



Birmingham Theological Seminary
2200 Briarwood Way
Birmingham, Alabama 35243
(205) 776-5650

PS1920 – Reformed Preaching Syllabus

Semester: Summer 2026 (Tues 5/26/26 to Fri 8/14/26)

Course: PS1920 Reformed Preaching

Day & Time: Monday 5:30-7:20 pm

Room: V/C online

Professor: Rev. Jackie D. Gaston, ThM, DMin

Credits: 2

Email: jackie.gaston@comcast.net

Phone: (256) 541-4103

Course Note: This course will be conducted by video conference and will involve reading and listening to a number of different Reformed preacher's sermons. Weekly preparation for each class will be necessary in order for the whole class to benefit from the class time and discussion.

Course Description: This course explores the distinctive features of preaching within the Reformed tradition. The student will explore Reformed expository preaching that is word-centered, Christ-exalting, Spirit empowered, and experiential in nature. Reformed preaching will be presented as a means of grace that seeks to address the whole man — mind, will, and emotions. The student will also learn to appreciate the evangelistic aspects of Reformed preaching. Finally, the student will recognize the distinct character of Reformed preaching which addresses the sovereignty of God in salvation, election, predestination, the sinfulness of man, covenant theology, and its relationship to the sacraments.

Course Objectives:

1. The student will be able to recognize Reformed versus non-Reformed preaching.
2. The student will be able to evaluate Reformed sermons for content and style of delivery.
3. The student will be able to describe the various components of an expository sermon.
4. The student will be able to formulate a Reformed sermon in all its composite parts.
5. The student will be able to recognize doctrinally sound experiential preaching.
6. The student will gain a greater appreciation for the Holy Spirit's role in the preparation, delivery, and response of Reformed sermons.

Required Texts:

*Beeke, Joel R. *Reformed Preaching: Proclaiming God's Word from the Heart of the Preacher to the Heart of His People*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2018. (439 pgs)

*Baxter, Richard. *The Reformed Pastor*, ed. William Brown. Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1974. (256 pgs)

*Westminster Larger Catechism Q&A 154-160; Westminster Shorter Catechism Q&A 88-90

*Various sermons distributed or assigned by the professor

*Read the following journal articles:

-Timothy Keller, "A Model for Preaching - Part I" *The Journal of Biblical Counseling* 12 no. 3, Spring 1994: 36-42.

-Timothy Keller, "A Model for Preaching - Part II: The Situational Aspect" *The Journal of Biblical Counseling* 13 no. 1, Fall 1994: 39-48.

-Timothy Keller, "A Model for Preaching - Part III" *The Journal of Biblical Counseling* 13 no. 2, Winter 1995: 51-60.

-Cornelius P. Venema, "The Doctrine of Preaching in the Reformed Confessions" *Mid-America Journal of Theology* 10 (1999): 135-183.

-Alan D. Strange, "Comments on the Centrality of Preaching in the Westminster Standards" *Mid-America Journal of Theology* 10 (1999): 185-238.

-Joel R. Beeke, "The Transforming Power of Puritan Preaching: The Westminster Directory and Its Application for Today" *The Masters Seminary Journal* 32/2 (Fall 2021): 287-299.

-Joel R. Beeke, "God-Centered Theology in the Ministry of the Word" *Puritan Reformed Journal* 1 (2009): 3-19.

Collateral or Recommended Texts:

*Ryle, J.C. *Simplicity in Preaching*. Peterborough: H&E Publishing, 2019.

*Perkins, William. *The Art of Prophesying*. London: Banner of Truth, 1996.

Course Requirements and Assessments:

- Book Critiques on both required texts: *Reformed Preaching* by Beeke; and *The Reformed Pastor* by Baxter — 3-5 pages each.
- Written Sermon Project - write a complete three point Reformed sermon on a selected and approved text that includes Sermon Title, Text Announcement, Scripture Introduction, Scripture Reading, Prayer of Illumination, Sermon Introduction, Proposition, Signpost, 3 Points (including Explanation, Illustration, and Application under each point, and proper transitions between points), Sermon Conclusion, and Closing Prayer. This is not to be in outline form or bullet points, but is to be comprehensive as you write out every word that you would say. — 10-12 pages.
- Five complete sermon evaluations of a preacher of your choice (preferably your pastor).

Grading

- 1. Written Sermon Project - 45% (due 8/14/26)
- 2. 2 Book Critiques - 30% (15% each) (due 8/7/26)
- 3. 5 Sermons Evaluations – 25% (5% each) (due 7/30/26)

BTS Format, Style, and Writing Standards:

All research papers must be formatted in accordance with Turabian Chicago standards including the title page. All papers are to be #12 font Times New Roman and Double-Spaced. Any paper not conforming to these standards will automatically be dropped one letter grade. Please see the BTS Turabian Style Guide for more information on turning in papers and assignments.

The BTS Turabian Style Guide and other resources are available on the BTS Writing Center webpage: <https://www.btswritingcenter.net/>

BTS Plagiarism / Generative AI Policy

In addition to the BTS plagiarism policy, BTS is implementing a new Generative AI policy. Unless clearly directed by the instructor, the students should submit their own work, independent of artificial intelligence tools. Use of generative AI to write papers or to write significant portions of assignments is considered an ethical violation of our Student Code of Conduct and to be a violation of general academic integrity, which could result in a zero on the assignment and/or a lowered letter grade for the course by the professor. If determined to be an egregious violation, it could lead to further sanctions administered through the Academic Committee, including expulsion from BTS.

Course Schedule/Outline:

[Class is under development and schedule will change as needed. Updated course schedule will be given at first class, and updated as needed as the course progresses.]

Class 1: 6/1/26 - Reformed Preaching Defined: Word-Centered, Christ-Exalting, and Substantial

Class 2: 6/8/26 - Reformed Preaching is Expository Preaching, part I

Class 3: 6/15/26 - Reformed Preaching is Expository Preaching, part II

Class 4: 6/22/26 - Reformed Preaching is Expository Preaching, part III

Class 5: 6/29/26 - Reformed Preaching is Expository Preaching, part IV

Class 6: 7/6/26 - Reformed Preaching is Evangelistic Preaching

Class 7: 7/13/26 - Reformed Preaching is Doctrinally Sound Preaching, part I

Class 8: 7/20/26 - Reformed Preaching is Doctrinally Sound Preaching, part II

Class 9: 7/27/26 - Reformed Preaching is Covenantal Preaching

Class 10: 8/3/26 - Reformed Preaching is Experiential Preaching

Class 11: 8/10/26 - Reformed Preaching is Holy Spirit Empowered Preaching

Attendance Policy:

Students are expected to demonstrate punctuality and attend all class sessions. Any absences should be communicated to the professor beforehand.

Class Policies and Procedures:

- BTS highly recommends using handwritten note taking methods in class and keeping computer typing during class to a minimum.
- Other electronics, such as phones, should be silenced and not consulted unless there is an emergency.
- All assignments must be submitted by email by 11:59 (CDT/CST) on the due date.
- Late assignments will incur a -3-point deduction per weekday after the due date, except in cases of emergency communicated to the professor.
- Missed tests/exams may only be made up with an excused absence, preferably in advance of class. Excused absence tests/exams must be made up before the final day of the semester.

Video Conference Policies and Procedures:

- Please utilize the BTS “Best VC (Video Conference) Practices” information for the course.
- Laptops/Desktops are the preferred method of attending a video conference course. Information will be shared on the screen, so phones will be less useful.
- In Video Conference, it is preferable for the student to keep their video on (when possible) so that students and faculty may engage with one another. Extended periods of dark screen will result in follow-up and potential removal from class.
- Other electronics should be used sparingly.

Course Bibliography / Extended Bibliography

Adam, Peter. *Speaking God's Words: A Practical Theology of Preaching*. Vancouver: Regent College Publishing, 1996.

Adams, Jay. *Preaching With Purpose*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1982.

Akin, Daniel L, David L. Allen, and Ned L. Mathews. *Text-Driven Preaching: God's Word at the Heart of Every Sermon*. Nashville: B&H Publishing, 2010.

Alexander, James W. *Thoughts on Preaching: Classic Contributions on Homiletics*. Birmingham, AL: Solid Ground Christian Books, 2009.

Baxter, Richard. *The Reformed Pastor*, ed. William Brown .Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1974.

- Beeke, Joel R. *Reformed Preaching: Proclaiming God's Word from the Heart of the Preacher to the Heart of His People*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2018.
- Capill, Murray. *The Heart is the Target: Preaching Practical Application from Every Text*. Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing, 2014.
- Chapel, Bryan. *Christ-Centered Preaching: Redeeming the Expository Sermon*, 2nd ed. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2004.
- Charles, Jr. H.B. *On Preaching: Personal and Pastoral Insights for the Preparation and Practice of Preaching*. Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2014.
- Clowney, Edmund P. *Preaching Christ in All of Scripture*. Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2003.
- Gordon, T. David. *Why Johnny Can't Preach: The Media Have Shaped the Messengers*. Phillipsburg: P&R Publishing, 2009.
- Griffiths, Jonathan I. *Preaching in the New Testament: An Exegetical and Biblical-Theological Study*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2017.
- Helm, David R. *Expository Preaching: How We Speak God's Word Today*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2014.
- Johnson, Dennis E. *Him We Proclaim: Preaching Christ From All the Scriptures*. Phillipsburg: P&R Publishing Co, 2007.
- Keller, Timothy. *Preaching: Communicating Faith in an Age of Skepticism*. New York: Viking, 2015.
- Kim, Julius J. *Preaching the Whole Counsel of God: Design and Deliver Gospel-Centered Sermons*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015.
- Lloyd-Jones, D. Martyn. *Preaching and Preachers*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1971.
- Logan, Samuel T. *The Preacher and Preaching: Reviving the Art*. Phillipburg: P&R Publishing Co., 1986.
- MacArthur, John. *Rediscovering Expository Preaching: Balancing the Scene and Art of Biblical Exposition*. Dallas: Word Publishing, 1992. [Now the title is *Preaching: How to Preach Biblically*, 2005.]
- McDill, Wayne. *12 Essential Skills For Great Preaching*. 2nd ed. Nashville: B&H Publishing, 2006.
- Millar, Gary and Phil Campbell. *Saving Eutychus: How to Preach God's Word and Keep People Awake*. Sydney: MatthisMedia, 2022.

- Mohler, Jr. R. Albert, et al. *Feed My Sheep: A Passionate Plea for Preaching*. Orlando: Soli Deo Gloria Publications, 2002, 2008.
- Murray, David. *How Sermons Work*. Carlisle, PA: EP Books, 2011.
- Perkins, William. *The Art of Prophesying*. London: Banner of Truth, 1996.
- Piper, John. *Expository Exultation: Christian Preaching as Worship*. Wheaton: Crossway Publishing, 2018.
- Piper, John. *The Supremacy of God in Preaching*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2004.
- Robinson, Haddon. *Biblical Preaching*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academics, 2001.
- Ryle, J.C. *Simplicity in Preaching*. Peterborough: H&E Publishing, 2019.
- Spurgeon, C.H. *Lectures to My Students*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1980.
- Stott, John R.W. *Between Two Worlds: The Art of Preaching in the Twentieth Century*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982.
- Strain, David. *Expository Preaching*. Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing, 2021.
- Van Mastricht, Petrus. *The Best Method of Preaching*. Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2013.

GRADING CRITERIA AND ASSESSMENT RUBRIC

A to A-	B to B-	C to C-	D to D-
Correct spelling and grammar/punctuation	Minor errors in spelling or grammar/punctuation	Multiple errors in spelling or grammar/punctuation per page	Difficult to read due to English writing errors
Smooth writing that provides for effective and efficient reading	Writing is acceptable, but not as organized and coherent	Writing is not smooth, sometimes confusing and inconsistent	Writing lacks clarity, focus, structure, and is incoherent
Person and format are proper for assignment	Person and format are inconsistent	Person and format are not appropriate	Person and format are totally inappropriate
Scripture, paraphrases, quotes, and summaries are appropriately used, cited, and clearly supports main argument	Scripture, paraphrases, quotes, and summaries are appropriate but need more depth and use of critical thinking	Scripture, paraphrases, quotes, and summaries are inadequate for main argument and do not reflect understanding	Scripture, paraphrases, quotes, and summaries are improperly used, over used, under used, or cited in error
Paper completely conforms to Turabian's <i>Manual for Writers</i>	Paper generally conforms to Turabian's <i>Manual for Writers</i>	Paper somewhat conforms to Turabian's <i>Manual for Writers</i>	Paper does not conform to Turabian's <i>Manual for Writers</i>

BTS Outcomes Evaluation

Please rank each outcome on a scale of 1-5

1: this outcome is not covered in this class

2: this outcome is only touched on in this class

3: this outcome is discussed in conjunction with class material

4: this outcome lightly assessed as part of course assessment (one assignment)

5: this outcome is fully integrated into the assessment of this course (multiple assignments)

1. Scripture: Students will effectively articulate the truth of Scripture and Scripture as truth, engaged with learning biblical knowledge and reformed principles of the supremacy of Scripture as God's word.
2. Reformed Theology: Students will be able to engage and reproduce the primary and essential elements of Reformed Theology.
3. Local Church: Students will be engaged in applied ministry projects in the local church
4. Wisdom: Students will grow in character; increasing in their demonstration of wisdom and its fruits.
5. Discipleship: Students will be able to understand and articulate the nature and importance of discipleship—both ordinary (means of grace) and extraordinary (biblical counseling).
6. Communication: Students will grow in the efficacy of their communication (articulation, teaching/speaking, and preaching—respective to various departments) both in content knowledge and rhetorical strategies.
7. Worldview: Students will demonstrate a growing ability to apply God's word to all spheres of life, evidenced through class discussion and other assigned assessments.
8. Leadership: Students will grow in their understanding of godly leadership and ability to lead others in service of the local church.

Outcome	Rank	Rational (one sentence)
Scripture	5	Scripture is foundation to the office of preacher and preaching.
Reformed Theology	5	Reformed theology as it relates to preachers and preaching is the underlying foundation of this course.
Local Church	5	Evaluating preachers and preaching is of valuable service to the local church.

Wisdom	5	Growing in knowledge and understanding of preaching the word promotes Christian maturity.
Discipleship	5	Preaching is the primary means of grace and best method of whole congregational discipleship.
Communication	5	Understanding preaching as a mode of communication, along with the elements of sermon-making promotes hunger for God's word.
Worldview	3	Preaching will be applied to the sphere of the church as the primary means of grace.
Leadership	5	Leading the church in its mission and vision is best accomplished through the pulpit.