MOODY DISTANCE LEARNING

Course Number, Name, and Credit Hours

PS-4430 Development and Delivery of Narrative Messages, 3 credit hours

Course Description

This course is a study of homiletical style, delivery, and development of effective communication with an audience. Special emphasis is placed on preaching from a biblical narrative. Student messages are evaluated by both professor and classmates.

Prerequisites: PS-3330 *Communication of Biblical Truth* or CM-2240 *Message Preparation for Women.*

Course Goals

In this course the learners will:
- Understand the rationale for preaching biblical narrative texts in the church today
- Understand the exegetical process required for proper interpretation of a biblical narrative text
- Understand why interpreters should look for the theological idea of a biblical narrative text
- Understand how the narrative form shapes the structure and flow of a sermon on a biblical narrative text

Course Objectives

By the completion of this course the learners should be able to:
1. Identify the exegetical idea of a given Old Testament narrative through an exegetical process which pays attention to the literary artistry of the text
2. Make valid application of a given Old Testament narrative to New Testament believers, locating this application in the narrative's theological message and connecting it to the storyline of the Bible and the gospel of Jesus Christ.
3. Construct an expository sermon on an Old Testament narrative which communicates the narrative's big idea and uses a form conducive to the story form used by the Biblical writer
4. Deliver a sermon without notes in a clear, compelling way that draws listeners into the story

Course Textbook(s) and/or Supplemental Information

Alter, Robert. *The Art of Biblical Narrative.* New York: Basic Books, 1981. ISBN: 0465022553. [Alter]

Block, Daniel I. *Judges, Ruth.* The New American Commentary. Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1999. ISBN: 0805401067. [Block]

Mathewson, Steven D. *The Art of Preaching Old Testament Narrative.* Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002. ISBN: 0801022967 [Mathewson]

Assignments

All assignments are due according to the schedule listed on the Course Schedule.

1. **READING:** The completion of the course reading is an important part of the course. You are expected to complete the reading prior to class participation in the discussion boards. You will be required to submit a reading report at the end of each week. In addition to your reading of the textbooks, you will be required to read supplemental articles or presentations.

2. **DISCUSSION BOARDS:** You are required to participate in weekly online discussions. In these discussions, you will interact with a small group of 4-5 cohorts. You will be placed in a cohort group at the beginning of the course. Each week, you will either discuss the topics and questions raised in your reading or the work you have done at a particular stage in the sermon preparation process. For each week's Discussion Board question or topic, you will create an initial post by mid-week, Friday, 11:59pm (CT) and will then comment on the posts of others and interact with their comments on your initial post by the end of the week, Monday 11:59pm (CT) Course weeks run from Tuesday to Monday.

3. **SERMON EXEGESIS:** You will work on an assigned preaching text from the book of Judges. You will select this text from the "Preaching Text" document provided by your instructor. The first part of your sermon preparation will be an exegetical assignment. This assignment must be at least three typed, single-spaced pages. When you cite a commentary or another resource, simply put the author and an abbreviated title in parentheses as in the following example (Block, *Judges*, 78). Your paper should be organized around the following headings:

    *   Action – Describe the way that the narrative develops, using the categories of exposition, crisis, resolution, and conclusion. Indicate whether the plot is comedic or tragic. Discuss any unique patterns or structure, such as the repetition of a key word or phrase.

    *   Characters – Identify the characters (major and minor), and discuss how the major characters develop and relate to each other in the story. What do we learn about these characters from their actions and the comments made by the narrator about them?

    *   Talking – List the key statements made by the characters. Also, indicate which statements seem to capture an emphasis in the narrative or even its main idea.

    *   Setting – Discuss both the historical-cultural setting of the narrative as well as its literary setting. For the latter, explain how this particular narrative fits into the surrounding chapters and how it develops the narrator's overall argument.

    *   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 care for the poor and marginalized? 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?

- 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."

4. **SERMON OUTLINE:** 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 (or portions of outlines), consult pp. 125, 127, and 129 in Mathewson.

5. **SERMON MANUSCRIPT:** Prepare a single-spaced manuscript of about three pages. This manuscript should read like an oral transcript of your sermon and should not have outline points. Use the sermon manuscripts in Part Three of Mathewson (pp. 161-226) as a model.

6. **SERMON DELIVERY:** Preach a 25-30 minutes expository sermon on your assigned narrative text. Preferably, deliver this in a ministry setting (worship service, youth group meeting, chapel service, etc.). Record and upload your sermon to Vimeo.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 the Titanic, you may write "Titanic" in the margin.

7. **SERMON EVALUATION:** Provide an evaluation of each sermon posted by a member of your cohort group. Your evaluation should answer the following questions with 2-3 sentence answers to each question.

- INTRODUCTION: How well did the introduction command attention, surface a need, and orient you to the text?

- EXEGESIS: How accurately did the preacher handle the text? Was the exegesis accurate?

- FLOW: How well did the sermon flow like a story, creating and maintaining suspense?

- DELIVERY: How well did the preacher use vocal variety, effective pauses, an appropriate pace, and suitable gestures?

- APPLICATION: How well did the preacher give leads for applying the text to life?

- THEOLOGY: How well did the preacher root the message in the gospel and connect it to the Bible's larger story of redemption?

- CONCLUSION: How well did the sermon end? Did the preacher bring the sermon's big idea to a burning focus?

- BIG IDEA: In a sentence, what was the big idea – that is, the proposition, main point, central idea – of the sermon?

- GREATEST STRENGTH: What was the sermon's greatest strength?

- IMPROVEMENT POINT: What can the preacher do to improve this sermon?

8. **FIRST PERSON NARRATIVE SERMON MANUSCRIPT:** Take the sermon manuscript you previously completed and re-write it as a "first person" sermon. You will not be required to preach, record, and upload it. But you are required to prepare a single-spaced manuscript of about three pages which delivers the sermon from the perspective of one of the characters in the story. This may be a major or minor character. For examples of a first person sermon, see the sermon manuscripts by Donald Sunukjian and Haddon Robinson in Mathewson (pp. 177-183 and 205-210).

Assessments

Your grade for this course will consist of:

Reading & Class Participation (Discussion Boards)	25%
Sermon Exegesis	15%
Sermon Outline	10%
Sermon Manuscript	15%
Sermon Delivery	15%
Final Manuscript (First Person)	20%
	100%

Letter grades are determined by the following scale:

Letter Grade	Percentage Equivalent	Letter Grade	Percentage Equivalent
A	96% or higher	C	73 - 76.9%
A-	90 - 95.9%	C-	70 - 72.9%
B+	87 - 89.9%	D+	67 - 69.9%
B	83 - 86.9%	D	63- 66.9%
B-	80 - 82.9%	D-	60 - 62.9%
C+	77 - 79.9%	F	Below 60%

Course Resources

Online students have access to the Moody Library. Go through this Checklist to determine how best to obtain books and articles on your topic: http://libguides.moody.edu/distancelearning/checklist

- Bookmark the library's search start page for MBI-DL: http://library.moody.edu/distance-learning/begin-your-search/
- Bookmark this online guide for MBI-DL students: http://libguides.moody.edu/distancelearning
- Bookmark this tab that provides tutorials for online students: http://libguides.moody.edu/distancelearning/tutorials

In addition to the resources available at the Moody Library, you may wish to visit
http://www.biblicalstudies.org.uk or www.bible.org. These sites contain content on various topics
written by competent biblical scholars. It is also suggested that you download a free version of the
NET Bible at http://bible.org.

The final resource that deserves mention here is iTunes University. Apple has developed a platform
for colleges and universities to post audio and video content. There are a number of lectures
available on iTunes U. Download the iTunes University application for your device or computer to
access.

Course Copyright Statement

Course Bibliography

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES ON THE BOOK OF JUDGES

Mathewson, Steven D. *Joshua and Judges*. The People's Bible Commentary. Oxford: The Bible
Reading Fellowship, 2003.

Younger, K. Lawson Jr. *Judges and Ruth*. The NIV Application Commentary. Grand Rapids:
Zondervan, 2002.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES ON INTERPRETING BIBLICAL NARRATIVE

Bar-Efrat, Shimon. *Narrative Art in the Bible*. Sheffield: The Almond Press, 1989.

Chisholm, Robert B. Jr. *Interpreting the Historical Books: An Exegetical Handbook*. Grand Rapids:
Kregel, 2006.

Fokkelman, J. P. *Reading Biblical Narrative: An Introductory Guide.* Philadephia: The Westminster
Press, 1999.

Howard, David M. Jr. and Grisanti, Michael A., eds. *Giving the Sense: Understanding and Using Old
Testament Historical Texts*. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2003.

Pratt, Richard L. Jr. *He Gave Us Stories: The Bible Student's Guide to Interpreting Old Testament
Narratives.* Brentwood: Wolgemuth & Hyatt, 1990.

Wenham, Gordon J. *Story as Torah: Reading Old Testament Narrative Ethically*. Grand Rapids:
Baker Academic, 2000.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR FIRST PERSON SERMONS

Robinson, Haddon W. and Robinson, Torrey W. *It's All In How You Tell It: Preaching First-Person
Expository Messages*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2003.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR APPLICATION OF NARRATIVE TEXTS

Doriani, Daniel M. *Putting the Truth to Work: The Theory and Practice of Biblical Application*. Phillipsburg: P&R Publishing, 2001. [Especially pp. 189-212]

Greidanus, Sidney. *Sola Scriptura: Problems and Principles in Preaching Historical Texts*. Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2001 reprint of 1970 edition.