



PT5100 Communication I

Fall 2026

August 20 – December 3

Reformed Theological Seminary – Charlotte

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Course Description

This course addresses total communication for pastors with an emphasis on preaching philosophy and style, textual exposition, and sermon structure. Written and oral, verbal and non-verbal communications are included.

Course Purpose

The purpose of this course is to help students construct a biblical theology of preaching and a basic understanding of sermon construction.

Course Objectives

- To foster confidence in the preached Word to save, sanctify, and comfort God's elect.
- To emphasize the role of the Holy Spirit in Biblical preaching.
- To introduce students to the distinct nature of expository preaching.
- To introduce students to the basic construction of sermons.
- To explain the different elements of a sermon.
- To introduce students to basic pulpit etiquette and technique.

Course Requirements

Reading (to Be Discussed in Class)

1. *Called to the Ministry*: Edmund Clowney
2. *Preaching and Preachers*: Martyn Lloyd-Jones
3. *Biblical Preaching*: Haddon Robinson
4. *Preaching with Purpose*: Jay Adams

Articles (Provided on Canvas)

1. *What's a Young Preacher to Do? Toward Reconciling Rival Approaches to Reformed Preaching*: Dennis Johnson, pages 1-21 (part I)
2. *Balanced Preaching: A Four-legged Stool as a Model*: Jim Newheiser
3. *Simplicity in Preaching*: J. C. Ryle

Audio

1. Coram Deo Pastors Workshop 2025 with Kevin DeYoung and John Piper
<https://clearlyreformed.org/coram-deo/conference/2025-coram-deo-pastors-workshop/>

The expectation is that students will read every word of these books to receive full reading credit. Students will be graded based on their self-reporting according to the following rubric:

	Percentage of the book read word-for-word
	Percentage of the book skimmed
	Read by due date (Yes or No)

If you have already read any of the assigned readings, you may either read them again word for word or contact the professor for an alternative assignment. There will be a small penalty if the reading is not completed by the due dates. Not doing the reading will result in more significant penalties. Reports submitted late or students who must be reminded to submit their report will suffer an academic penalty.

Qualifications and Calling

Write a 4-page paper analyzing your qualifications for ministry (according to 1 Tim. 3:1-7) and your call to the ministry. Include a brief plan for how you plan to work on at least one area of weakness.

Sermon Analysis

Listen to or read four sermons by four different preachers (four sermons total) and fill out a sermon evaluation form in which you reflect upon the strengths and weaknesses of each preacher. I would suggest that you consider including your present and/or past pastor, Spurgeon, Piper, L. Duncan, Lloyd-Jones, and MacArthur.

Sermon Preparation

Choose and sign up for a passage from Ephesians. Over the course of the semester, work through the stages of sermon preparation. The final product will be a sermon manuscript and an outline that could be brought into the pulpit.

Make sure to clearly include your text reference at the TOP of every submission

1. Text Selection from Ephesians
 - a. Sign up online through the Google Docs link shared on Canvas.
 - b. No two students may choose the same text.
2. Study Notes
 - a. I expect 3 or more pages. I prefer at least 5.
 - b. Must include word studies.
 - c. Must include notes from commentaries. Please make sure to include the names and authors of the commentaries that you reference.
3. Purpose Statement
 - a. One tweetable sentence summarizing how the purpose of the passage will be applied to your congregation. Include your text reference.
4. Bare Bones Sermon Outline
 - a. Introduction, main points, and conclusion.
 - i. This outline should be 2 to 4 complete sentences (one for each main point) aimed at the congregation.
 - ii. Must be stated in 1st person plural or 2nd person plural.
 - iii. Must include the verses for each main point.
 - iv. Ideally it should be in parallel structure.
5. Full Sermon Outline
 - a. 3 to 4 pages, based upon your bare bones outline.
 - b. Verses should be attached to each main point.
 - c. Must include sub-points, transitions, illustrations, and applications.
 - d. Must have an introduction and a conclusion
 - e. Must include a title and your text as a heading
6. Sermon Manuscript (minimum 3000 words)

****Here is a link to my sermon outlines from 30 years of preaching. The summary outlines are in the folder "0 Handouts"**

https://www.dropbox.com/sh/fkfglhlybfvdhejs/AAAfYcqYQbRQ5etTwy_0njaa?dl=0

Self-Evaluation of In-Class Presentation

Give a ten-minute presentation—either a short homily or sermon (which could be based upon your chosen text from Ephesians)—or your personal testimony (with reference to a favorite passage of Scripture). Students are to record their own speaking assignments, listen to them, and turn in a 1-2 page self-evaluation.

Final Exam

Will be provided on Canvas.

Class Participation

It is required that students be present for all class sessions. If a student is “providentially hindered” from attending class, if possible, please notify the instructor. It is expected that students will keep current in their reading and assignments on time. Failure to comply with these standards will result in a grade reduction unless other arrangements have been made.

Grading

Assigned Reading	10%
Study Notes	5%
Purpose Statement and Bare Bones Outline	10%
Sermon Manuscript and Outline	20%
Qualifications and Calling Paper	10%
Sermon Analysis	10%
Final Exam	15%
In-Class Speaking Assignment	10%
Class Participation	10%

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.

Class Schedule (Subject to Change/Adjustment)

Date	Lecture	Reading/Assignment Due
August 20	Class Introduction Preparing the Man: Qualifications	—
August 27	Preparing the Man: Call to Ministry and Personal Life of the Leader	Choose text from Ephesians Qualifications and Calling Sermon Analysis 1 <i>Called to the Ministry</i>
September 3	Guest: Dr. Van Dixhoorn	Sermon Analysis 2 <i>Balanced Preaching: A Four-legged Stool as a Model</i> <i>What's a Young Preacher to Do?</i>
September 10	Preparing the Text: General Principles, Text Selection	Sermon Analysis 3 <i>Biblical Preaching</i> , Chapters 1–4
September 17	Preparing the Text: Content, Exegesis, Learning from Others	Sermon Analysis 4 <i>Preaching with Purpose</i> Coram Deo Pastors Workshop Audio
September 24	Preparing the Sermon: Determining Purpose and Creating a Bare Bones Outline	Study Notes <i>Biblical Preaching</i> , Chapters 5–7
October 1	Purpose Statements in Class	Purpose Statement (*Due Sep 30*)
October 8	No Class: Fall Break	—
October 15	Bare Bones Outlines in Class	<i>Biblical Preaching</i> , Chapters 8–10 Bare Bones Outline
October 22	Preparing the Sermon: Transitions, Illustrations, and Applications	<i>Simplicity in Preaching</i>
October 29	Delivery	—
November 5	In class presentations	<i>Preaching and Preachers</i>
November 12	In-class Presentations	—
November 19	In-class Presentations	Full Outline Sermon Manuscript Self-Evaluation of In-Class Presentation*
November 26	No Class: Thanksgiving	—
December 3	No Class: Exam Period	Reading Report Due
December 8	No Class: Exam Period	Final Exam Due

***Due Nov 21, 2026**

Classroom Policies

1. All classroom policies at RTS Charlotte are expected to be followed.
2. Guidelines for papers (including reflections and exams) submitted in this course can be found as a separate document on Canvas. **Reading this document and following its instructions is essential for you to pass this course.**
3. Students are required to cite all sources consulted for a written assignment. Students who plagiarize or cheat in any other manner are guilty of academic misconduct and will be reported to the Dean of Students. This will result in disciplinary action up to and including failure of the course and academic dismissal.
4. Laptops are welcome in class for note taking only. Only word processing programs may be open during class; no browsers, email programs, social media feeds, or any other program is to be used. Please silence cell phones and do not text, Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram, or whatever else desperately beckons for your attention during class.

Please also adhere to the following RTS internet usage protocol:

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.

In order 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.

Course Objectives Related to MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes

Course: Communication 1 (PT5100)
 Professor: Jim Newheiser
 Campus: Charlotte
 Date: Fall 2026

<u>MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes</u> <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> <i>*As the MDiv is the core degree at RTS, the MDiv rubric will be used in this syllabus.</i>		<u>Rubric</u> ➤ Strong ➤ Moderate ➤ Minimal ➤ None	<u>Mini-Justification</u>
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 the ability to preach and teach the meaning of Scripture to both heart and mind with clarity and enthusiasm.	Strong	Student must integrate hermeneutics, biblical exposition, theological themes, historical information, cultural familiarity, and verbal skills in communicating the message of Scripture.
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	Student must understand the original meaning of Scripture through the use of the original language and be able to apply it in preaching the text.
Reformed Theology	Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards.	Moderate	Texts have theological messages that must be communicated to God's people.
Sanctification	Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student's sanctification.	Minimal	Preaching itself is a sanctifying process that should remind the student of complete dependence on God.
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	This is one of the goals of preaching and so should be a desire of the preacher.
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	Emphasizes a winsome approach to preaching, including the presentation of the truth of the gospel and the word of God to those who may not agree.
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	Preaching should expound and apply the text of Scripture while also pointing to Christ. Emphasis is placed upon the Pastor's duty to shepherd the flock. We are taught to appreciate gifted preachers from various backgrounds.