

31-532 Preaching in African American Traditions

Spring 2014

Instructor: Dr. Gennifer Brooks

E-mail: gennifer.brooks@garrett.edu

Office: Room 714

Telephone #: 847-866-3888

Office Hours: Wednesday 1:30 – 3:00 or by appointment

Class Hours: Monday 6:30 p.m. – 9:30 p.m.

Description:

The course will engage students in the history, theology and practice of preaching in the African American context, generally referred to as Black Preaching. It is designed to enable students to understand the unique genre and styles attributed to the African American Church, and to develop and preach effective sermons in that context. Students will be taught the rudiments of sermon preparation and delivery in order to meet the requirements of developing effective sermons even as it focuses on the particularities applicable to Black preaching. They will be given several opportunities to practice their own preaching as appropriate to the African American and/or Black Church communities. Students will also be exposed to different styles of Black Preaching by reading, viewing and reflecting on actual sermons preached by known and unknown African American preachers.

Course Outcomes:

Knowing:

Students will become familiar with the streams of church traditions that contributed to the formation of the genre of African American worship and specifically preaching. They will understand the characteristics and constructs of different styles of African American sermons.

Being:

Students will be trained in the art of developing and preaching sermons that are authentically African American or Black with respect to focus and function in an appropriate worship setting.

Doing:

Students will develop sermons that are creative, celebrative and emotionally enriching, that engage the Biblical texts, and that offer authentic good news worthy of celebration, based on the understanding that these characteristics are the bedrock of Black/African American church culture and preaching.

Assumptions and Expectations:

1. That each student comes willingly to the process of her/his learning and that of her/his classmates and thus will be an active participant and a contributor to the development of all through a collegial rather than a competitive spirit.

2. That each student will contribute and adhere to a culture of respect for human diversity and collegiality within the classroom and will recognize and engage the differences of culture with an open mind.
3. That each member of the class values and respects the unique nature of African American/Black preaching traditions and will approach the experience and work of the course with openness and expectation.
4. That all assigned material will be read as scheduled, and all assignments will be completed and turned in on time.
5. That inclusive language will be used for God and human beings in written and oral work.
6. That all students understand and adhere to G-ETS policies on plagiarism (see Student Handbook). Please be aware that all work submitted may be checked electronically.
7. **That the schedule and syllabus WILL be modified and additional material added as the professor considers necessary to the course and the development of students.**
8. **There will be no extensions allowed past the end of the term.**

Classroom Culture:

- **A Culture of Respect:** In order to maintain a culture of respect for human diversity and collegiality within the classroom, students are expected to engage the professor and their fellow students as colleagues and to receive all material with respect for the author. Participation in class activities must take into account the right of every student to be heard, which requires students to avoid interrupting the presentations of others or claiming an inordinate amount of time in putting forward their point of view such that it prevents the engagement of other students. Groups may be created for some of the class work and students are expected to participate with integrity with the members of their group.
- **Laptop Usage in Class:** Because of the inability to ensure that students use laptops only to take notes in class, the use of laptops is permitted only with specific approval from the professor. All students who wish to use their laptops in class, must sign a covenantal agreement regarding its use, prior to using their laptops in a class setting. Students that use their laptop for anything other than specific class work will be disallowed from further class use.
- **Telephone Calls:** Please turn off your telephone when you come to class. If there is an ongoing emergency situation that may require you to receive a call, please let the professor know before class begins. When that is the case, please put your phone on vibrate and leave the classroom before answering any call that you receive.

Requirements and Grading

1. **Faithful attendance and preparation for each class demonstrated through knowledge of assigned reading materials and full participation in class and group activities.** Students are expected to be present and on time for all class sessions, including timely return from breaks. **Absence from 3 or more classes will be considered as non-attendance.** **Late arrival at or early departure from classes will also be considered in determining class attendance. 10%**

2. **Four sermons preached in class.** At least two sermons will be recorded for later review. At least three different styles of sermon must be used. **75%**
3. **Presentation of an African American preacher** with sermon that models a recognized style of preaching in the African American context. Both the choice of preacher and the contents of the presentation will reflect the presenter's knowledge of effective Black Preaching. The presentation and sermon manuscript must be handed in upon completion of the presentation. **15%**

Required Textbooks:

- Brooks, Gennifer Benjamin. *Good News Preaching: Offering the Gospel in Every Sermon*. Cleveland, Ohio: The Pilgrim Press, 2009. ISBN-13: 9780829818222 \$20.00
- Brooks, Gennifer Benjamin, Editor. *Black United Methodists Preach!* Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2012. ISBN 978-1-4267-4833-2 \$18.99
- Brown, Teresa L. Fry. *Weary Throats and New Songs: Black Women Proclaiming God's Word*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2003. ISBN 0-687-03013-7 \$25.50
- Crawford, Evans E. Crawford. *The Hum: Call and Response in African American Preaching*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995. ISBN -687-18020-1 \$17.00
- Gilbert, Kenyatta R. *The Journey and Promise of African American Preaching*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2011 ISBN-13: 978-0800696276 \$20.00
- McMickle, Marvin A. *I Believe I'll Testify: The Art of African American Preaching*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2011. ISBN-13: 978-0-664-23677-9 \$17.00
- Thomas, Frank. *They Like to Never Quit Praisin' God: The Role of Celebration in Preaching. Revised and Updated*. Cleveland, OH: Pilgrim Press, 1997. ISBN: 978-0-8298-1978-6 \$16.00
- Simmons, Martha and Frank A. Thomas. *Preaching with Sacred Fire: An Anthology of African American Sermons, 1750 to the Present*. New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2010. ISBN 978-0-393-05831-4 \$45.00 (Optional)

Secondary Textbooks:

- La Rue, Cleophus J. *The Heart of Black Preaching*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2000.
- McMickle, Marvin A. *Where Have All the Prophets Gone? Reclaiming Prophetic Preaching in America*. Cleveland, Ohio: The Pilgrim Press, 2006.
- _____ . *Preaching to the Black Middle Class: Words of Challenge and Hope*. Valley Forge: Judson Press, 2000.
- Mitchell, Henry H. *Black Preaching: The Recovery of a Powerful Art*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1990.

Pre-Class Assignment:

Read *I Believe I'll Testify: The Art of African American Preaching* by Marvin A. McMickle (carefully and completely). Prepare a paper that responds to the following material as contained in the author's work. Your response should include both a selective summary of the author's ideas and your reflection in response to his work.

- Preaching in the Black Church

- The distinctiveness and/or distinction of Black Preaching
- Scripture and story
- Language and Style
- Purpose and Delivery
- Effectiveness and Effect in Church and Community in the 21st Century

Schedule:

Week 1 – 2/3 Introductions and review of course requirements and syllabus
Discussion of Pre-class Assignment – The Art of African American Preaching

Definition(s) of African American Preaching
 African American Preaching vs./= Black Preaching
 Key Characteristics of AA/Black Preaching
 AA/Black Preaching as Art and Artful
 Effectiveness and Effect in Black Culture
Pre-Class Assignment: *I Believe I'll Testify*
Preacher of the Day – Gardner Taylor

Week 2 – 2/10 Developing the AA/Black Sermon

The Centrality of Scripture
 The Challenge of Interpretation
 Styling and Shaping for Effect
Reading Assignment: *I Believe I'll Testify; Good News Preaching*
Preacher of the Day – TBD

Week 3 – 2/17 AA/Black Preaching as Celebration

Black Preaching as Worship and Celebration
 The Good News for Celebration
 The Celebration as Praise
 Developing the Celebrative Sermon
 Engaging the Congregation for Celebration
Good News Preaching; The Hum; They Like to Never Quit Praisin' God; I Believe I'll Testify pgs. 81-122
Preacher of the Day – Telly Gadsen (*Black United Methodists Preach!*)
Practice Preaching I – Group 1

Week 4 – 2/24 The Voices of AA/Black Preaching

Theological Resonance
 Black Theology and Black Preaching
 The Black Preacher as Prophet, Priest and Sage
 The Liberation factor in AA/Black Preaching
 Social Justice and “The Assurance of Grace”
Reading Assignment: *The Journey and Promise of African American Preaching; They Like to Never Quit Praisin' God*
Preacher of the Day – Jeremiah Wright
Practice Preaching I – Group 2

Week 5 – 3/3 The Artfulness of Black Preaching
The Sermon as Liturgical Art
Music and Poetry in AA/Black Preaching
Determining the musicality of your preaching voice
Reading Assignment: *The Hum; Weary Throats and New Songs* pgs. 9-88
Preacher of the Day – Dorothy Watson Tatem (*Black United Methodists Preach!*)
Presentations by: (1)_____ and (2) _____

Week 6 – 3/10 Designing the Sermon as Poetic Dialogue
Creating the conversation
Designing the Sermon for Call and Response
**Reading Assignment: *The Hum; Weary Throats and New Songs* pgs. 89-155;
The Journey and Promise of African American Preaching pgs. 77-107**
Preacher of the Day – Dorothy Watson Tatem
Practice Preaching II – Group 1

Week 7 – 3/17 Poetry, Music and Drama in Delivery
The musicality of the sermon
Creating the beat
Preaching to the Rhythm
Reading Assignment: *The Hum; Weary Throats and New Songs* pgs. 156-236
Preacher of the Day – James Swanson (*Black United Methodists Preach!*)
Practice Preaching II – Group 2

Week 8 – 3/24 The AA/Black Preacher as Griot
Interpreting the Biblical Story
Telling the People’s Story
A Voice of Hope for the Community
Reading Assignment: *Journey and Promise of African American Preaching*
Preacher of the Day – James Forbes
Presentations by: (1)_____ and (2) _____

Week 9 – 3/31 Designing and Delivering the Story
Effectiveness in preaching the biblical story as the people’s story
Preaching for effect vs. Preaching the story effectively
Evaluating the people’s response
Preacher of the Day – TBD
Practice Preaching III – Group 1

Week 10 – 4/7 The Challenge of Being “A Black Preacher”
Identity Formation: The challenge and joy of “becoming”
Living into and beyond the legacy
Learning and loving your preaching style and delivery
Reading Assignment: *I Believe I’ll Testify* pgs. 99-133; *Good News Preaching* (Ch. 6 pgs. ?)

Preacher of the Day – TBD
Practice Preaching III – Group 2

Week 11 – 4/14 Keys to Effective Embodiment

Developing the AA/Black Preacher

Beyond Styling and Profiling: Embodying the Sermon

Reading Assignment: *Good News Preaching (Ch. 6 pgs. ?)*; *The Journey and Promise of African American Preaching pgs.109-142*

Preacher of the Day – TBD

Presentations by: (1) _____ and (2) _____

Easter Break – 4/21

Week 12 – 4/28

Preacher of the Day – TBD

Practice Preaching IV – Group 1

Week 13 – 5/5

Preacher of the Day – TBD

Practice Preaching IV – Group 2

Bibliography:

- Bailey, Randall C. and Jacquelyn Grant, editors. *The Recovery of Black Presence: An Interdisciplinary Exploration*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995.
- Canon, Katie Geneva. *Teaching Preaching - Isaac Rufus Clark & Black Sacred Rhetoric*. London: Continuum, 2002.
- Cooper-Lewter, Nicholas. *Soul Theology: The Heart of American Black Culture. !* Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1991.
- Costen, Melva Wilson *In Spirit and In Truth: The Music of African American Worship*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004.
- Holmes, Barbara A. *Joy Unspeakable: Contemplative Practices of the Black Church*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2004.
- La Rue, Cleophus J. *Power in the Pulpit: How America's Most Effective Black Preachers Prepare Their Sermons*. Westminster John Knox Press, 2002.
- _____. *More Power in the Pulpit: How America's Most Effective Black Preachers Prepare Their Sermons*. Westminster John Knox Press, 2009.
- Lincoln, C. Eric and Lawrence H. Mamiya. *The Black Church in the African American Experience*. Duke University Press Books, 1990.
- McClain, William B. *Come Sunday: The Liturgy of Zion*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1990.
- McMickle, Marvin A. *Living Water for Thirsty Souls: Unleashing the Power of Exegetical Preaching*. Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 2001.
- _____. *The Star Book on Preaching*. Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 2006.
- Massey, James Earl. *The Burdensome Joy of Preaching*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1998.

- Mitchell, Ella Pearson and Valerie Bridgeman-Davis, editors. *Those Preaching Women: A Multicultural Collection*. Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 2008.
- Mitchell, Henry H. *Celebration and Experience in Preaching: Revised Edition*. Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 2008.
- _____. *A Word for All Seasons: Sermons from Henry Mitchell*. Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 2012.
- Moyd, Olin P. *The Sacred Art: Preaching & Theology in the African American Tradition*. Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1995.
- Proctor, Samuel D. *"How Shall They Hear?" Effective Preaching for Vital Faith*. Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1992.
- _____. *The Certain Sound of the Trumpet: Crafting a Sermon of Authority*. Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1994.
- Taylor, Gardner C. *The Words of Gardner Taylor: A Collection of Resources Commemorating an Extraordinary Ministry*. (6 Volume Set) Compiled by Edward L. Taylor. Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 2004.