



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

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PTH 602
Contemporary Homiletics
Spring 2025



(CNS photo)

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Director of the Catholic Preaching Institute

Class Information

Mondays @ 1:35 - 4:15 p.m.
Student Life Center #223
St. Thérèse Chapel



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This syllabus was last revised on 7/7/25 at 1:50 PM.

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

Description

This course explores the history of Homiletics in the Roman Catholic tradition, with a particular emphasis on preaching in the twenty-first century.

Formation for preaching benefits from examining the work of those recognized as masters of sacred eloquence. This course considers some key figures in Church history, with emphasis placed on the contemporary teaching and example of Pope Francis. It offers the opportunity for practice focused on delivering Sunday homilies in the Lent and Easter seasons.

Typically, the course methodology will be divided between a didactic element (readings and lectures) and a practicum for liturgical preaching, as scheduled in the proposed course calendar below.

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 Learning Outcomes

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

1. a basic understanding of the historical development of Catholic preaching, encompassing impacts of an apostolic mission in the new digital age
 - *assessed by seminar reading & discussion + the final interview*
2. a deeper appreciation of the essential qualities of good preaching today, with particular reference to the approaches taught and exemplified by contemporary churchmen
 - *assessed by seminar reading & discussion*
3. a stronger familiarity with the *ars praedicandi* related to the Lectionary for select Sundays during the seasons of Lent and Easter
 - *assessed by homily outlines and progress in preaching*
4. a continuing improvement in the communications skills employed in delivering a homily, with attention to public speaking and evangelical rhetoric
 - *assessed by homily evaluations and progress in preaching*

Assessment

(to be explained further during class)

Growth in the art of preaching involves both didactic and practical learning. The course will alternate between both elements, as outlined in the proposed class schedule below.

The DIDACTIC element focuses on the history of homiletics and **contemporary preaching**. In this learning, students have the following responsibilities:

- All students will complete the **assigned reading** for the designated class periods.
- All students will engage in **class discussions** by raising critical questions and joining in thoughtful dialogue about the seminar materials.
- Where specified, all students will complete **special assignments** on specific topics in the course.

The PRACTICUM element incorporates the didactic into the **art of preaching**. In this learning, students have the following responsibilities:

- 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, also providing 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 distributed as follows:

- (1) **Class Seminars (6)** ... Students will complete a written review of the assigned reading and participate in the discussion of it. (35% of the final grade)
 - (2) **Homily Outlines (6)** ... Students will write one-page outlines of potential or practiced homilies based on the Lectionary readings for the “practicum” sessions. (30% of the final grade)
 - (3) **Homily Evaluations (3)** ... Students in assigned groups will complete evaluations of the homilies heard during the “practicum” sessions. (10% of the final grade)
 - (4) **Final Preaching** ... Students will preach on the Lectionary for Pentecost Sunday before a public audience of parishioners. (25% of the final grade)
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Academic Resources

Required Sources for this Course (info also posted on Populi)

	<p>ARCHBISHOP WILTON D. GREGORY “Liturgical Preaching in the 21st Century” article (19 pages) in <i>The Jurist</i>, vol. 76 (2016): 361-378</p>
	<p>THOMAS F. DAILEY, O.S.F.S. “From Francis to Francis: How a Saint and a Pope Share a Vision of Preaching” chapter in <i>Love Is the Perfection of the Mind</i> (Salesian Center for Faith & Culture, 2017), 19-34</p>
	<p>POPE FRANCIS <i>Evangelii Gaudium</i> Apostolic Exhortation on the Proclamation of the Gospel in Today’s World (11/24/13) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The Homily” (nn. 135-144) - online text • “Preparing to Preach” (nn. 145-159) - online text </p>
	<p>TIMOTHY CARDINAL DOLAN “Ars Praedicandi” address (10 pages) at Theological College, in <i>Homiletic & Pastoral Review</i> (11/25/22)</p>
	<p>BISHOP ROBERT BARRON "Apprenticing to Jesus the Preacher" Opening talk at the 2018 Word on Fire National Conference for Priests (45 min. video)</p>
	<p>ARCHBISHOP ALLEN VIGNERON “The Preacher: Servant of the Word of God” pastoral letter (8 pages), Archdiocese of Detroit (6/30/15)</p>
	<p>THOMAS F. DAILEY, O.S.F.S. “Meeting the Digital Challenge to Evangelization” article in <i>Rambling Spirit</i>, 3 (Spring 2015): 4-5</p>
	<p>BISHOP CHRISTOPHER J. COYNE “Connecting to God and WiFi: Preaching in a Digital Culture.” address (4 pages) at the 2016 Catholic Media Conference, in <i>America</i> (10/3/16)</p>

Recommended Reading:

Congregation for Divine Worship & Discipline of Sacraments. *Homiletic Directory* (6/29/2014). [online text](#)

Pope Francis, with Antonio Spadaro, SJ. *Encountering Truth: Meeting God in the Every Day. The Morning Homilies from St. Martha's Chapel*. Image Books, 2015 [online text](#)

Foley, Edward (ed.). [A Handbook for Catholic Preaching](#). Pueblo Books, 2016

Supplemental Reading (listed in order of topics in the course)

HISTORY

Atwood, Ray. [Masters of Preaching: The Most Poignant and Powerful Homilists in Church History](#). Hamilton Books / Rowman & Littlefield, 2012.

Atwood, Ray. [Masters of Preaching: More Poignant and Powerful Homilists in Church History](#). Hamilton Books / Rowman & Littlefield, 2012.

Hermenegild, Brother. [Instructions from the Saints on How to Preach](#). Amazon Digital Services, 2017.

Waznak, Robert P. "From Sermon to Homily." In *An Introduction to the Homily*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1998. pp. 1-30.

on SAINT FRANCIS DE SALES ... [Salesian Homiletics](#)

Dailey, Thomas. ["Preaching as Praying: Complementary Methods for Sacred Eloquence."](#) *New Theology Review* 31/1 (October 2018): 11-17.

Dailey, Thomas. ["The Soulful Homily."](#) *Homiletic & Pastoral Review*, May 2000, pp. 56-60.

on POPE FRANCIS

Cameron, Peter John. [Evangelii Gaudium and Pope Francis' Revolution in Preaching](#). CreateSpace Publishing, 2014.


Dailey, Thomas. ["Preaching the 'Story of Stories'."](#) *Homiletic & Pastoral Review* (26 Feb 2020).

Heille, Gregory. [The Preaching of Pope Francis: Missionary Discipleship and the Ministry of the Word](#). Liturgical Press, 2015.

Landry, Fr. Roger. "Pope Francis and the Missionary Reform of Sacred Preaching" ([seminar notes](#))

Proposed Calendar

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

Date	Class Focus	Related Task(s)
Jan 13	introduction to the course ... review and preview	read: syllabus for the course
Jan 16 (TH)	seminar – “Liturgical Preaching in the 21 st Century”	read & review: GREGORY article
Jan 20	no class – Martin Luther King Day	
Jan 27	seminar – “From Francis to Francis”	read & review: DAILEY chapter
Jan 30 (TH)	lecture – the teaching & example of Pope Francis	read & review: Evangelii Gaudium , nn. 135-159
Feb 3 Foley Lecture	practicum – “A” preaches / “B” evaluates	on the First Sunday of Lent
Feb 10	practicum – “B” preaches / “A” evaluates	on the Third Sunday of Lent (scrutiny)
Feb 17	seminar – “The Art of Preaching Today”	read & review: DOLAN address
Feb 24	no class – Spring Break	
Mar 3	no class – Wichita Mission	view & review: BARRON video
Mar 10	practicum – “A” preaches / “B” evaluates	on Easter Sunday (day)
Mar 17 	practicum – “B” preaches / “A” evaluates	on Divine Mercy Sunday
Mar 24	seminar – “The Preacher as Servant of the Word”	read & review: VIGNERON pastoral
Mar 31	practicum – “A” preaches / “B” evaluates	on the Fifth Sunday of Easter
Apr 7	practicum – “B” preaches / “A” evaluates	on the Ascension of the Lord
Apr 14	no class – Holy Week	
Apr 21	no class – Easter Monday	
Apr 28	conclusion to the course ... preparing for final exams	review: schedules & instructions
Apr 29 + 30 7:00–9:00pm	final exam – public preaching (special schedule & instructions)	ALL preach on Pentecost (Mass during Day)
May 5	final interviews (special schedule)	read to prepare: DAILEY article read to prepare: COYNE article

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, but they are actually 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.

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 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.”
