

Preaching and the Problem of Racism
2021 Doctor of Ministry Program, Sewanee
June 7–25, 2021
10-11:50 a.m. C.D.T.

Google Drive Folder: <https://drive.google.com/drive/u/0/folders/0AHkPjV5tQJ4Uk9PVA>

Zoom Link: <https://sewanee-edu.zoom.us/j/89389268466>

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Acknowledgment: The Domain of the University of the South lies on territory ceded by the Cherokee Nation to the United States on Feb. 27, 1819 (Treaty with the Cherokee, 1819).¹

Course Description: This course aims to empower Doctor of Ministry students with questions and research skills to proclaim the promises of God in the face of the unrelenting evil of racism. The class will explore theodicy—the believability of God’s justice and mercy within the reality of human suffering—with one focus in mind: the problem of American racism, including but not limited to the lens of the Black-white binary.

Course Objectives:

- To think deeply about how to name, identify, and address evil of racism in preaching.
- To articulate the problem of theodicy as it relates to racism and to engage it sermonically.
- To preach pastorally sensitive but theologically profound sermons about the persistence of God’s grace and mercy in the face of widespread, overt, and implicit sophisticated racial prejudice.
- To articulate reflexive and communal homiletic theology and homiletic imagination with close reading, clear writing, and speech.
- To embolden life-long journeys toward becoming courageous preachers and proclaimers who do not shy away from the plague of racism.

¹ Information courtesy of Floyd Ayers; see also: <https://www.tngenweb.org/cessions/18190227.html>

Required Texts:

- Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic, *Critical Race Theory (Third Edition): An Introduction*. New York: NYU, 2017. ISBN-10 : 147980276X.
- Jerome F.D. Creach, *Violence in Scripture*. Louisville, KY: WJK, 2013. ISBN-10: 0664231454.
- Gertz, Nolen. *Nihilism* Boston, MA: MIT Press, 2019. ISBN-10: 0262537176.
- Frank Thomas, *How to Preach a Dangerous Sermon*. Nashville: Abingdon, 2018. ISBN-10: 1501856839.
- Lisa Thompson, *Ingenuity: Preaching as an Outsider*. Nashville: Abingdon, 2018. ISBN-10: 150183259X.

Course Requirements:

1. Attend and participate in class discussions. (10%)
2. Complete required reading/viewing/listening assignments. (10%)
3. Preach one new sermon in class, 10–12 minutes long. Due June 21-25. (25%)
4. Revise one sermon based on the in-class feedback and coursework. Due Sept. 1. (25%)
5. Research Paper: Write a 7–10 page paper integrating course readings, materials, exegetical studies, etc. that addresses your *potential* D.Min. thesis topic. Due Sept.1. (30%)

Inclusive Language:

Written and spoken language used by students and faculty when referring to humanity shall be gender-inclusive. It shall avoid perpetuation of derogatory stereotypes such as those based on gender, age, race, ethnicity, ability, religion, sexual orientation, or birth or family status.

Because God transcends human categories, our language about God is necessarily analogical and metaphorical. Written and spoken language referring to God shall therefore avoid exclusive use of masculine language and imagery. Students and faculty shall draw on the diverse and expansive images used in Scripture, tradition, and the arts to describe the divine nature and action.

**Adopted as the official policy of the School of Theology in 2019.*

Tentative Course Schedule (subject to change):

Mon. Prayer, Welcome, & Introductions
6.7 Delgado and Stefancic, *Critical Race Theory*.

Tues. Gertz, 1-72 and related notes.
6.8 Creach*

*Discussion of Creach will be determined in class based upon student interests. Creach is especially helpful in showing how Scripture itself contains biases associated with human difference that require careful interpretation. I look forward to reviewing the scope of it together and then choosing which pages draw our interest the most.

Wed. Gertz, 73-107 and related notes.
6.9 Creach, TBD.

Thurs. Gertz, 108-186 and related notes.
6.10 Creach TBD.

Fri. Outlines and tips and tricks
6.11

Mon. Discuss Newsom, *Cut in Stone: Confederate Monuments and Theological*
6.14 *Disruption* (see Google Drive). Discuss selections from *Preaching Black Lives Matter* (see Google Drive). Analyze Sermon Sample.

Tue. Monuments and Dialogue workshop with Rev. Hannah Pommersheim and
6.15 Rev. Kellan Day

Wed. Discuss Thomas. Analyze Sermon Sample.
6.16

Thurs. Discuss Thompson. Analyze Sermon Sample.
6.17

Fri. Discuss Willimon, *Who Lynched Willie Earle: Preaching to Confront Racism*
6.18 and selections from *Preaching Black Lives Matter* (see Google Drive). Discuss sermon evaluation rubrics. Analyze Sermon Sample.

Mon. 6.21
Through Fri. 6.25 In class preaching and feedback.