

**Reformed Theological Seminary- Washington, D.C.**  
**06PT5150 Communications II**  
**Syllabus**

**Dates:** February 1- May 10, 2022 (There will be no class on 3/16 due to reading week)

**Time:** Wednesdays 10:00am-12:00pm

**Credit Hours:** 2

**Instructor:** Rev. Russ Whitfield

**Contact address:** 637 Indiana Ave. NW #300 Washington, DC 20004

**Email:** pastor@gracemosaic.org

**Office Hours:** By Appointment via email.

**Academic Catalog Information**

**Course Description:** This course is a continuation of Communications I. Students will continue to develop interpretive and communications skills, aiming to advance beyond mechanics into greater degrees of homiletical maturity. Special emphasis is given to the preparation of homilies for weddings and funerals.

**Prerequisite:** PT5125 (Communications I) is a prerequisite to PT5150 (Communications II). It “introduces the theological framework and basic skills required for interpreting and communicating the Bible within the context of the church’s ministry (both formal and informal).

**Timing:** Communications II is designed to be taken in a student’s senior year, with the assumption that both Hebrew and Greek courses have been completed. Students hoping to receive maximum benefit from Communications II should complete the majority of their biblical and systematic courses prior to this class.

**Preaching Laboratory II:** Comm. II is usually taken in conjunction with PT5151 (Preaching Lab II). The catalog description for PT5151 states that “Students will preach multiple sermons. Women and other non-ministerial candidates will substitute additional elective course hours for all Preaching Labs.” Although these two courses are usually packaged together, I welcome all students to take PT5150 (Comm. II) for credit, whether or not they are able or interested in taking PT5151 (Preaching Lab II). It should also be noted that the RTS DC registrar will assist non-ministerial candidates in finding an alternative course or independent study suited to replace PT5151.

**Course overview**

**Goals:**

This course intends to facilitate the achievement of the following goals:

- Greater Competency in creating Christ-centered sermons and homilies that are faithful to the biblical text and sensitive to the redemptive-historical contours of scripture.
- Greater competence in creating doctrinally rich sermons and homilies that are both clear and compelling for listeners from various ethnic, racial, cultural, and spiritual backgrounds.
- Sharpening the Christ-centered instincts of the student as it pertains to biblical interpretation, gospel proclamation, and congregational formation.

- Encouraging greater freedom and confidence in proclaiming the excellencies of Christ; specifically through the student’s own personality, gifts, and experience of union with Christ.
- To foster pastoral reflection and awareness that goes beyond the individual sermon, giving thought to the sermon series and a broader preaching ministry as well.
- To foster pastoral reflection upon the individual sermon, the sermon series, and the long-term preaching ministry of a pastor.

**Class Format:**

The majority of class hours will be spent in lecture and in guided discussion based upon assigned reading. Each student will be expected to come to class prepared to critically engage the material and contribute to the guided discussions. As with most things in life, the more effort you put into your preparation, the more benefit you will take away. We will seek to foster an encouraging, truthful, and gracious environment in our class discussions, keeping in mind that our every meeting is yet another occasion to obey the great commandment: “*You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself.*” - Luke 10:27

**Course Objectives Related to MDiv\* Student Learning Outcomes**

Course: 06PT5150

Professor: Rev. Russ Whitfield

Campus: Washington, DC

Date: Spring 2022

<b><u>MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes</u></b> <i>In order to measure the success of the MDiv curriculum, RTS has defined the following as the intended outcomes of the student learning process. Each course contributes to these overall outcomes. This rubric shows the contribution of this course to the MDiv outcomes. *As the MDiv is the core degree at RTS, the MDiv rubric will be used in this syllabus.</i>		<b><u>Rubric</u></b>	<b><u>Mini-Justification</u></b>
<b>Articulation (oral &amp; written)</b>	Broadly understands and articulates knowledge, both oral and written, of essential biblical, theological, historical, and cultural/global information, including details, concepts, and frameworks.	Strong	Students will write an essay on homiletics, craft a sermon series, and learn to write homilies effectively.
<b>Scripture</b>	Significant knowledge of the original meaning of Scripture. Also, the concepts for and skill to research further into the original meaning of Scripture and to apply Scripture to a variety of modern circumstances. (Includes appropriate use of original languages and hermeneutics; and integrates theological, historical, and cultural/global perspectives.)	Strong	Students will have to demonstrate the ability to communicate the overarching story of God through a sermon series. This will require sufficient command of Scripture.

<b>Reformed Theology</b>	Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards.	Moderate	Students will develop their ability to communicate the reformed faith in the context of preaching.
<b>Sanctification</b>	Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student's sanctification.	Moderate	Emphasis will be given to the importance of personal piety as it pertains to preaching.
<b>Desire for Worldview</b>	Burning desire to conform all of life to the Word of God.	Moderate	Students will sharpen their ability to understand congregational challenges and apply the Word of God
<b>Winsomely Reformed</b>	Embraces a winsomely Reformed ethos. (Includes an appropriate ecumenical spirit with other Christians, especially Evangelicals; a concern to present the Gospel in a God-honoring manner to non-Christians; and a truth-in-love attitude in disagreements.)	Moderate	Lecture time will be given to cross-cultural considerations in preaching.
<b>Preach</b>	Ability to preach and teach the meaning of Scripture to both heart and mind with clarity and enthusiasm.	Strong	This is the primary subject matter of the course.
<b>Worship</b>	Knowledgeable of historic and modern Christian-worship forms; and ability to construct and skill to lead a worship service.	Minimal	Preaching is an important aspect of worship, however, focus will be narrowed to proclamation.
<b>Shepherd</b>	Ability to shepherd the local congregation: aiding in spiritual maturity; promoting use of gifts and callings; and encouraging a concern for non-Christians, both in America and worldwide.	Moderate	Since preaching is a significant aspect of shepherding, attention will be given to the relationship between preaching and pastoring. There will also be instruction regarding how students may improve their shepherding impact through proclamation.

<b>Church/World</b>	Ability to interact within a denominational context, within the broader worldwide church, and with significant public issues.	Moderate	The content of this class will be accessible and applicable across denominational contexts. This class will also foster a gracious dialogical spirit.
---------------------	---	----------	---

### **Assignments**

- At the beginning of each lecture, students will come prepared to answer the following questions about the sermon they heard the previous Sunday **(10%)**:
  - What did you appreciate about the sermon?
  - How were you challenged or encouraged to live in light of the gospel?
  - What homiletical devices did you find effective? (e.g. Illustrations, tag lines, transitions, use of cultural authorities, etc)
- Outline a sermon series that traces the grand, narrative arc of Scripture. You should plan to accomplish this assignment with no fewer than 6 sermons and no more than 12 sermons. Put your theological rigor and creativity to pastoral use! **(30%)**
  - Provide a series outline document. This should include the title and an introductory briefing (a paragraph) on the entire series, aiming to communicate the need for, and expected results of this series.
  - Provide details on the resources you plan to consult for your research and preparation.
  - Provide specific texts, titles, and skeletal outlines for each sermon within the series. Be sure to transcript both your introduction and conclusion for each sermon within the series.
  - For context, use the church that you currently attend as your target audience (Don't forget neighbors of this local church).
- Write an essay (3000 words max) to "your congregation" detailing 1) The importance of preaching 2) Your Homiletical approach, and 3) How your congregants should prepare their hearts for the preaching of God's Word. **(30%)**
- Complete a reading checklist indicating the total percentage of reading accomplished. **(30%)**

### **Reading (30%)**

#### Books:

- Octavius Winslow, *The Precious Things of God* (156 pages)
- Robert Smith Jr., *Doctrine That Dances* (207 pages)
- Timothy Keller, *Preaching* (309 pages)
- Sidney Greidanus, *The Modern Preacher and the Ancient Text* (374 pages)
- Craig M. Gay, *The Way of the (Modern) World* (313 Pages)
- Matthew D. Kim, *Preaching With Cultural Intelligence* (288 pages)
- Irwyn L. Ince Jr., *The Beautiful Community* (168 pages)

Articles:

- Sinclair Ferguson, *Preaching Christ From the Old Testament* (18 Pages, PDF)
- Jonathan Edwards, *The True Excellency of a Gospel Minister* (15 Pages, PDF)
- **Total Pages: 1848**

Recommended:

- Bryan Chapell, *The Hardest Sermons You'll Ever Preach*

**Class Schedule**

Date	Lecture Topic	Reading to Complete	Assignment Due
2/1	Introduction to the Course & Big Picture Review of our Preaching Goal (Union with Christ & Christoformity)		
2/8	Heat & Light in Preaching: An Edwardsian Paradigm	Edwards & Ferguson	
2/15	Developing Redemptive Lenses on Scripture and Life	Keller Due	
2/22	**Double Lab	Winslow chapters 1-4	
3/1	**Double Lecture: Exalting Christ in Proclamation & Doxological Delivery (Morning) & Developing a Sermon Series (Afternoon)	Winslow chapters 5-8	
3/8	Writing Homilies	Winslow chapters 9-12	
3/15	<b>Reading Week- NO CLASS</b>		
3/22	<b>No CLASS</b>	Smith chapters 1-7	
3/29	Preaching the Whole Counsel of God		
4/5	Preaching to the Whole Person	Kim Complete	
4/12	Preaching to the Whole Community	Ince Complete	
4/19	The Role of Prayer In Preaching & The Use of Story and the Cultivation of Sacred Imagination in Preaching	All Reading Due	Sermon Series Due
4/26	Double Lecture: Preaching A Cross-Cultural Christ from a Cross-Cultural Bible & Preaching In A Podcast Culture		Essay Due & Reading Checklist

**Assessment and grading**

Sunday Sermon Responses: 10%

Sermon Series: 30%  
Essay: 30%  
Reading: 30%

**RTS Grading Scale:** The seminary uses the following grading system:

A (97-100) 4.00 quality points  
A- (94-96) 3.66  
B+ (91-93) 3.33  
B (88-90) 3.00  
B- (86-87) 2.66  
C+ (83-85) 2.33  
C (80-82) 2.00  
C- (78-79) 1.66  
D+ (75-77) 1.33  
D (72-74) 1.00  
D- (70-71) 0.66  
F (below 70) 0.00  
I (incomplete) 0.00  
W, WP (withdraw, 0.00 withdraw passing)  
S (satisfactory) 0.00

**Late Assignments:** Late assignments will be dropped one grade on the above scale for each week they are late. For example, an assignment that is four weeks late will be dropped from an A to a B-. Late and Missing assignments are the primary reason for low course grades. 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."