

**Spring Term 2024**

**Worship 370 | Sacred Texts 370:**

**Preaching the Parables of Jesus**

**Licentiate in Theology Course Syllabus**

**Huron University College Land Acknowledgment**

Huron is situated on the traditional lands of the Anishinaabeg, Haudenosaunee, Attawandaron, and Lenape peoples, whose sharing and stewardship of the land has been governed by the Dish with One Spoon treaty since time immemorial. We are guided by this treaty in the spirit of peace, friendship, and respect. Huron University College acknowledges its past role in perpetuating colonial and exclusionary relations. Because religious and ecclesial institutions were instrumental in such relations, we consider it our particular responsibility as a Faculty of Theology to work towards justice and reconciliation.

**Course Dates:** From April 9 to June 11, 2024 (with no class sessions May 28 and June 4)

**Time:** Tuesdays from 7 – 9 P.M. (CT), 8 – 10 P.M. (ET)

**Delivery:** Hosted via Zoom

**Instructors:** the Rev. Dr. Jeff Crittenden; Dr. Dan Smith

**Contact:** jcritte@uwo.ca and dsmith89@huron.uwo.ca

**Course Description**

The parables of Jesus are well loved by both preachers in the pulpit as well as parishioners in the pew. Oftentimes, sermons on the parables tend to fall into traditional and expected interpretive patterns – even though they were originally shocking or challenging to their hearers! In this course, we will talk about different ways scholars today interpret the parables and see how learning about their original contexts – in the Gospels as well as in the teaching of Jesus – can provide fresh insights for preachers. Students will also become acquainted with different styles of preaching, learn how to integrate biblical study into sermon preparation, and have a chance to practice preaching (on Zoom) and get feedback from both instructors and peers.

**Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes**

At the end of this course, students will…

1. improve their skill in reading the Canonical Gospels, especially Jesus’ parables
2. understand the history of and the challenges of interpreting Jesus’ parables
3. learn to assess both methods and results in parable interpretation
4. develop strategies for moving from biblical exegesis to sermon preparation
5. learn different styles of preaching and structures for sermons
6. gain experience preparing, writing, and delivering a sermon on a parable of their choice

**Required Text(s)**

We suggest that students purchase a Study Bible, preferably in the New Revised Standard Version or New Revised Standard Version (Updated Edition), if they do not already own one. The following are recommended:

1. Michael D. Coogan, et al., eds., *The New Oxford Annotated Bible: New Revised Standard Version*, 5th edition (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2018).
2. Amy-Jill Levine and Marc Zvi Brettler, eds., *The Jewish Annotated New Testament*, 2nd ed. (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2016). [note: NRSV]
3. Steven L. McKenzie, Kristen De Troyer, and F. Scott Spencer, et al., eds., *The SBL Study Bible: New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition* (New York: Harper Collins, 2023). Brand new!!!

The following required readings (see course schedule below) are all available in this folder: [link] , except for Rindge and Snodgrass (click the link to go to the Bible Odyssey website). In some cases, we advise you to read only selected parts of the chapter/article: details are below. Other readings may also be added before the beginning of the course.

Levine, Amy-Jill. “How We Domesticate Jesus’s Provocative Stories.” Pages 1-26 in Amy-Jill Levine, *Short Stories by Jesus: The Enigmatic Parables of a Controversial Rabbi.* New York: HarperOne, 2014.

Pembroke, Neil. “Artistry in Jesus’ Parables and in Preaching on Them.” *Practical Theology* 11 (2018): 127-140.

Rindge, Matthew. “The Good Samaritan.” Available online at bibleodyssey.org: https://www.bibleodyssey.org/articles/the-good-samaritan/

Snodgrass, Klyne. “Parables of Jesus.” Available online at bibleodyssey.org: https://www.bibleodyssey.org/articles/parables-of-jesus/

Stanton, Graham. “From the Gospels to Jesus.” Pages 3-12 in Stanton, *The Gospels and Jesus.* Second Edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002.

Van Eck, Ernest. “Interpreting the Parables of Jesus the Galilean.” Pages 1-43 in Ernest van Eck, *The Parables of Jesus the Galilean: Stories of a Social Prophet*. Matrix: The Bible in Mediterranean Context. Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2016.

Zimmermann, Ruben. “Reading and Analyzing Parables.” Pages 183-209 in Ruben Zimmermann, *Puzzling the Parables of Jesus.* Minneapolis: Fortress, 2015.

**Course Outline/Plan**

**April 9: Jesus and the Gospels; Jesus and the Parables; What is a Parable? (Smith)**

Please read: Graham Stanton, “From the Gospels to Jesus” (2002); Klyne Snodgrass, “Parables of Jesus” (n.d.), bibleodyssey.org

For discussion: the Parable of the Tenants in the Vineyard (Mark 12:1-12; Matt 21:33-46; Thom 65–66)

**April 16: The History of Parable Interpretation; How Do Parables Work? (Smith)**

Please read: A.-J. Levine, “How We Domesticate Jesus’s Provocative Stories” (2014); Matthew Rindge, “The Good Samaritan” (n.d.), bibleodyssey.org

 For discussion: the Parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37)

**April 23: Two Approaches to Parable Interpretation (Smith)**

Please read: Ruben Zimmermann, “Reading and Analyzing Parables” (2015: pp. 191-209); Ernest van Eck, “Interpreting the Parables of the Galilean Jesus” (2016: pp. 11-21)

Text for discussion: the Parable of the Friend at Midnight (Luke 11:5-8)

**April 30: Styles and Structures for Preaching (Crittenden)**

Students will be provided with links to videos so they can observe and learn to incorporate various preaching styles. [links to follow]

**May 7: Moving from Biblical Exegesis to Sermon Preparation (Crittenden)**

Practical advice about finding useful (and reputable) online resources and moving from biblical exegesis to sermon preparation. [links to follow]

**May 14: Preaching the Parables (Crittenden; Smith away)**

Please read: Neil Pembroke, “Artistry in Jesus’ Parables and in Preaching on Them” (2018)

**June 4: Sermon Workshops**

Students will preach on a parable of their choice, and will explain briefly, following their sermon, their interpretive process in approaching the parable. Sermons will be evaluated both by peers (observation sheets will be provided) and by the instructors.

**June 11:** **Sermon Workshops**

Continued from previous week.

**Method of Evaluation and Criteria for Grading** (only for students choosing to be evaluated for full course credit)

Detailed instructions and options will be given in class.

1. Class Engagement/Participation – 10%

2. Reading Notes on Two Parables (suggested length: 1500 words total) – 30%

3. Parable Interpretation Assessment (suggested length: 1000 words) – 20%

4. Sermon (10-12 minutes) with Commentary (500 words) – 40%

**Huron Grade Descriptors**

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| --- | --- | --- |
|  A+   |  90-100    |  One could scarcely expect better from a student at this level |
|  A |  80-89   |  Superior work which is clearly above average |
|  B |  70-79 |  Good work, meeting all requirements, and eminently satisfactory |
|  C |  60-69 |  Competent work, meeting requirements |
|  D   |  50-59 |  Fair work, minimally acceptable |
|  F |  below 50 |  Fail |

**Student Code of Conduct**

Membership in the community of Huron University College and Western University implies acceptance by every student of the principle of respect for the rights, responsibilities, dignity and well-being of others and a readiness to support an environment conducive to the intellectual and personal growth of all who study, work, and live within it. Upon registration, students assume the responsibilities that such registration entails. While in the physical or online classroom, students are expected to behave in a manner that supports the learning environment of others. Please review the Student Code of Conduct at: https://huronatwestern.ca/sites/default/files/Res%20Life/Student%20Code%20of%20Conduct%20-%20Revised%20September%202019.pdf.

**Statement on the Recording of Class Activities**

Students may not record or distribute any class activity, including conversations during office hours, without written permission from the instructor, except as necessary as part of approved accommodations for students with disabilities. Any approved recordings may only be used for the student’s own private use.

Online courses within the Licentiate in Theology Program are recorded for student engagement purposes. These recording are only used by the registered students of the class and made available through a restricted video hosting site to respect both privacy and intellectual property. Should a student be uncomfortable with this practice, they can contact the course instructor or the LTh Program Director, Dr. Grayhame Bowcott at grayhame.bowcott@huron.uwo.ca

**Support Services**

For advice on course selections, degree requirements, and for assistance with requests for medical accommodation, students should contact the LTh Program Director, Dr. Grayhame Bowcott at grayhame.bowcott@huron.uwo.ca.



THIS COURSE HAS BEEN APPROVED BY HURON’S FACULTY OF THEOLOGY COMMITTEE

FOR THE WINTER TERM OF THE LTH PROGRAM, 2024.