I. Course information

Dates: 19 February 2016
        4 March 2016
        11 March 2016
        1 April 2016
        15 April 2016
        29 April 2016

Time: Fridays, 10:00am - 12:10pm

Credit hours: 1

Professor: Dr Chad Van Dixhoorn

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                 McLean VA 22102

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Office hours: Tuesday mornings and Wednesday afternoons, or by appointment

II. Course overview

Course description: The primary purpose of this course is to help preachers connect people to the Scriptures. Special attention is paid to the content and structure of sermons and to methods of preaching Christ persuasively from the text of Scripture.

Prerequisite: PT510 (Communications I) is recommended, but not absolutely required. Advanced Expository Preaching is designed to be taken in a student’s senior year, with the assumption that both Hebrew and Greek have been mastered. Students hoping to receive maximum benefit from AEP should complete the majority of their biblical and systematic courses prior to this class. This course is not be taken if you have taken Communications 2 with me.

Aims: In addition to the goal stated in the course description, a secondary goal is to make sermons both clear and engaging for listeners.

Format: The majority of class hours will be spent in lecture and in guided discussion. This is a practical course which addresses the content of sermons only. We will focus on writing (and critiquing) outlines, and reading (and critiquing) printed or audio sermons.
When contemplating the way in which infants acquire languages, Augustine once asked, “why should the eloquent not be able to acquire their eloquence not through traditional teaching but by reading and listening to the speeches of the eloquent and by imitating them within the limits of their ability?”¹ This seems to be to be a good question containing an important insight. For that reason you will be required to listen to sermons each week.

To participate in this course, students must be willing to submit their work for class discussion and positive critique. It is my belief that a willingness to see one’s work critiqued is a valuable skill to be learned as soon as possible, and to be promoted as much as possible among one’s elders and peers. To that end, this class will seek to model an encouraging environment of robust discussion – and we will pray that God will help us all to live humbly before him, and to speak the truth (or our opinions!) with grace and in love.

In these class hours we will talk about how sermons can address textual problems, translation challenges, and interpretational options. We will think together about ways of summarizing a context, structuring a sermon, preaching Christ in different genres, and the merits of preaching Christ in the textual and the theological traditions. We will also look at the challenges and advantages of preaching long and short passages, ‘unpreachable’ passages, and the use of sermons for special occasions.

III. Initial pre-class assignment
Prior to the first class, students are asked to (1) divide Matthew 6 into preaching pericopes (or literary chunks for sermons); (2) create a 1-2 page outline of a sermon or sermons on Matthew 6; (3) bring this division and this/these outline(s) to the first class.

IV. Reading
A. Primary
Students will read biblical passages, biblical commentaries, and sermons as part of their class assignments.

B. Secondary

Sinclair Ferguson, PDF (see Dropbox)

Martin Lloyd-Jones, *Preaching and Preachers* (1972 or after), ch. 11, “The Shape of the Sermon”

Charles Haddon Spurgeon, *Lectures to my Students* (any edition), 2 chs.: (1) “Attention!” and (2) “Illustrations in preaching” (chapter numbers vary from edition to edition)

V. Readings and assignments

### Read
Beginning the second week of class, students will read one or more chapters which will be discussed in class. The object of these readings is both to expose students to classic writers in the history of homiletics (e.g., Spurgeon, Lloyd-Jones) and to introduce some more technical writers (e.g., Clowney, Ferguson). These readings form a conceptual supplement to the class.

### Write
Starting the second week, students submit a brief paper on the readings assigned. In order to ensure that the material is properly digested, students are asked to write a summary (or ‘digest’) of the assigned material which identifies the main point(s) and, briefly, explains its value (if any) to the student. These digests will equip you for class discussion.

### Outline
For 5 of the 6 weeks students are to submit a one-two page preaching outline for the passage specified, including (1) a title; (2) an idea for an introduction and conclusion; (3) the opening and closing sentences of the sermon; (4) the main points of the sermon; and (5) the transition sentences between those main points. These outlines will be discussed in class.

### Listen
Students are to listen to 5 sermons over the 6 sessions of the class, in the order listed above. These sermons will be found in the Sermons Dropbox Folder. An invitation to the folder will be sent to each student. It does require installing Dropbox, a free ‘cloud’ program that many of you may already use. Each week the student will come prepared to discuss the sermon, noting some feature that they found useful, challenging, or even unhelpful.

### VI. Assessment and grading

#### A. Assignments

1. **Exegesis (70% of grade)**
   - a. One sermon (PLEASE NOTE: this sermon does not need to have been written anew for this course. You may reuse or recycle. A sermon used in another context, including another RTS course, can be submitted. Nonetheless, it ought to be adapted for the kind of sermon this course is trying to promote).
   - b. Provide five sermon outlines for this course.

2. **Digests (30% of grade)**
These assignments will comprise 80% of the course grade. Digests will account for the remaining 20% of the course grade.

**Due dates:** All assignments must be submitted prior to the beginning of class. Sermons must be submitted TWO DAYS before the beginning of class.

**Late papers:** Differing from my other classes, no late assignments will be accepted for this class.

Please inform me *in advance* if for some reason your schedule will require you to be late for a class, or if there is some extenuating reason to ask for an extension for an assignment.

**B. RTS Grading Scale**

The seminary uses the following grading system:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Quality Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>(97-100)</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>(94-96)</td>
<td>3.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>(91-93)</td>
<td>3.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>(88-90)</td>
<td>3.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>(86-87)</td>
<td>2.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>(83-85)</td>
<td>2.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>(80-82)</td>
<td>2.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>(78-79)</td>
<td>1.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>(75-77)</td>
<td>1.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>(72-74)</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td>(70-71)</td>
<td>0.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>(below 70)</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>(incomplete)</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W,WP</td>
<td>(withdraw, withdraw passing)</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td>(satisfactory)</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The grade "I" indicates that the work required for the course was not completed. It is given only when special, extenuating circumstances (such as illness) prevent the student from completing the work or taking the examination. A written request for an extension must be submitted prior to the due date of the work concerned. If the request is granted, it remains the responsibility of the student to complete all work for the course as soon as possible. In any case, an "I" grade must be removed within the extension time granted; otherwise it will be changed to "F."

**VII. Class advice**

1. I recognize that many of you work long days and experience challenging commutes. Please leave sufficient time to battle adverse traffic so that you can arrive on time.
2. Please come to each class prepared, with readings and reading reports completed. From the first class, I will call on students to discuss assigned material. It is a courtesy to teacher and fellow students alike if your class contributions are informed by prior study. There are no reading reports due for the first class.

3. Take notes of these discussions. These exchanges are a vehicle for learning and you will be expected to retain the material that we discuss.

4. Please ask questions in class. When necessary, I will establish the boundaries and let you know when I need to press on in delivering information and when we should to stop to enjoy a discussion. But in this course the majority of class time is dedicated to discussion and I would be disappointed if we did not pack it with useful comments and queries.

5. Give some thought to your questions. There is no question too simple to ask (although there are many that are too difficult to answer). But please do not stop the class to regale it with stories, ride hobby-horses, play teacher to your fellow students, or ask to have a word spelled.

6. Please turn off your cell phones. Checking your mobile phone in a class discussion or lecture is as thoughtless as checking it while holding a conversation with another person.

7. Please refrain from online chatting, and the use of email in class.

8. You may quietly snack and drink and stretch in class, or pace about the back of the room if it helps you to stay alert.