

Conrad Grebel University College  
University of Waterloo  
TS 755: Preaching

Spring 2025

**Class Time:** We meet from 9:00-11:50 am, May 5-9, 12-16.

**Location:** Our main room is CGR 2201. We will move to the Great Hall for some of our sessions.

**Instructor:** Allan Rudy-Froese

**Office Hours:** By appointment

**Office Location:** NA

**Phone:** 574-349-1609

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### Course Description :

This course explores biblical interpretation, embodiment of the sermon, the contextual nature of preaching, the gospel, and sermon form and focus. Matters such as the place of preaching in worship, the role of the Spirit, the purposes of preaching, and 'writing for the ear' will be addressed throughout. Class time will include short lectures, discussions, solitary and small group work, voice/body exercises, and the crafting and preaching of sermons.

### Learning Goal and Course Objectives:

The goal of this course is to **preach** the **gospel** **authentically**.

With this goal in mind, we will attend to the following:

1. **Bible:** Students will examine and experiment with strategies for moving from biblical text to preached sermon.
  - a. Rationale: individual sections of the Bible and the larger story of the Bible serve as the foundation of the sermon. Developing good habits for interpreting the Bible in a timely and prayerful way is crucial for preaching.
  - b. Key assignments: sermon and sermon rationale, book review or gospel project.
2. **Form:** Several forms of the sermon will be examined. Two sermons are assigned for this course: one preached in class, and one to be submitted by July 23. One sermon will be preached in the Four Page form. (See Allen, *Determining the Form*, ch. 7).
  - a. Rationale: understanding and employing a specific form for a given sermon offers the preacher and the listeners a sense of structure, so as to aid the crafting and the hearing

- of the sermon. Sermons should move us from one place to another and ultimately to the preaching of the gospel. Sermon forms help us do that.
- b. Key assignments: sermon and sermon rationale, book review or gospel project.
3. **Focus:** Students will examine and demonstrate one model that serves to focus the sermon.
- a. Rationale: sermons focused on one biblical text, one theme, one need, in addition to other indicators, aid in the crafting of the sermon and help the listener hear the gospel with clarity.
  - b. Key assignments: sermon and sermon rationale, book review or gospel project.
4. **Context:** Students will ponder and articulate how their sermons are created and preached for a given setting.
- a. Rationale: preaching is highly local and contextual. A given sermon is, among other things, an historical, biblical, and theological artifact for a given time, place, and people.
  - b. Key assignments: sermon and sermon rationale, book review or gospel project
5. **Voice and Body:** In class and through readings, videos, and personal practice, students will learn how to warm up their voices and bodies for the preaching event.
- a. Rationale: preaching is a physical activity that is significantly aided by a voice and body that is free of tension and tuned for authentic expression.
  - b. Key assignments: vocal warmups in class and on your own, preached sermons.
6. **Gospel:** Students will further understand and preach the simple yet complex gospel of Jesus Christ.
- a. Rationale: sermons offer the gospel. Preaching the gospel means that while we preach *about* God, we also endeavor to have the listeners *meet* our loving and transforming God in the event of the sermon.  
Key assignment: sermon and sermon rationale, book review or gospel project.

## Required Reading:

Allen, O. Wesley, Jr. *Determining the Form*. Elements of Preaching Series. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2008. ISBN 978-0-8006-0444-8 \$28.28

Brown, Sally A., and Luke A. Powery. *Ways of the Word: Learning to Preach for Your Time and Place*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2016. ISBN 978-0-8006-9922-2 \$47.56

I reserve the right to add up to four short videos. These videos will be posted on LEARN.

## Evaluation:

Assignment	Weighting	Due Date
Sermon 1: Sermon rationale, manuscript, and preached sermon	30%	The day you preach in class, by 11 pm
Sermon 2: Sermon rationale and manuscript	35%	Post on LEARN July 28
Book Review or Gospel Project	25%	Post on LEARN July 28
Class Attendance and Participation	10%	

## Assignments:

### #1. Sermon #1 (25%)

Submit your sermon rationale and sermon manuscript in a Word document on the day that you preach. Because of our limited time, your sermon should be 6-8 minutes in duration. See the separate document entitled 'Sermon Rationale and Sermon Manuscript' on LEARN for more information.

### #2. Sermon #2 (35%)

Submit your sermon rationale and sermon manuscript in a Word document by July 28 to LEARN. This sermon should be no longer than 1800 words. See the separate document entitled 'Sermon Rationale and Sermon Manuscript' on LEARN for more information.

### #3. Book Review or Gospel Project (30%)

Complete and submit **one** of the following by July 28:

#### 1) Book Review (1000 words):

This is your chance to read a book on preaching that you have on your shelf and have not yet read. If you are not sure where to find a book on X topic, let me know and we can find a book that would be suitable.

Use the following outline for your book review:

- i) Outline the main thesis of the book.
- ii) Zero in on one chapter or section of a that has wowed, disturbed or helped you and tell us why.
- iii) Note how (or not) this book makes a significant contribution to your understanding of preaching.
- iv) Tell us who would most benefit from reading this book.

## 2) Gospel Project (1000 words, or see below)

With this assignment I invite you to be curious investigators of the gospel. We will learn much from each other and from our authors on this somewhat elusive yet crucial term and concept. 'Gospel' can be a noun which we can provisionally define biblically or theologically. More, the gospel is verbal. God is doing something, and preachers can join in through the work of the Spirit. As a verb, the gospel refers to an experience – an experience of God meeting us in a way that offers hope, love, salvation, or a new perspective – just to name a few. Preaching the gospel makes the sermon an event of meeting our transforming God. We will hear this gospel in our class sermons.

Your gospel project can take many forms. A reflective essay of 1000 words is one way to go. Another option is to submit an artifact. Get creative! Create a collage, paint or draw a picture, perform (compose?) a hymn or song. This is not an exhaustive list. If you choose the artistic route, please offer a brief explanation of your process, the sources that inspired you, and some interpretive clues that help me see or hear your artifact (300 words). I will ensure that our LEARN site will be able to accept images, videos, and audio recordings.

### Course Schedule:

Day	Topic	Reading
Mon, May 5 9 am to 11:50	<b>Introduction to the course</b> Syllabus Say something about You and Preaching in 2 minutes Chose a biblical text for your first sermon  <b>This afternoon:</b> Spend time with your biblical text. Speak your text out loud. Read it to a friend and have them read it back to you. Read it in an odd place. Write your text out on a big piece of paper and notice the verbs and repetition.	Read the welcome letter (sent in late March) and the syllabus and come to our session with your questions, fears, hopes, and dreams.
Tues, May 6	<b>Interpreting the Bible for Preaching</b>	Brown and Powery, 5-6.
Wed, May 7	<b>Voice and Body</b>	Brown and Powery, 8. Take a look at few short videos on LEARN Wear loose clothing so that you can move easily. Have your biblical text handy either on paper or your phone.
Thurs, May 8	<b>Sermon Form Sermon Focus</b>	See Allen, and esp. 7. Brown and Powery, 7. See LEARN for my brief essay, <i>The Tiny</i>

		<i>Dog Now Is Mine.</i> (Yes, you read that right!)
Friday, May 9	<b>The Preaching Life</b>	Brown and Powery, chs 1-4
Sat and Sun May 10-11		
Mon, June 12	<b>Student Sermons</b>	Submit your sermon rationale and sermon manuscript to LEARN on the day you preach
Tues, June 13	<b>Student sermons</b>	
Wed, June 14	<b>Student sermons</b>	
Thurs, June 15	<b>Student sermons</b>	
Fri, June 16	<b>Student sermons</b>	

## UWaterloo Policies

**Academic Integrity:** In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility.

Arts: [Academic Integrity website](#) University of Waterloo: [Academic Integrity Office](#)

## Notes

### The Land on Which We Meet:

We acknowledge that we are located on the traditional territory of the Attawandaron (also known as Neutral), Anishinaabe, and the Haudenosaunee peoples. The University of Waterloo and Conrad Grebel University are situated on the Haldimand Tract, the land promised to the Six Nations that includes ten kilometers (six miles) on each side of the Grand River.

### Class Attendance

Class attendance is expected. If you know you will be away for an unavoidable reason (sickness or family emergency), please email the instructor. Missing three or more classes even for unavoidable reasons will result in an additional assignment to be determined by the instructor. Please mute phones and refrain from doing email or texting during class.

### Citations and Plagiarism

Your sources must be fully documented, according to the *Chicago Manual of Style*, 16<sup>th</sup> edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010). The latest edition is available [on-line](#). Please use the notes and bibliography system rather than the parenthetical author/date system. Using undocumented quotations from published sources, or submitting work that is not your own will have serious ramifications for your academic career.

## Tardy Assignments

Punctual submission of assignments is expected. Late assignments will be accepted only if you have talked to the instructor ahead of time for an extension. Marks may be deducted for assignments that are over one week overdue.

## Confidentiality

In the course of our discussions as we explore the topics, the students or instructor may wish to share stories of a personal nature. It is expected that personal stories you hear in class will not be repeated outside the classroom without the express permission of the person who told the story.

## Other sources of information for students:

**Mental Health Services** aim is to provide holistic programming and services to help you lead a healthy and balanced life. We strive to provide a secure, supportive environment for students of all orientations and backgrounds. Students suffering from problems with anxiety, depression, problems with sleep, attention, obsession or compulsions, relationship difficulties, severe winter blues, etc., may make an appointment by phone or in person. Appointments are usually available within two days of initial contact with one of our medical doctors. All contacts are completely confidential. Phone 519-888-4567 ext. 32655.

**For students with learning differences:** The [AccessAbility Services \(AAS\)](#) office, located in Needles Hall Room 1132, collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with the ASS office at the beginning of each academic term.

**Counselling Services:** Counselling Services provides free confidential counselling, in both individual and group sessions, with qualified professionals to help registered students, faculty and staff with personal concerns, educational career decisions, and strategies for studies and exams: [www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infocs](http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infocs), ext. 33528, NH Room 2080.

**The Writing Centre:** Writing Centre staff offer one-on-one support in planning assignments and presentations, using and documenting research, organizing and structuring papers, and revising for clarity and coherence. Make an appointment or drop in at the Library for quick questions or feedback. To book a 50-minute appointment and to see drop-in hours, visit [www.uwaterloo.ca/writing-centre](http://www.uwaterloo.ca/writing-centre).

## **Sermon Rationale and Manuscript Preaching CGUC 2025**

Please submit your Sermon Rationale and Sermon Manuscript in one Word document to LEARN on the day that you preach.

### **Sermon Rationale**

Hint: Cut and paste these 8 questions into a Word document and use it a template for your rationale. Single-space for this assignment is preferred.

1 Name: Your name, not the name of the sermon.

2 Bible: Give the biblical reference.

3 Context: Who are the imagined hearers of this sermon? Not more than a sentence.

4 Form: No more than a short sentence for each section of the given form.

5 Theme/Gospel: No more than a 10-word sentence. Recall that a strong theme sentence has to do with what God is doing.

6 Function: What is this sermon doing? One sentence with a powerful verb. Take a guess at this one for now. We will tell you what your sermon is doing once we hear it!

7 Focus: Comment on one of the following in your sermon: one image, one need, or one mission. Two or three sentences.

8 What question(s) do you have about your sermon? Two or three sentences.

### **Sermon Manuscript**

I need to read the words that you preached. If you are a preacher who uses an outline or has memorized your sermon, you still need to provide a way for me to see those preached words on paper. If you need to record your sermon and transcribe it, then do so. In this case I would like to see your manuscript within 2 days of your preached sermon.

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See the next page for a winning example of a Sermon Rationale and Manuscript.

### **Sermon Rationale and Sermon Manuscript (A winning example)**

#### **Sermon Rationale**

1 Name: Allan Rudy-Froese

2 Bible: Biblical text: Luke 13: 10-13

3 Context: Who are the imagined hearers of this sermon? Seminary students

4 Form: Four Page sermon:

Page 1: The woman is bent over and suffering

Page 2: We are bent over and suffering

Page 3: Jesus straightens the woman's back

Page 4: Jesus straightens our backs – lifts us up.

5 Theme/Gospel: Jesus lifts us up.

6 Function: What is this sermon doing? This sermon is lifting us up.

7 Comment on one of the following in your sermon: image, need, or mission. Image: I will keep returning to the action of being bent over and being brought up to standing. When bent over it is hard to see, use one's hands etc. It is harder to communicate with others down there. When standing upright we can see, move about more freely, and participate in community.

8 Questions: I wonder if I can make the sounds of the woman's back going from curved to straight when I preach? I think it took work on Jesus' part to uncurve her back and there may have been sounds. I wonder about how those with physical challenges hear this message, or any message in the Bible of the blind receiving sight, the deaf hearing, or the paralytic walking?

### **Sermon Manuscript**

It happened 18 years ago. Her back. It just went out one day ... [the remainder of the manuscript continues.]