part of your response will be what you think about what they have said, and your second part will be how you would suggest they improve their statement.

**Assessments**

Assessments (23)	% of Total
Discussions (8)	20
Response Papers/Blog/Journal Entry (5): 1-3, 2-2, 4-1, 5-2, 6-2	20
Charts/Worksheets/Outlines (6): 1-2, 3-1, 3-2, 4-2, 5-1, 6-1	30
Theology of Preaching Paper (including these assignments: 1-1, 2-1, 7-1, 8-1, 8-2)	30
<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