

Communications II (PT 5150)
Summer 2026
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Course Description

This course seeks to continue the development of expository preaching by examining how to preach from Old Testament narrative texts. It is primarily a lecture course that lays a foundation for the preaching labs where students will preach from narrative texts. This course builds on the material of Communications I and seeks to develop a methodology of how to preach narrative texts. There will also be an emphasis on the theology of the Word of God as the basis for preaching within God's redemptive program and on certain hermeneutical issues that arise in relationship to preaching narrative.

Course Objectives

- 1) To understand how narrative works to preach effective expository sermons from narrative texts
- 2) To develop a methodology of sermon preparation appropriate to Old Testament narrative texts.
- 3) To lay a foundation for the necessity of preaching in understanding the theology of preaching.
- 4) To introduce certain issues related to the hermeneutics of preaching and its significance for understanding the task of preaching.

Required Textbooks

- 1) Murray Capill, *The Heart is the Target*, 244 pages
- 2) Bryan Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, 3rd ed., 2018 (1-346, 381-383)
- 3) Timothy Keller, *Preaching*, 2015 (pages 1-210)
- 4) Steven D. Matthewson, *The Art of Preaching Old Testament Narrative*, 2nd ed., 2021 (Pages 1-178 and Appendix B): **students must read the 2nd ed.** This book discusses how to preach OT narrative and has an excellent Appendix on the function of the imperfect waw consecutive in Hebrew narrative
- 5) Albert N. Martin, *Preaching in the Holy Spirit* (Reformation Heritage Books, 2011)
- 6) "The Ebb and Flow of Lectio Continua Bible Reading in the English-Speaking Reformed Churches, 1539-2000," by Terry Johnson in *The Hope Fulfilled*, 290-316 (supplied to the student): this article discusses the history and importance of reading the Bible as part of worship

- 7) "Redemptive-Historical Themes in the *Westminster Larger Catechism*," by Robert Cara in *The Westminster Confession of Faith in the 21st Century* (supplied to the student): this article lays out hermeneutical categories that are important for understanding different approaches concerning how to preach
- 8) If you have already read one of the above books you must read another book in its place.
- a) In place of Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching*, read John A. Broadus, *On the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*, rev. Weatherspoon (Harper and Row, 1944); if you have read Broadus, contact the professor
- b) In place of Keller, *Preaching*, read R. Albert Mohler, Jr., *He is Not Silent: Preaching in a Postmodern World* (Moody Press, 2008); if you have read Mohler, contact the professor
- c) If you have read any of the other required works listed above, contact the professor. Any substitutions must be approved by the professor.

Assignments

- 1) The reading must be completed (record percentage out of 100% in Canvas, Saturday **July 18, 11:59 PM**)
- 2) Each student will have the opportunity to read a narrative text in class to practice the public reading of Scripture; you must use the ESV so that the professor can follow the reading (see the Handout on the Public Reading of Scripture)
- 3) There is an oral presentation of 5-7 minutes that will include the following:
 - a) Scripture introduction (this will be explained)
 - b) Reading four verses from your text
 - c) Prayer
 - d) Introduction of your sermon followed by a statement of your proposition (proposition should be handed in to the professor)
- 4) One sermon from an Old Testament narrative text must be written, which should include the following (these will be explained in class)
 - a) a general plot analysis of the narrative which acts as the justification for the boundaries of the preaching text (in other words, the preaching text may not necessarily coincide with the chapter assigned the student)
 - b) a Homiletical Outline
 - c) state the audience to whom you are speaking

- d) the proposition and main points should be in **bold** type
- e) transitional statements should be in *italic* type
- f) placement of the text (reference to verses) should be underlined, for example, v 7

Note: if you are planning on taking Preaching Lab II offered July 27-July 31, 2026, you will be able to preach the sermon you have been assigned for this class from 2 Samuel. In other words, you will turn in a written sermon for this class on 2 Samuel (**due Saturday July 18, 11:59 PM**) and then preach that sermon for the Lab in July (along with another narrative sermon assigned to the student). However, note that a written sermon, although written with the prospect of preaching it, may be different in many ways from the spoken sermon. This policy only applies to the Summer Lab and not to the Lab offered during the Spring Semester.

- 5) The week-long class format provides some challenges for this class because there are assignments that we will discuss in class. Although the major assignments are not due until after the class is over, some of the assignments will be due during the week of class (see the Assignments document 002 in the Mega-syllabus). There will be time given during the week to complete these assignments. If you want to get a start on the reading/assignments before the class begins, the following are good places to start (many of the following are provided to the student on Canvas):

a) Read "Brothers, Bitzer was a Banker," in John Piper, *Brothers, We are Not Professionals: A Plea to Pastors for Radical Ministry* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2002), 81-88 and write out a statement that could be included in a philosophy of ministry that explains why the original languages are important for ministry and how you plan to keep up with the languages and use the languages in your ministry. This assignment should be from ½ a page to one page and should be uploaded to Canvas.

b) Read the Johnson article, Matthewson, and Chapell

- 5) Class attendance is important. Absences should be because of true emergencies and not because of the many interruptions common to our lives. This fosters the "discipline of regularity" needed in the pastorate, where the pastor experiences many interruptions and distractions that take time away from study and sermon preparation. A poor attendance can lower the grade.

6) There will be no exam for this class

Grades

1) Written Sermon	50%
2) Required Reading	20%
3) Homework and Class Participation	15%
4) Oral presentation	10%

5) Public Reading of Narrative 05%

Extensions Policy for Assignments: In extenuating circumstances, a deadline extension of **up to one week** may be granted at the discretion of the professor. Requests for extensions of **more than one week** must be submitted to the Registrar for consideration by the Academic Dean in consultation with the professor. Extensions are granted only for significant emergencies or unforeseen circumstances, and a grade penalty may be applied. *All extension requests must be made prior to the assignment deadline.* No retrospective extensions will be granted.

RTS Charlotte Classroom Technology Usage

RTS Charlotte recognizes how essential it is for students to have reliable, campus-wide access to the internet. For that reason, we have made Wi-Fi available for our student body, not only in the library and student lounges, but also in the classrooms. We know that students need to use the internet to download class materials, access files on the Cloud, and locate other important information. However, we also recognize that internet access in the classroom provides opportunity for abuse and misuse. Some students have unfortunately used their internet access to engage in many activities that distract them from the classroom lectures (e.g., surfing the web, checking sports scores, playing games). Not only does such activity hamper a student's own seminary education, but it distracts other students who can easily view the screens of nearby students. In addition, donors and classroom guests (who often sit in the back) can see this inappropriate internet usage, which reflects poorly on RTS. Classroom etiquette includes leaving cell phones turned off, refraining from surfing the Internet or playing computer games or other distracting activities. In addition, students must respect standards set by individual professors regarding the use of technology during their class.

To address this issue, we must appeal to the integrity of the students as ones who are preparing for a lifetime of ministry to Christ and his church. We expect each student to take personal responsibility for proper classroom technology usage and to encourage others around them to do the same. All RTS-Charlotte students are accountable to the policies stated in the Student Handbook and Academic Catalog and are therefore expected to use technology in the classroom only for appropriate class-related activities. Student conduct is under the supervision of the Dean of Students.

Note: RTS affirms that local churches, denominational structures, parachurch organizations, educational institutions, and mission agencies present many strategic ministry and leadership opportunities where preparation through the M. Div. degree can be particularly helpful for women and other non-ministerial students. While RTS limits the MDiv preaching labs to male students, women in the MDiv degree program can either (a) take elective courses in the place of the two preaching labs, or (b) take a directed study in general communications, which may involve women or other non-ministerial students attending a section of the preaching lab with similar but alternative assignments.

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SYSTEM

Course Objectives Related to MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes

Course: Communications II

Professor: Richard P. Belcher, Jr.

Campus: RTS Charlotte

Date: March 14, 2026

MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes		Rubric	Mini-Justification
<p><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.</i></p> <p><i>*As the MDiv is the core degree at RTS, the MDiv rubric will be used in this syllabus.</i></p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong • Moderate • Minimal • None 	
Articulation (oral & written)	Broadly understands and articulates knowledge, both oral and written, of essential biblical, theological, historical, and cultural/global information, including details, concepts, and frameworks. Also includes ability to preach and teach the meaning of Scripture to both heart and mind with clarity and enthusiasm.	Strong	a written sermon is required; the theological basis and the hermeneutics of preaching are covered
Scripture	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	Preaching focuses on the original meaning as a basis for modern meaning; there is an emphasis on using the languages in understanding the original meaning for preaching purposes
Reformed Theology	Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards.	Minimal	the theology and hermeneutics of preaching touches on a few issues
Sanctification	Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student's sanctification.	Moderate	discussions of application of the text deals with sanctification issues
Worldview	Burning desire to conform all of life to the Word of God. Includes ability to interact within a denominational context, within the broader worldwide church, and with significant public issues.	Minimal	the goal of preaching is to help people do this
Winsomely Reformed	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.)	Minimal	respect for other methods of preaching is encouraged
Pastoral Ministry	Ability to minister the Word of God to hearts and lives of both church and unchurched, to include preaching, teaching, leading in worship, leading and shepherding the local congregation, aiding in spiritual maturity, concern for non-Christians.	Strong	ability to minister the word of God is the heart of this course