

PR1510: TELLING THE STORY
LUTHER SEMINARY – SPRING 1/2009

“...it is a tragic error to assume that the Truth is its own evangelist...And those of us concerned to communicate the Christian gospel...must all the while follow the operational principle, *if it has been heard*. To effect that hearing is no small task.”

Fred B. Craddock
Overhearing the Gospel

INSTRUCTORS:

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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

An introduction to the nature of oral communication, the principles of rhetoric, and the various kinds of discourse and speaking skills needed to be an effective public leader. Half course.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

Our syllabus engages you as an evangelical public leader eager to tell the story of Jesus as found in Holy Scripture and called to interpret publically a text into the life of a congregation. All three participants are important:

- The character of the story, or the text, or the word. In classical rhetoric, this is *logos*.
- The character of the speaker, or the reader, or the storyteller. This is *ethos*.
- The character of the audience, or the people, or the congregation. This is *pathos*.

By imagining the world Scripture imagines, our preaching, teaching, and speaking can be more biblical, interesting, and theological. This course is intended to help you begin to develop skills in the following areas:

- The public reading of Scripture
- Effective delivery
- Passionate, moving speech for the sake of Gospel proclamation
- Thinking and interpreting theologically
- Writing for oral communication

We will use only one biblical text in the course in order to illustrate the breadth and depth of textual rhetoric, literary detail, imagery, oral devices, and narrative elements that biblical texts engage in theological imagination and proclamation. Our biblical text for the course is John 18:1-13a. **Please bring a Bible to each class session.**

John 18:1-13a (NRSV)

After Jesus had spoken these words, he went out with his disciples across the Kidron valley to a place where there was a garden, which he and his disciples entered.

² Now Judas, who betrayed him, also knew the place, because Jesus often met there with his disciples.

³ So Judas brought a detachment of soldiers together with police from the chief priests and the Pharisees, and they came there with lanterns and torches and weapons.

⁴ Then Jesus, knowing all that was to happen to him, came forward and asked them, "Whom are you looking for?"

⁵ They answered, "Jesus of Nazareth." Jesus replied, "I am he." Judas, who betrayed him, was standing with them.

⁶ When Jesus said to them, "I am he," they stepped back and fell to the ground.

⁷ Again he asked them, "Whom are you looking for?" And they said, "Jesus of Nazareth."

⁸ Jesus answered, "I told you that I am he. So if you are looking for me, let these men go."

⁹ This was to fulfill the word that he had spoken, "I did not lose a single one of those whom you gave me."

¹⁰ Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it, struck the high priest's slave, and cut off his right ear. The slave's name was Malchus.

¹¹ Jesus said to Peter, "Put your sword back into its sheath. Am I not to drink the cup that the Father has given me?"

¹² So the soldiers, their officer, and the Jewish police arrested Jesus and bound him.

¹³ First they took him to Annas.

COURSE EXPECTATIONS:

In order to receive a passing grade in the course, the following course expectations must be met:

- 1) Attendance at all plenary and lab sessions. **If more than one class session is missed, a passing grade for the course will not be possible.**
- 2) Class participation that demonstrates engagement with the readings and issues at hand.
- 3) Completion of assigned readings on date due.
- 4) Satisfactory completion of written assignments on date due.
- 5) **All coursework must be completed to receive a passing grade.**

Students are strongly discouraged from taking this course for a letter grade. This is a workshop, skills based introductory course that makes evaluative criteria difficult to assess.

Reading:

Quentin Schultze. *An Essential Guide to Public Speaking: Serving Your Audience with Faith, Skill, and Virtue*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006.

In addition to the required textbook, there are three articles available as e-reserves from the Luther Seminary Library. You can access these through our course management system called MyLutherNet.

Gracia Grindal, "Self-Disclosure in the Pulpit"

Lucy Lind Hogan, "Open My Lips," 173-190, in *Graceful Speech: An Invitation to Preaching*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006.

Donald Juel. "The Strange Silence of the Bible." *Interpretation* 51/1 (1997): 5-19.

Karoline M. Lewis, "The Ethics of Self-Disclosure in Preaching," *Journal of Lutheran Ethics*, 8/8 (2008) <http://archive.elca.org/jle/archive/08-08.asp>

Luke Timothy Johnson. "Imagining the World Scripture Imagines." *Modern Theology* 14/2 (1998): 165-80.

Howard W. Stone and James O. Duke, "Resources for Theological Reflection," 38-54 in *How to Think Theologically*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2006.

Writing:

There are five major writing assignments for this course:

Paper #1: *Logos: Hearing the Word*

Write approximately 500 words (about 2 double-spaced pages, typed) documenting one or more insights into the interpretation of John 18:1-13a from the reserve reading (Juel and Johnson), class discussion, lab discussion, and your own reading out loud of John 18:1-13a.

Due February 19, 2009.

Paper #2: *Ethos*: Resources for My Theological Reflection

Stone and Duke offer a list of potential resources for theological reflection: scripture, tradition, reason, and experience. Write a paper (3 double-spaced pages) on how these and/or other resources define you as a theologian and shape your own theological reflection while considering the following question: What does it mean to think theologically? In addition, engage the readings by Grindal and Lewis in reflecting on your own theological voice.

Due February 26, 2009.

Paper #3:

Logos & Ethos: Discovering a Theological Claim in the Text

In two paragraphs, discuss what you interpret a possible theological claim of John 18 to be. What is this text saying and doing theologically? Provide specific textual rationale for your claim.

Due March 5, 2009.

Paper #4: *Pathos*: Serving Your Audience with Faith, Skill, and Virtue

Write a book review (3 double-spaced pages) of Schultze, *An Essential Guide to Public Speaking*, discussing three insights that surfaced in relation to this course and what difference these insights make for communication of your theological claim on the text. Provide one specific example of how you might rewrite a sentence of your theological claim discussion based on Schultze.

Due March 12, 2009.

Paper #5: *Logos, Ethos & Pathos*: Theological Claims in a Human Voice for Human Ears

Rewrite your theological claim paper using the techniques of oral communication discussed in plenary sessions, assigned readings, and labs. Prepare to deliver orally in our last class session, giving specific attention to delivery skills – volume, vocal variety, fluency, clarity, physical presentation – and to communication toward passionate, moving, effective speech

Due March 19, 2009.

CLASS SCHEDULE:

CLASS 1 **February 12, 2009 – Introduction to Course**

PLENARY *The Rhetorical Triangle/Hearing the Biblical Text*

LAB #1 Reading texts: empathetic reading and delivery

ASSIGNMENT #1 – DUE NEXT CLASS SESSION

Read Juel, "The Strange Silence of the Bible"
Read Johnson, "Imagining the World Scripture Imagines"
Read *The Gospel of John*

Paper #1: *Logos: Hearing the Word*

CLASS 2
PLENARY

February 19, 2009 – Logos
Orality and Communication

LAB #2

Prepare a short drama on the biblical text to present to the entire class in third hour of class session.

ASSIGNMENT #2 – DUE NEXT CLASS SESSION

Read Stone and Duke, "Resources for Theological Reflection"
Read Grindal, "Self-Disclosure in the Pulpit"
Read Lewis, "The Ethics of Self-Disclosure in Preaching"

Paper #2: *Ethos: Resources for My Theological Reflection*

CLASS 3
PLENARY

February 26, 2009 – Ethos
Interpreting Ourselves/Thinking and Writing Theologically

LAB #3

Discussion of Paper #2

ASSIGNMENT #3 – DUE NEXT CLASS SESSION

Read Hogan, "Open My Lips"
Paper #3: *Logos & Ethos: Discovering a Theological Claim in the Text*

IN ADDITION, bring in an example – **only one sentence/phrase** – of good rhetorical writing/writing for the ear that you come across this week. Evaluate why you think this example is effective oral communication. One paragraph in length to be turned in during lab.

CLASS 4
PLENARY

March 5, 2009 – Pathos
Audience, Speech that Moves, Effective Delivery
Share Examples of Effective Rhetorical Writing

LAB #4 Discussion of Paper #3

ASSIGNMENT #4 – DUE NEXT CLASS SESSION

Read Schultze, *An Essential Guide to Public Speaking*
Paper #4: *Pathos*: Book Review

CLASS 5

March 12, 2009 – Pathos

PLENARY

How to Write for the Ear/Effective Delivery

LAB #5 Discussion of Paper #4/Workshop

ASSIGNMENT #5 – DUE NEXT CLASS SESSION

Paper #5: *Logos, Ethos & Pathos*: Theological Claims in a Human Voice
for Human Ears

CLASS 6

March 19, 2009 – Student Presentations

FINAL CLASS

Students present rewritten papers/feedback/discussion