I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course assists students in understanding the contemporary North American cultural milieu and preaching effectively under the anointing of the Holy Spirit. The course will give attention to understanding the contours of postmodern thought, implications of the technological revolution, alternative expressions of preaching such as found in the emerging church movement, and preaching in a free society with its political dimensions. Each student will preach in this course.

II. STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

Ashland Theological Seminary desires that each student who is a part of its community experience spiritual transformation through the curricular and co-curricular life of the seminary. This course seeks to help in shaping the core identity and character of the student by creating a classroom community and ethos grounded in Christ-likeness and by helping students meaningfully proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ to their generation in the context of postmodern culture of North American society.

As a result of completing this course the student will acquire the following competencies in the disciplines and skills relevant to Christian ministry:

1. Demonstrate critical and faithful interpretation and responsible use of scripture through preaching in ministry settings embedded in contemporary North American culture.
2. Form a missional vision for preaching ministry with contemporary North American culture.
3. Demonstrate critical theological reflection that is biblically faithful, historically grounded, and contextually relevant in the preparation and delivery of sermons.
4. Demonstrate effective ministry skills relevant to preaching and cultural exegesis.

*Note: The above student learning outcomes correspond to the student learning outcomes for the Master of Divinity degree found in the ATS catalog. Student learning outcomes 2 and 5 are not being assessed in this course.

III. TEACHING STRATEGIES FOR STUDENT LEARNING

The spirit and culture of this course will be one of collegiality and dialogue. The professor and the students will synergistically work together to discover and examine the issues impacting
preaching in American society today. Students will be urged to move toward decisions about identified issues and then to construct a sermon and preach it with these issues in mind. It is hoped that the mood of the course will be respectful and relaxed with each member of the course contributing regularly and meaningfully. Student participation is central to the success of the course. Often the classroom will be set up in the shape of a circle with the hope of fostering these aims. Specifically, the following teaching strategies will be employed: lecture by the professor, student-led discussion, examining and reflecting on contemporary sermons in print, student presentations, examining audio-video lectures and sermons, and ultimately student preaching.

IV. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A. Required Textbooks


B. Attendance

According to the student handbook, attendance at all class sessions is expected unless the professor has been notified in advance. Any student missing in excess of six class hours will be required to do additional work, receive a lower grade or withdraw from the class. This is at the discretion of the professor. This policy also included tardiness.

C. Assignments/Assessment of Student Learning

1. **Journal/Recorded Sermon Reflections. DUE Friday 10/23/15.** Each student will review and critique 6 sermons (1 each from at least 3 different homiletical journals and 1 each from at least 3 different recorded sources). The sermons should be presentations that you believe are exemplary for use in a contemporary church context. Each student should prepare and submit a one-page sermon critique from the perspective of its usefulness in contemporary American society. The journals, all found in the periodicals section of our library, are as follows: *Preaching/Preaching.com, The Preacher’s Magazine, The African-American Pulpit, and The Living Pulpit*. Each student will be prepared to present 2 of the 7 sermon critiques in class. While it is not required you may want to select a sermon constructed by a person of a different ethnicity or gender than your own to expand your own horizons. The critique format should address:

   a. What? In one paragraph articulate and describe the primary content of the presentation – What does the preacher want you to know?
   
   b. So what? In one paragraph describe the impact and implications of the preacher’s argument/s.
2. **Sermon Manuscript and Preaching, DUE Saturday 11/6/15.** Each student will construct an original expository sermon designed to speak to a contemporary American congregation. The sermon will be approximately 8-10 written pages or presented in no more than 15-18 minutes in duration. The sermon is to be constructed with understanding of the texture of the 21st century landscape. Encoded into the sermon’s design, language, and presentation should be elements the perceptive biblical preacher of the 21st century considers apropos. Each sermon is to be original and constructed during the time frame of the course, and should reflects the ideals of homiletics, exegesis and exposition of Ashland Theological Seminary and espoused in this course.

3. **Reading Reflection (7-8 pages), DUE Friday 11/7/15.** Each student will engage in a critical reading of the four required texts by Allen, Johnston, McMickle and Stanley, then reflect on the content in light of contemporary American culture. Particular attention should be given to the movement and impact of cultural elements of language, technology, politics, economics, news media, and arts and entertainment. The elements and sequence of the book reflection will be as follows:

   a. **Brief Summary of the Content.** Discern the most important issues addressed in the books and highlight them. Highlight specific learnings from each text. *Approximately Three (3) to Four (4) pages for this section.*

   b. **Critical Engagement.** Cite specific passages from the books and discuss their impact on your understanding of the preaching ministry in today’s culture. *Approximately Two (2) pages for this section.*

   c. **Blessings, Questions, and Challenges.** The student should respond to the most helpful and most challenging perspectives of the books and explain their impact. *Approximately Two (2) pages for this section.*

D. Calculation of Grade

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignments</th>
<th>Learning Outcomes</th>
<th>Percent of Final Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading and Class Discussion</td>
<td>1,3,4,6</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journal/Recorded Sermon Reflections</td>
<td>3,4,6</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading Reflection</td>
<td>1,3,6</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sermon Manuscript/Preaching</td>
<td>1,2,3,4</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
V. Course Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings/Assignments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1,2</td>
<td>9/18-19</td>
<td>A Short History of Preaching Theological Foundations and the Word of God</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3,4</td>
<td>10/23-24</td>
<td>Worldview, Culture and the Proclamation of the Gospel in Postmodern Contexts</td>
<td>Journal/Recorded Sermon Reflections Due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5,6</td>
<td>11/6-7</td>
<td>The Art of Redemption and Transformation</td>
<td>Reading Reflection Due Sermon Manuscript Due</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

VI. Other Course Instructions

Written assignments are due at the beginning of the class period on the dates indicated. Please do not ask to negotiate due dates. Assignments submitted late will receive a grade of marginal at best and generally will not receive written comments. All papers should be single-sided typed in black 12-point type, Times New Roman font, with 1” margins, double-spaced, and with attention given to grammatical structure, spelling, appearance, and inclusive language. Include your name and date on the top of your first page. Do NOT include a cover page. If you cite any readings besides those assigned, please include a bibliography or a works cited page. When you use direct quotes or otherwise refer to ideas in any of the books, use parenthetical citations in the text of your paper following MLA Style.

VII. Recommendations for Lifelong Learning

Review selected bibliography works. Additional denominational, technological and professional resources will be shared in class.

VIII. Seminary Guidelines

A. ATS Academic Integrity Policy

Ashland Theological Seminary seeks to model servant leadership derived from biblical standards of honesty and integrity. We desire to encourage, develop, and sustain men and women of character who will exemplify these biblical qualities in their ministry to the church and the world. As members of the seminary community, students are expected to hold themselves to the highest standards of academic, personal, and social integrity. All students, therefore, are expected to abide by the academic integrity standards outlined in the Student Handbook.

B. Academic Support Services

If you need assistance with writing projects for your coursework, contact the ATS Academic Support Center. The center provides free sessions with a peer consultant who can help you with all of your concerns about academic support including writing, critical thinking, documentation, reading skills, study skills, test-taking skills, time management. Contact the center if you have a question about how to complete your assignment, if you have documentation questions, or if you would like to have your paper evaluated for areas needing improvement. The ATS Academic Support Center can be reached at 419-289-5162 or by e-mail at atswc@ashland.edu.
C. Students with Disabilities

Students with documented disabilities who require academic adjustments for this class are requested to contact me to discuss reasonable accommodations. While not required, it is in the best interest of the student to have this conversation early in the semester. In order to receive academic adjustments paperwork from Disability Services must be provided to document this need. Disability Services is located in 105 Amstutz, extension 5953 (419-289-5953).

D. ATS Grading Scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>97-100</td>
<td>Superior achievement of course objectives, diligence and originality, high degree of freedom from error, outstanding evidence of ability to utilize course knowledge, initiative expressed in preparing and completing assignments, positive contributions verbalized in class.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>92-96</td>
<td>Good work submitted, commendable achievement of course objectives, some aspects of the course met with excellence, substantial evidence of ability to utilize course material, positive contributions verbalized in class, consistency and thoroughness of work completed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>89-91</td>
<td>Acceptable work completed, satisfactory achievement of course objectives, demonstrating at least some ability to utilize course knowledge, satisfactory class contribution.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>86-88</td>
<td>Acceptable work completed, satisfactory achievement of course objectives, demonstrating at least some ability to utilize course knowledge, satisfactory class contribution.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>83-85</td>
<td>Good work submitted, commendable achievement of course objectives, some aspects of the course met with excellence, substantial evidence of ability to utilize course material, positive contributions verbalized in class, consistency and thoroughness of work completed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>80-82</td>
<td>Passing but minimal work, marginal achievement of course objectives, poor performance in comprehension of work submitted, inadequate class contributions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>77-79</td>
<td>Unacceptable work resulting in failure to receive class credit, inadequacy of work submitted or of performance and attendance in class.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>74-76</td>
<td>Passing but minimal work, marginal achievement of course objectives, poor performance in comprehension of work submitted, inadequate class contributions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>71-73</td>
<td>Passing but minimal work, marginal achievement of course objectives, poor performance in comprehension of work submitted, inadequate class contributions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>68-70</td>
<td>Unacceptable work resulting in failure to receive class credit, inadequacy of work submitted or of performance and attendance in class.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Below 65</td>
<td>Unacceptable work resulting in failure to receive class credit, inadequacy of work submitted or of performance and attendance in class.</td>
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IV. Selected Bibliography


