

MISSISSIPPI CONFERENCE COURSE OF STUDY  
(COS) SYLLABUS FOR COS 324- PREACHING

July 14 – September 1, 2025

Reverend Cynthia. A. Cross,  
Instructor

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**Course Objectives:**

The goal of this course is to help pastors/preachers understand the importance and power of preaching, and to receive practical guidance for preparing and proclaiming the Good News of Jesus Christ from both the Old and New Testaments.

The objectives of this course are to help students:

- Articulate a theology of proclamation
- Learn how to exegete biblical texts
- Discuss ONE method of sermon preparation (based primarily on the teaching of Fred Craddock)
- Preach a sermon *without notes*
- Prepare a second sermon manuscript
- Participate in the evaluation of sermon videos of your classmates for biblical integrity, theological soundness, internal logic, and delivery; and to appropriate insights gained from the evaluation of your own sermons
- Develop plans for ordering and delivering sermons in their congregational and communal context
- Understand and communicate the spiritual truths of the Bible effectively to the twenty-first century church

**Required Texts:**

Craddock, Fred B. Craddock on the Craft of Preaching. St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2011.

LaRue, Cleophus. The Heart of Black Preaching. Westminster  
John Knox

Press, Louisville, Kentucky, 2000.

Taylor, Barbara Brown. The Preaching Life. Cowley Publications,  
Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1993.

**Reference Text:**

Wilson, Paul Scott. The New Interpreter's Handbook of Preaching. Abingdon  
Press, Nashville,  
2008.

**Supplemental Text:**

Webb, Joseph. Preaching Without Notes. Abingdon Press, Nashville, 2011.

Hamilton, Adam. Unleashing the Word: Preaching with Relevance, Purpose,  
and Passion.  
Abingdon Press, Nashville, 2000

**Suggested Texts by Instructor**

Ryken, Leland, James Wilhoit, Tremper Longman III. Dictionary of Biblical  
Imagery. InterVarsity  
Press, USA, Illinois, 1998.

Sweet, Leonard. Giving Blood: a fresh paradigm for preaching.  
Zondervan, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 2014.

Thomas, Frank A., How to Preach a Dangerous Sermon., Abingdon Press,  
Nashville, TN, 2018

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

The following are the requirements for a passing grade in this class:

**1. BE PRESENT AND ON TIME.** Class time is limited, thus extremely important.

Attendance at ALL sessions is required. These Sessions Will Be Conducted Over Zoom.

ZOOM login information will be provided on Course Connect.

Each session will be held on Monday's, July 14, 2025 through September 1, 2025 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm.

**2. READ THE REQUIRED BOOKS ( *Craddock, LaRue, and Taylor*) AND TURN IN THE BOOK REVIEWS.** Prior to the 1st weekend session, students are required to read the 3 texts and prepare a two (2) to three (3)- page **typed [double-spaced] review of each book**. **The book reviews MUST uploaded to Course Connect by July 11, 2025 .** **Without the book reviews, no passing grade is possible.**

NOTE: In preparing the book reviews, the students MUST use the following "**Guidelines for Book**

### **Reviews<sup>1</sup> :**

- Each book review should be between 2 and 3 pages in length.
- the opening paragraph of the book review [1/2 page] should describe generally what the book is about (the subject) and the author's purpose in writing it.
- The largest section of the book review [1page] should adequately cover the material in the book
- The closing paragraph [1/2 to 1 page] should be a summary of your conclusions about the book: *What did you learn from this book? How has this book contributed to your understanding of preaching? What will I use/not use from this book?*

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PLEASE NOTE: You are free to love or hate the books you read; but the book review MUST communicate: *WHAT DOES THE AUTHOR SAY?...as well as any personal reviews on the books.* ALL writing assignments should be TYPED (double spaced). Remember to

reference any quotes; plagiarism is not allowed.

3. **PARTICIPATE IN CLASS DISCUSSION.** A major element of the Zoom class sessions is class participation discussion. Students are expected to listen, offer their input, but also to give appropriate consideration to others. As part of your asynchronous time, you will also be assigned some videos through Course Connect to view before each of the last two Zoom sessions to share your observations with your classmates through Course Connect and in our class time on Zoom.
  
4. **PREACH A GOOD SERMON WITHOUT NOTES.** Each student will video a sermon for preaching without notes to be uploaded to Course Connect. The text for this sermon will be chosen from the Revised Common Lectionary Scripture readings for the dates of August 10<sup>th</sup> (9<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost) OR August 17<sup>th</sup> (10<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost), the student's choice. Students will provide the Instructor with a sheet listing the sermon title, the theme sentence, and a list of all sources used in sermon preparation by email when video is uploaded to Course Connect. The deadline to upload your videos is August 18, 2025.

Each video for this sermon preached without notes should be approximately fifteen (15) to 20 minutes.

5. An evaluation form will be provided for each student to evaluate each submitted sermon video by their fellow classmates. The instructions for assessing this evaluation will be on your Course Connect. You will view and evaluate these videos as part of your grade and class participation and email your completed forms to the Instructor.
  
6. Submit a second sermon by manuscript from the Revised Common Lectionary Scripture readings for August 25, 2025, (11<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost). This is a manuscript not an outline, and should have a range of six (6) to ten (10) double-spaced typed pages. The deadline for this sermon to be submitted by email is August 26, 2025.

## CLASS GRADING SCALE

This course is graded on a letter grade basis from A to F, with the Instructor responsible for assigning a grade. The grade will be based on how well the student meets the following criteria:

- **Well-written** and **timely** submitted written requirements
- Delivery of sermons that demonstrate the following characteristics:
  1. Theologically sound
  2. Draws in listeners
  3. Engages the text
  4. Proclaims good news
  5. Invites response
  6. Is well-delivered
- **Attendance of all class sessions online**
- **Participation in class discussions**

*Unacceptable work for the MS Conference COS is assigned the letter grades of D or F and will result in no credit given for course. The student will have to repeat the course in order to receive credit.*

