



The John Cardinal Foley Chair of Homiletics & Social Communications
SAINT CHARLES BORROMEO SEMINARY, OVERBROOK

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PTH 601

Theology of Homiletics

Fall 2024



(FRA ANGELICO - detail of St. Peter Preaching in the Presence of St. Mark)

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The John Cardinal Foley Chair of Homiletics & Social Communications
Director of the Catholic Preaching Institute

Class Information

Mondays
1:35 to 4:15 p.m.
SLC #228
St. Thérèse Chapel



Contact Information:

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Office: SLC #212
Office Hours by appointment

This syllabus was last revised on 7/7/25 at 1:47 PM.

All elements in this syllabus are subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances and/or at the discretion of the instructor.

Description

This course offers a contemporary **THEOLOGY OF HOMILETICS** in the Roman Catholic tradition.

Formation for preaching requires a critical understanding of the ecclesial and liturgical contexts that shape the distinctive character of the homily as a dialogic proclamation of the Good News. Emphasis will be placed on the study of Church documents related to preaching. Practical experience will focus on delivering Sunday homilies in the Advent and Christmas seasons.

The course methodology includes two alternating elements throughout the semester. The entire class gathers for the **didactic** lectures and discussions about the theological readings. The class is sub-divided into sections for the **practicum** on liturgical preaching. The calendar below provides details.

Goals

Related Department Goals (Pastoral Theology)

- The student will develop and practice skills for celebrating, proclaiming, preaching, teaching, evangelizing, listening, guiding and reconciling in the multi-cultural Catholic Christian community.

Specific Course Goals & Student Learning Outcomes

By the conclusion of this course, students will gain ...

1. a deeper appreciation of the relationship between the assembly, the liturgical context, and the ministry of preaching
 - *assessed by reading review and class discussion*
2. a fuller understanding of the interpretation of Sacred Scripture as foundational to the preparation of the homily
 - *assessed by reading review and class discussion*
3. a stronger familiarity with the *ars praedicandi* related to the Sunday Lectionary for the Advent and Christmas seasons
 - *assessed by preaching critiques and progress in preaching*
4. a gradual improvement in the communications skills employed in delivering a homily, in terms of public speaking and evangelical rhetoric
 - *assessed by preaching critiques and final exam preaching*

Assessment

(to be explained further during class)

Growth in the art of preaching involves both didactic and practical learning, as follows:

The DIDACTIC element focuses on the **theology of homiletics**. For each period so designated in the course calendar ...

- Students will
 - complete the assigned **reading** prior to class;
 - complete the **“reading review” form** (to be submitted by email no later than Noon);
 - participate in a small-group and class-wide **discussion** of the reading.
- The professor will lead the discussion of the reading(s), lecture on the designated topic, and suggest points / raise questions for further consideration.

The PRACTICUM element incorporates the didactic into the **art of preaching**. For each period so designated in the course calendar ...

- A designated group of students will “preach” – by preparing and delivering a **5-8 minute homily** based on the specified texts from the Lectionary.
- A designated group of students will “critique” – by listening carefully to each preacher and completing the **“homily evaluation” form** (to be submitted by email no later than Midnight)
- The professor will provide a helpful critique of each preacher during the class period; he will also offer a group “wrap-up” of the day’s practicum, which will be posted to the course discussion board. Afterward, he will collate and share the student critiques with each preacher, providing also his own feedback in terms of both the content and the delivery of the homily. *The purpose of this is so that all can learn from all!*

Assessment of learning in this course will be based on accumulated knowledge of the theology of homiletics and developmental progress in the art of preaching. Grades will be determined as follows:

- (1) **Reading Review & Discussion** (4 submissions = 40% of final grade) ... The professor will determine a grade based on the quality of the student's responses to each of the three topics and the student’s contribution to the class discussion.
- (2) **Preaching Critiques** (3 submissions = 30% of the final grade) ... The professor will determine a grade based on the quality of the student’s responses to each of the three questions asked.
- (3) **Final Exam Homily** (30% of the final grade) ... An independent panel of reviewers will determine the grade for the final homily of the semester, based on the quality of the student’s preaching.

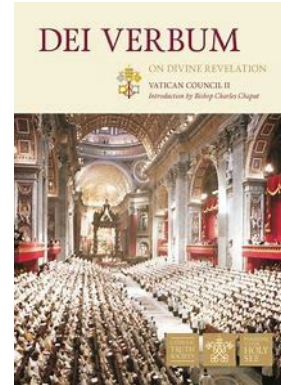
Academic Resources

REQUIRED Texts for this Course

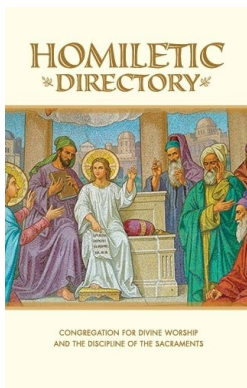
(linked to **online** versions at no cost; links to reading selections are also posted on Populi)



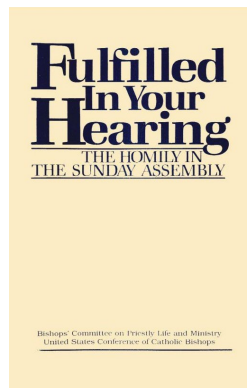
Vatican, 2020
([full text](#))



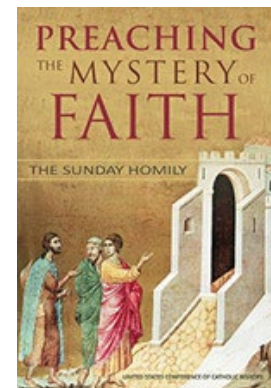
Vatican II, 1965
([document](#))



Vatican, 2014
([sections](#))



USCCB, 1982
([full text](#))



USCCB, 2012
([full text](#))

SUPPLEMENTAL Resources ... available at www.scs.edu/preaching/resources



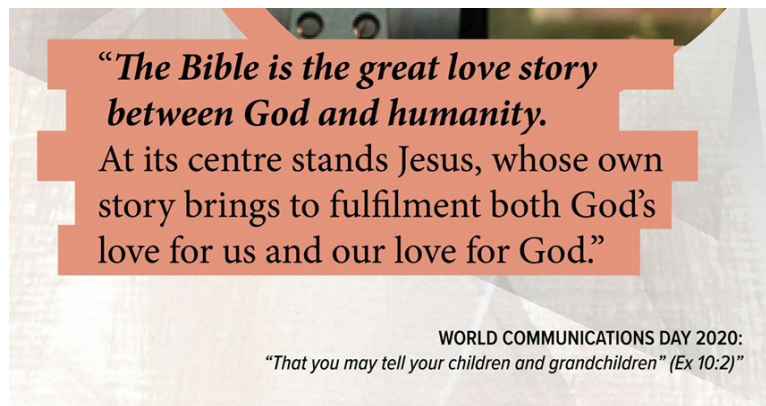
- books housed in the St. Jerome Library
- bibliography of newer books on (mostly) Catholic preaching
- search engine of digital resources (ZETEO)
- digital repository of information on Catholic preaching
- monthly feature of books on saintly preachers

Proposed Schedule

subject to change at the discretion of the professor

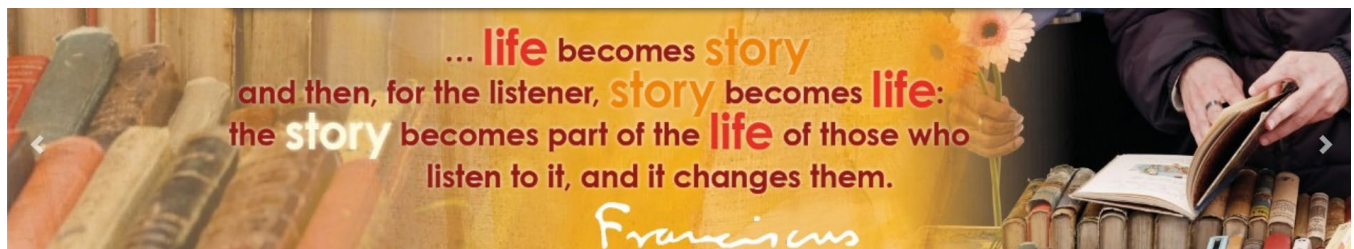
- Unless otherwise noted, ALL classes begin at **1:45 p.m.**
 - “Didactic” sessions (75 min.) take place in the assigned classroom.
 - 1:45 to 2:15 – discussion of the assigned reading
 - 2:15 to 3:00 – lecture on the designated topic
 - “Practicum” exercises (150 min.) take place in the St. Thérèse of Lisieux (college) chapel.
 - preachers assigned in 15-minute intervals (as scheduled on Populi)
- All information for the course will be posted in Populi. Timely communications will also be emailed.

section "A"		section "B"	
PAUL BOYER	KEVIN RICHARDSON	JOSEPH BUI	CODY HEIN
MARK GOMBA	BRANDON SCHMIDT	NIRVOY DIBRA	JOHN HELBRING
ROBERT HUTZ	MICHAEL TOPLEY	APURBO GHAGRA	JOSEPH LE
DANIEL MONASTRA		CALEB HANSEN	MAXIMILIAN LOCK



<i>DATE</i>	<i>Topical FOCUS</i>	<i>Preparatory Tasks</i>
Aug 26	Introduction to the course	READ the syllabus!
Aug 27 (TU)	didactic – The “Story of Stories”	<i>Read to discuss:</i> “Life Creates History” (WCD, 2020)
Aug 29 (TH)	didactic – Appropriating the Story	<i>Read (review):</i> “Dei Verbum” (on Divine Revelation)
Sept 2	<i>no class – Labor Day holiday</i>	

Sept 9	didactic – Proclaiming the Story	<i>Read to discuss:</i> “Homiletic Directory” (nn. 4-36)
	<i>Special Event: The Cardinals’ Forum (7:00pm)</i>	<i>your attendance is expected!</i>
Sept 16	didactic – Telling the Advent/Christmas Story	<i>Read: “Homiletic Directory”</i> (nn. 78-109 + nn. 110-139)
Sept 23	<i>no class – Seminary golf tournament</i>	
Sept 30	practicum – First Sunday of Advent	“A” preaches / “B” critiques
Oct 7	practicum – Third Sunday of Advent	“B” preaches / “A” critiques
Oct 14	practicum – Nativity of the Lord (night)	“A” preaches / “B” critiques
Oct 21	<i>no class – Rector’s Weekend</i>	
Oct 28	practicum – Nativity of the Lord (day)	“B” preaches / “A” critiques
Nov 4	<i>no class – Patronal Feast Day</i>	
Nov 11	practicum – Holy Family	“A” preaches / “B” critiques
Nov 18	practicum – Mary, Mother of God	“B” preaches / “A” critiques
Nov 25	didactic – The Story for Being Human	<i>Read to discuss:</i> “Fulfilled in Your Hearing”
Dec 2	didactic – The Story in the Sunday Assembly	<i>Read to discuss:</i> “Preaching the Mystery of Faith”
Dec 9	<i>no class – Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception</i>	
Dec 10 + 11 7:00 – 9:00 pm	final exam practicum – on the Epiphany	<i>see special schedule & instructions</i>



Seminary Policies

Internet Use in the Classroom:

While the internet is a valuable source of information that can facilitate the learning process, it can often be a distraction within the classroom setting. Therefore, unless explicitly permitted by the instructor, students in the classroom are not permitted to connect to the internet. [Because the digital world is the environment in which people live and work in the twenty-first century](#), students in this course are not only permitted to connect to the internet in the classroom ... they are required to do so!

Attendance

Saint Charles Borromeo Seminary requires attendance at all classes at the assigned times. This policy reflects the Seminary's recognition of the vital importance of philosophy and other preparatory studies for the seminarian's formation and for the pastoral ministry to which the seminarian aspires. As a general rule, the number of absences in a course should not exceed twice the number of weekly class meetings for the course. For example, in a three-credit course which entails two instructional classes each week of 75 minutes in length, the maximum number of absences of any kind should not exceed four (4) such classes. Students with absences in excess of the limit may be asked to withdraw from the course. Exceptions to this policy are to be sought from the Vice President for Academic Affairs. The instructor reserves the right to determine the number of absences which may result in a reduced grade or even the loss of academic credit, with the consequent requirement to repeat the course. In aggravated cases, excessive, unexcused absences may result in dismissal. Out of courtesy, students who are absent are asked to communicate this fact – if possible, prior to the class day in question – to the Dean of Men of their respective Seminary, to the Vice President for Academic Affairs, and to the course instructor. Students are responsible for the timely performance of all class assignments and the gaining/mastery of class notes. Students who wish to have the course lecture recorded on the day of absence should seek permission from the instructor prior to making such an arrangement.

Academic honesty

As indicated in the Seminary policy, “no instance of plagiarism, cheating or falsification of research work, examinations or academic records will be tolerated and will make the seminarian liable to dismissal.” A failing grade will be assigned where there is evidence of academic dishonesty. [Use of AI technologies to create homilies or written exercises related to homilies will be considered an instance of academic \(and pastoral\) dishonesty!](#)

Late Work - Unless approved by the instructor prior to the due date, late work is unacceptable.

Incomplete Work - Failure to fulfill any of the requirements of this course may result in an F for the entire course.

Exams

“[Final] Examinations in all courses are held on the dates and in the places designated on the final examination schedule. No seminarian is excused from an examination unless an exception is granted by the Academic Dean. A seminarian who, for illness or another serious reason, must be absent from a final examination may request permission from the Academic Dean to reschedule the examination and is responsible for making the necessary arrangements with the appropriate professor [or instructor]. If an examination has not been taken within two weeks, the grade of “F” will be given for the course. Extensions can be granted only by the Academic Dean.”

Seminary Grading System

“Letter grades are used to indicate the quality of a seminarian's performance in a course. Professors assign grades as the result of class work, reports, research papers, examinations, or a combination of the above.” “A seminarian's academic standing is measured by the cumulative average. The cumulative average is calculated by dividing the total number of grade points earned by the total number of credit hours attempted. Grade points are not granted for Pass/Fail courses, nor do these courses affect the semester or cumulative averages.”
