The purpose of this course is to explore women’s preaching—its contextuality, issues, authority, theologies, hermeneutics, resistance, strategies, and practices—in order to help women preachers voice the good news of God.

**BASIC ASSUMPTIONS: A Working Classroom Torah**

*In various strange and wonderful ways we’ve all been called by God to be here. Accordingly, we will respect one another and give thanks for the gifts each has to offer from her/his unique perspective.*

*God is the most important matter and the only One to whom we are all subordinate.*

*We will be good stewards of the mysteries of the faith that holds us all in various ways.*

*We are sinners in the process of being redeemed. Each of us is called to help one another along the Way of God’s-sovereign-being-in-the-world (*basileia*). We seek to conduct ourselves in this way of being.*

*Together we will create and maintain a safe space in which to explore freely the issues surrounding women’s preaching without concern for looking foolish or being labeled. What happens in women’s preaching class, stays in the women’s preaching class when it comes to any potentially confidential material that could hurt another’s professional reputation. If you’re not sure if the confidentiality of something should be maintained, err on the side of caution. If it’s something that makes another look good, share freely. Keep in mind, though, that what you may think of as good could be seen by another as heretical.*

*Your experience/perspective isn’t the only one that matters, though it is important, and we need to hear it. Share vocal space and time.*
*Being “nice” isn’t always being faithful. We can challenge one another—in love and respect—to think more broadly (pun intended) in light of the divine horizon in which we all live and move and have our being.

* It’s ok to name God as Father—just not exclusively so. Language not only reflects reality but creates and/or perpetuates it. We will use language that is respectful of all people and stammer a multitude of names and metaphors for God, believing that doing so will stretch us to glimpse an expanded horizon of meaning. When we fail in this endeavor (and we will) we will gently admonish one another, if necessary.

*Who you are and where you’re coming from is welcome. You don’t have to self-identify as a feminist, but your professor’s perspective is consciously her own unique feminist/womanist Reformed theological one.

*Your professor doesn’t presume to think her perspective is the only one. But she can be full of herself to the point of being myopic sometimes, and, in those cases, she needs the help of your challenge. She promises to return the favor.

*You will read the material because it’s really cool. You’ll use your voice to say pertinent things instead of trying to convince folks you’ve read things you haven’t. That old trick fools few.

*Become familiar with the etymology of the term deadline: cross the line, and you’re dead. We’re a stickler about deadlines in this class because ready or not, you have to preach a sermon each Sunday in the parish at the time specified; you can’t ask folks to come back on Tuesday when the sermon will be finished then. Of course, dire circumstances beyond our control (i.e. your mother dies, your child ends up in the ER) may result in grace. But plan on doo-doo happening (lamentably, this is life) and don’t count on having the last minute in which to work.

*There is no such thing as a perfect sermon; even the best can be better. When it comes to preaching, our focus is on coaching you to be the best preacher you can be, to build up rather than tear down, though there are times when deconstruction can be helpful to create better architecture for new life.

*Just because you felt the Spirit when you preached doesn’t mean anyone else did.

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**TEXTS and MATERIALS**

**Required:**
- L. Susan Bond, *Trouble with Jesus*
- Mary Donovan Turner and Mary Lin Hudson, *Saved from Silence*
- Jana Childers, *Birthing the Sermon*
- Anna Carter Florence, *Preaching as Testimony*
- Leonora Tubbs Tisdale, *Preaching as Local Theology*
- Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza, *Wisdom Ways*
- Eunjoo Mary Kim, *Women Preaching*

**Supplemental:**
- Beverly Mayne Kienzle and Pamela J. Walker, eds. *Women Preachers and Prophets through Two Millenium of Christianity*

**Recommended:**
- The book you’ll be reviewing to teach the class.
- Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her*
- Any other book of interest from bibliography that will be helpful
ASSIGNMENTS

Complete reading for the course
Research one period of women’s preaching history together with others (see Jan. 5 below)
Do smaller assignments: a one-page observation
Outline one of the following set of materials to hand out to the class and prepare to briefly tell us about what each contributes to women’s preaching Teaching of one of the set of the following materials:

- Mary Catherine Hilkert, *Naming Grace*
- Christine Smith, *Weaving the Sermon: Preaching in a Feminist Perspective; Preaching as Weeping, Confession, and Resistance*
- Sandra Scheiders, *The Revelatory Text* and Phyllis Tribble’s approach (See article online http://www.religion-online.org/showarticle.asp?title=1281)
- Ada Maria Isasi-Díaz, *Mujerista Theology*
- Elizabeth Johnson, *She Who Is*
- Marjorie Suchocki, *The Whispered Word*
- Deborah Tannen, *Gender and Discourse* (see also *You Just Don’t Understand, Talking 9-5*)
- Rebecca Chopp, *The Power to Speak*
- Lucy Rose, *Sharing the Word*
- Carol Gilligan, *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development*, and responses to this seminal (argh! Mary Daly groans) work
- Foss, Karen A., Sonja K. Foss, and Cindy L. Griffin, Eds. *Readings in Feminist Rhetorical Theory*
- Ph.D. Wendy Farley, *Eros for the Other*
- Ph.D. Womanist Hermeneutics and Theologies

Preaching
Turn in the following preparatory materials before preaching:
- Exegesis for Sermon(s)
- [Exegetical Chart(s)] optional, but this is often helpful
- Sermon Plot(s) with focus and function of each major section
- Manuscript(s) of Sermon(s)

Video tape/DVD of 2nd sermon video tape with above preparatory materials OR a final 15-20 page paper on a topic of your choice (cleared with Dr. Stricklen) related to women’s preaching
**January 5**  Introductions. The Big Picture: Issues, problems, and methods for women’s preaching have to do with assumptions about language, truth, reality, and God

**Assignment**: Choose a period below in which you’d like to research the history of women’s preaching. Work together with others who chose that period online to determine who will focus on what. Put each significant figure down on a notecard or half-sheet of 8.5 x 11 paper with dates, place, denomination and 1-2 sentences summarizing significant contributions that we can put on a timeline. Bring these note cards to class on Jan. 26 when we will start constructing a timeline of the history of women’s preaching. We’ll share our findings orally in a good gossip session. As you read primary sources, note what women say authorizes their preaching.

- Old Testament and Jesus
- Early Christianity (resurrection-c.800)
- Middle Ages (c. 800 – c. 1500)
- Reformation to 1800 (post c. 1650 just do American church history)
- Second Great Awakening to Today in USA

**January 12** (last day to drop/add): More Big Picture and Working Definitions. **Read** Florence, pp. xiii-4; 59-108.

**January 19**—*No Class: Celebrate God’s gift of MLK, Jr., to the world*

**January 26**— History of Women’s Preaching through the Middle Ages. **Look at** the histories in Kim, Florence, Turner and Hudson to examine what rhetorical purpose the histories serve. Turn in your bullet-point conclusions for each person (1/2 page!)

**February 2**— History of Women’s Preaching; Authority of Women’s Preaching. **Read** Florence, pp. 111-130; Turner and Hudson, pp. 82-96.
February 9—Theologies of the Word. **Read** Turner and Hudson, pp. 1-58 and start next week’s reading. Chopp Suchocki Hilkert

February 16 Incarnationality: Exegeting Texts and Contexts of Preaching **Assignment:** Surf the internet to see what’s on the web regarding women preaching. Be sure to check out http://home.earthlink.net/~thogmi/woman/woman.html As you surf, jot down notes on your observations. These are truly just notes. The backs of envelopes and napkins, crayons and eye pencils are acceptable materials and writing implements for this assignment, though please corral them in some way to turn in. **Read** Tisdale’s Preaching as Local Theology; Kim, pp. 1-21, Florence, 131-158.

February 23—Feminist Hermeneutics Schneiders and Tribble **Read** Gafney’s article at http://www.sbl-site.org/assets/pdfs/Gafney.pdf and Schussler Fiorenza’s *Wise Words.*

March 2—*No Class, Spring Break*

March 9—Feminist Hermeneutics Womanist Hermeneutics and Theologies **Read** Delores Williams’ article online: http://www.religion-online.org/showarticle.asp?title=445

March 16—Feminist Theologies Isasi-Diaz Kanyoro and Shomanah Johnson **Read** Bond’s *Trouble with Jesus*

March 23—Feminist Rhetoric and gendered language differences. **Read** Foss, Foss, and Griffin Tannen 2 sermons

March 30—Women’s Ways of Preaching Smith **Read** Childers’ *Birthing the Sermon.*

April 6—Women’s contributions to homiletic theory. **Read** Rose 2 sermons. **Review** Kim, Tisdale, Florence, Bond, Hudson and Turner, Smith, and the works of Jana Childers to write up a one-page bullet-point style list of your observations about what effect women are having in homiletics.


April 23-30 Exam Day: Preaching of 4 sermons

EVALUATION

Sermons will be evaluated for oral coherence, language use, depth of meaning, ability to reach rhetorical audience with words that, God willing, become Word.

Papers will be evaluated for coherent argumentation of a pertinent issue and depth of research.

Your final grade will be calculated as follows:

- Sermon 15%
- Sermon’s supporting materials 10%
- Final Sermon and supporting materials OR Paper 25%
- Book(s) Presentation 12%
- Participation and Preparation 10%
- History Research 8%
- Surfing exercise 5%
- Homiletic effects observations 5%
- Rhetorical purpose of history 5%
- Fudge Factor Grace 5%

PROFESSOR’S AVAILABILITY

By appointment before or after class

Email: Teresa.Stricklen@pcusa.org
Phone: (502) 403-9214 or 1-888-728-7228 ext. 5022

"I fully believe that thou art sent by the great and good Spirit into this part of the world to do good to thy fellow creatures, to preach the gospel to every kind of people; and although many people are led to believe that it is not the duty of women to preach, still I pray God that thou mayest not be discouraged, there being many infallible proofs in the scriptures of women labouring in the gospel; one great encouragement is our Lord Jesus appeared to a woman first after his Resurrection." -- Catherine Quachemut, an Algonkian, wrote this to Dorothy Ripley, a missionary preacher in 1805 who was ill-received by the male missionary already at work there. Quachemut walked eight miles to deliver her letter of encouragement.