

Life and Letters of Paul (REL 108.01)

Duke University, Summer 2008 Term 2

M, T, W, Th, F 9:30 - 10:45 AM

Gray 319

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I. Course Description

Bulletin Course Description: Paul's biography and character, the social and physical circumstances of his work, his thought, and its relationship to ancient Jewish and Hellenistic ethics and beliefs. Religion 108, Life and Letters of Paul, falls within the Civilization (CZ) area of knowledge and within the focused areas of Cross-Cultural Inquiry (CCI) and Ethical Inquiry (EI).

We will begin this course by studying the cultural, historical, political, and religious contexts (Jewish, Christian, and Greco-Roman) in which the Apostle Paul lived and wrote his letters. After an overview of Paul's world(s), we will briefly review major currents in Pauline scholarship, including the "old" and "new" perspectives on Paul along with the recent emphases on Literary/Narrative, Rhetorical, Social-Scientific and Feminist interpretations of Paul's letters, etc. Next, we will turn to the focus of our course: the life and letters of the Apostle Paul. Initially, we will concentrate on Pauline chronology and a comparison between Paul's letters and Acts. An introduction to the individual letters, authorship, and their circumstances will be covered in conjunction with topical issues that give us a glimpse into Paul's thought. We will also spend a portion of our time delving into the fertile field of theological and ethical issues presented in the undisputed letters including, but not limited to, such topics as: Paul's understanding of Jesus and the crucifixion in relationship to his understanding of monotheism; faithfulness of/faith in Jesus Christ; the meaning of salvation in relationship to righteousness/justification and the "participationist" aspects of Pauline soteriology; Paul's understanding of Israel, the Jewish law, and the faithfulness of God in light of the Christ event; and the ways in which the transformational/ethical implications of being "in Christ" shaped the Christian identity of the various Pauline communities. As time permits, we will discuss Paul's legacy in the New Testament.

An introductory course on Paul and his letters, just like any other introductory course in a university setting, is usually composed of students from a wide variety of backgrounds. Although many students may read these letters from the perspective of personal faith, this course will study these documents from an academic perspective. Therefore, it is important that all students understand from the outset that this course is not about determining "theological truth" or about the ways in which Paul's letters support the various doctrines of contemporary Christianity. Rather, the focus of this course is to explore the many ways that these documents reveal the life and beliefs of Paul and the earliest church communities. We seek to understand how these Christ-believers constructed their identity in relationship to the religion from which Christianity originated, Second Temple Judaism, and in relationship to the Greco-Roman world in which these communities existed. Although all students will be expected to understand and be able to discuss the academic issues presented in the required readings and lectures, no student will be required to adopt any particular point of view on a personal level. Please note, however, that many students who do view

these documents as an important part of their faith find that the academic information gained in an introductory course can be incorporated into their devotional reading of the New Testament.

II. Learning Objectives to be accomplished by the end of the course:

You will be able to discuss the social/political/religious world(s) in which Paul and the recipients of his letters lived and practiced their faith.

You will be able to compare critically and to evaluate various interpretations of Paul's missionary endeavors including issues of chronology, authorship of the letters, and the contextual nature of the correspondence.

You will be able to articulate a working knowledge of the major issues involved in the academic study of Paul and his letters and to evaluate the cogency of various positions on these issues.

You will be able to identify major theological and ethical issues in Paul's undisputed letters.

You will be able to argue for the strengths and/or weaknesses of various theological interpretations of Paul by providing evidence from the undisputed letters.

You will have a working knowledge of the ways in which scholarly interpretations of Paul and Paulinism have played a role in the theoretical construction of early Christian identity.

You will be able to assess the degree to which various chronological and cultural "gaps" may or may not hinder contemporary interpretations of Paul's letters.

III. Course Texts

The following texts are *required* for this course:

- 1) Paul's letters in the English Bible: RSV or NRSV
- 2) Sanders, E.P. *Paul: A Very Short Introduction*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2001.
- 3) Horrell, David G. *An Introduction to the Study of Paul*. 2nd ed. New York: T&T Clark/Continuum, 2006.
- 4) Campbell, William S., *Paul and the Creation of Christian Identity*. London & New York: Continuum, 2008.

Dictionary of Paul and His Letters (Gerald F. Hawthorne, Ralph P. Martin, and Daniel C. Reid, eds.; Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1993) is a non-circulating reference book in the Divinity Library that you may find helpful for further study and for your class presentation. This work is abbreviated as DPHL when referenced for Bb readings.

IV. Course Requirements and Grading

30% **Attendance (10%), Position Papers (5%), Discussion Board Postings (5%), and Class Presentation (10%)** – Your attendance at all classes is expected, and informed participation is a vital component of this class. The attendance portion of your grade (10% of your final course grade) includes not only being physically present during our class sessions, but also it includes the completion of the required readings for the day in order that you can actively participate in our discussions in an *informed* manner. You will be allowed a total of three absences during our summer session without penalty. After the third absence, your participation grade will be reduced 10 points per day for each subsequent unexcused

absence. Please note that *informed* participation means that your comments in our class discussions should reflect your understanding of the required readings rather than theological opinions that have their basis in a personal religious setting. All required readings that are not from one of our required texts will be posted on the Blackboard website for our class under Course Documents.

You will be asked to write two position papers during our term. These should be typed and double-spaced using 12-pt font (Times New Roman or similar acceptable fonts). Your paper should be 1-2 pages in length (no longer!) and defend a particular position on a topic that we have discussed in class. The topics for the position papers will be posted on Blackboard under Assignments. The due dates for the Position Papers are: Wednesday, July 9th and Friday, July 25th. All position papers are due at the beginning of class on the due date. Failure to turn in Position Papers at the assigned time will result in a grade of zero for that assignment. If you choose to use one of your three absences on the day that a position paper is due, you must still turn in the position paper via email by the beginning of class on the due date. The average of the position paper grades will constitute 5% of your final course grade.

You will be expected to post a response to two questions on the Blackboard Discussion Board. The first Discussion Board post will be due on Wednesday, July 16th by 9:00 PM. The second will be due on Thursday, July 31st by 9:00 PM. Your posts will be graded on the basis of timely completion and whether or not the post demonstrates critical reflection on the question in light of our readings. The average of the discussion post grades will constitute 5% of your final course grade.

Our last class session, Thursday, Aug. 7th, will be reserved for individual presentations. The particular topic of your presentation needs to be chosen in consultation with the instructor, and each presentation should last about 25-30 minutes. After each presentation, the other students are expected to ask the presenter questions regarding the presentation. Your presentation grade will constitute 10% of your final course grade.

- 30% **Mid-term Exam** – The exam will take the entire class period and will give you the opportunity to demonstrate your understanding of all the material covered up to the date of the exam. The exam will be on Friday, July 18th and will consist of multiple choice, short answer, identification, and short essay questions. The Mid-term will also include a map quiz. Become familiar with the map of The Roman Empire in the 1st century (Gorman reading, Part 1, p. 10 on Blackboard) and “Significant places in the activity and travels of Paul” (Horrell, p. 38).
- 40% **Final Exam** – The final will be a take-home exam. I will provide more information on the Final Exam later in our term. Your take-home exam is due according to the official University Final Exam Schedule. Since our exam is scheduled for Sunday, August 10th from 2:00 – 5:00 PM, you must send your exam to me as an email attachment by 5:00 PM on Aug. 10th.

V. Procedures

- A. Contacting the Professor/Appointments: I will be available to talk with you immediately following our class sessions. Otherwise, the best way to contact me is via email (kbd2@duke.edu). I will check email before each class and at the end of the workday. I will be happy to arrange an appointment time to meet with you if you have any concerns that cannot be conveniently addressed after our class; however, since I do not have scheduled office hours, we need to arrange an appointment in advance.
- B. Access to Blackboard and Email: The Summer Session Office has created a Duke Email account for all summer visitors. If you are a summer visitor and you do not already know your NetID and password, you may obtain this information by contacting Kim Price (kprice@duke.edu; 684-5375) in the Summer Session Office. You may also obtain this information from the OIT HelpDesk by presenting a photo ID. All students will need immediate access to Blackboard with their NetID and password in order to keep up with class announcements, assignments, and posted readings, etc.
- C. Required Readings and Optional Readings: Required readings are listed in **boldfaced** print on the Schedule of Classes and Assignments below. Any reading that is not boldfaced is optional, but it may be of interest if you choose a related topic for your presentation or discuss a related topic in a position paper. Neither the Mid-Term Exam nor the Final Exam will quiz you on material that is mentioned solely in optional readings.
- D. Absences and Missed/Late Work: As delineated in IV above, attendance at all class sessions is expected. Therefore, absences will adversely affect your grade. However, if you have a short-term illness that prevents you from coming to class on a day that an assignment is due (e.g., Mid-Term Exam, Position Paper, or individual presentation), Duke University requires that you adhere to the official policies of the University. You will find the policies and proper notification procedures at <http://www.aas.duke.edu/trinity/t-reqs/>.
- E. Disabilities: If you anticipate the need to request academic assistance due to learning disabilities, please contact the Disabilities Services' Office at 668-1267 as soon as possible. Any disability must be officially documented through this office prior to requesting any change in class operating procedures.

Schedule of Classes and Assignments

<i>Date</i>	<i>Topic/Paper or Posting Due</i>	<i>Assigned Reading</i> <i>(All required readings are boldfaced and should be completed prior to the class session for which they are scheduled. Optional readings are not boldfaced.)</i>
Week 1 (June 30th – July 3rd)		
Mon.	Syllabus; Course Introduction	
Tues.	Paul in Context: Part 1 Greco-Roman World; Mediterranean Culture	Bb: Gorman, Part 1
Wed.	Paul in Context: Part 2 Second Temple Judaism; Greco-Roman Religions	Bb: Gorman, Part 2 Horrell, Chap 1: p. 1-11
Thurs.	Pre-Pauline Christianity; Identity Creation and Paulinism	Horrell, Chap 2: p.12-25 Campbell, Chap 1: p. 1-13 (skip 1.6)
Fri.	4 th of July – No class.	
Week 2 (July 7th – 11th)		
Mon.	Studying Paul: Old & New Perspectives, etc.	Campbell, Chap 2: p. 15-32 Bb: DPHL, p. 666-674 Bb: Wright, p. 13-20
Tues.	Paul's Pre-Christian Life; Paul's Call/Conversion; Introduction to chronological issues Comparison of Acts and Paul's Letters	Sanders, p. 9-22 Horrell, Chap. 3: p. 27-43 Acts 9, 11:29-30, 15:1-29; Gal 1:13-2:14 Knox, p. 30-52 (on reserve)
Wed.	Position Paper #1 is due Missionary Strategy/Letter Writing Eschatology and Salvation 1 Thessalonians; Parousia; Resurrection of the Dead	Sanders, p. 23-40 Horrell, Chap 4: p. 44-56 Horrell, p. 69-73 Read 1 Thess Read 1 Cor 15:12-58
Thurs.	Dealing with Issues/ Another Gospel? Righteousness/Justification Faithfulness of/Faith in Jesus Christ	Read Galatians Sanders, p. 52-75 Horrell, p. 73-80 Read Rom 3:22. 26; Phil 3:9

<i>Date</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Assigned Reading</i>
Fri.	Paul and the Jewish law, Part 1	Horrell, p. 89-99 Sanders, p. 76-90 Romans 1-8
Week 3 (July 14th – 18th)		
Mon.	Paul and the Jewish Law, Part 2	Campbell, p.33-53 Sanders, p. 98- 117 Romans 9-11
Tues.	Paul and the Jewish Law, Part 3 Paul and Israel; The Faithfulness of God	Campbell, p. 54-67 Sanders, p. 137-152 Bb:Wright, p.108-129
Wed.	The Church and Israel Discussion Board Post #1 is due by 9:00 PM	Horrell, p. 99-105 Campbell, p. 86-103; 121-139
Thurs.	Monotheism; Sin as Power Luther, Paul or Western Thinking?	Romans 7 Bb: Stendahl, p. 78-96 Sanders, p. 41-51
Fri.	Mid-term Exam	
Week 4 (July 21st – 25th)		
Mon.	1 st Corinthians Being “in Christ”/Transformation in Progress; Christ-Defined Identity	1 Cor 1-10 Sanders, p. 118-36 Campbell, p. 140-158
Tues.	1 st Corinthians continued The problem of Immorality	Campbell, p. 159-175
Wed.	Paul’s Christology; Participatory Aspects of Paul’s Soteriology Baptism in Paul’s Thought	Horrell, p. 57-69 Sanders, p. 91-97
Thurs.	Corporate Christology; Life in the Spirit; The Lord’s Supper in Paul’s Thought Community Ethics	1 Cor 11- 14; Rom 12-15:13 2 Cor 1-7 Bb: Hays, p. 16-59
Fri.	Position Paper #2 is due Monotheism, Christology, & Spirit	Bb: Wright, p. 83-107

<i>Date</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Assigned Reading</i>
Week 5 (July 28th – Aug. 1st)		
Mon.	The importance of the Collection for the Saints Theories regarding 2 Corinthians	Read 1 Cor 16; 2 Cor 8-9; Rom 15:14-Rom 16 Read the rest of 2 Cor
Tues.	Philippians Joy, Suffering, and Participation	Read Philippians
Wed.	Philemon Slavery in the Greco-Roman World	Read Philemon Bb: Barty, p. 65-73
Thurs.	Discussion Board Post #2 is due by 9:00 PM Pauline Theology: Coherent or Inconsistent? Does Paul's Theology have a Center?	Bb: DPHL, p. 674-679 Review previous reading in DPHL, p. 666-674
Fri.	Understanding Pauline Churches Assessing Different Approaches to Pauline Studies	Horrell, p. 106-124
Week 6 (Aug. 4th –7th)		
Mon.	What about Colossians and 2 Thessalonians? Paul's Legacy in the New Testament	Read Colossians; 2 Thess Horrell, p. 125-143
Tues.	Ephesians Church Structure after Paul	Read Ephesians
Wed.	Review	Horrell, p. 144-146
Thurs.	Presentations	
Fri.	No class – Term 2 Reading Period	
Sunday Aug. 10th	Take-Home Final Exam – Due by 5:00 PM	