



McMaster Divinity
College

CORINTHIAN LETTERS

NT 6R1050

McMaster Divinity College
Dr. Christopher D. Land
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Winter 2025 (In Person)
Thursday 2:00–3:50pm

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will provide an overview of scholarly issues related to 1 and 2 Corinthians and an opportunity to pursue specialized research involving the letters. Selected primary and secondary readings will be assigned. Seminar discussions will assess the current state of scholarship as regards key topics. Time will be taken to explore the primary texts themselves and to discuss interpretive issues. The semester will culminate in a research paper that in some way advances our understanding of Paul's Corinthian correspondence.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Through their active participation in this course, students will:

KNOWING

- Become familiar with key works that have impacted the interpretation of 1 and 2 Corinthians;
- Recognize the current state of scholarship as regards these letters;
- Formulate well-informed opinions about the letters;
- Become an expert on at least one specific area related to the letters;

BEING

- Become charitable givers and receivers of critical comments from fellow scholars;
- Become critical thinkers able to produce well-reasoned arguments and carefully assess the arguments of others;
- Reflect critically upon the complexities of the Corinthian situation and the contextual nature of all Christian theology, ethics, and ministry;

DOING

- Learn to engage in peer review;
- Improve in their ability to exegete the Greek New Testament;
- Develop their ability to write effective research papers.

COURSE PREREQUISITES

As a graduate seminar in Christian Theology, this course presumes a general familiarity with the New Testament and with the Pauline letters in particular. Students are also expected to have competency in Greek and to have the skills required for the production of graduate-level research papers.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Note: Students are required to attempt all of the course assignments. Failure to attempt an assignment could serve as grounds for failure of the course. Written assignments must be uploaded to Avenue to Learn (A2L) either as Word documents (.doc, .docx) or in Rich Text Format (.rtf). Unless alternative arrangements are made in advance, a penalty of 2% per day will be applied to all late assignments. Late assignments (even ones with an extension) will not receive detailed comments from the professor and may not be returned as quickly. Assignments cannot be submitted after April 11th without written permission from the Office of the Registrar (mdcreg@mcmaster.ca).

Seminar Preparation and Participation (20%)

Part of each week's class meeting will focus on topics of interest as regards the Corinthian letters; the other part will focus directly on the exegesis of the letters themselves (see topics and passages in the schedule below). Students will prepare for each class meeting by reading assigned portions of 1 and 2 Corinthians (in Greek) together with assigned secondary literature (available via A2L). Although no single commentary is being assigned as required reading, you should skim through various commentaries over the duration of the semester in order to become familiar with them. Before noon on Thursday, you must upload a 1–2-page document outlining the main things you learned from your reading, as well as any issues/questions you wish to discuss in class.

Critical Review Paper (30%)

To prepare for the final research paper, you must select a general research topic in consultation with the professor. You will then write a 6,000-word paper that: (1) documents what has already been said about the topic; and (2) offers a critical evaluation of what has been said. Your primary goal should be to accurately represent the relevant secondary literature with as much breadth and depth as possible. Your secondary goals should be to evaluate the literature and to discern where further work is warranted. Your review paper is due on **February 16th at 11:59pm**.

Paper Proposal (10%)

Having surveyed a general topic, you will next propose a research project that advances a specific thesis. It is recommended that you continue to work within the area surveyed by your critical review paper. Your proposal must include each of the following elements: (a) a research question that is 1–2 sentences in length; (b) a paragraph that sketches the most relevant prior research and then explains why, despite all of that research, your question is still worth asking; (c) a paragraph that identifies the type of argument that is implicated by your question (e.g. diachronic vs. synchronic; causal vs. correlative; historical vs. sociological vs. literary; etc.) and some authors and/or methods that exemplify this type of argumentation; (d) a paragraph that grounds the logic of your argument in relevant evidence, including both the evidence

that would *ideally* help you to answer to your question and the evidence that is *actually* available; (e) a paragraph that proposes a concrete procedure, involving *available* evidence, that can be completed in the amount of time you have available to complete the required research paper; (f) a proposed thesis statement that is 1–2 sentences in length, in which you succinctly convey what you expect to demonstrate by means of your research (i.e. your working hypothesis). Proposals are due on **February 20th at 2:00pm**.

Major Research Paper (30%)

Each student must write a research paper on a topic of his or her own choosing (provided that the topic relates somehow to the Corinthian letters). The paper is to be approximately 7,000–8,000 words in length. You should strive to produce a paper of publishable quality that makes a contribution to the current field of Pauline studies. For students who are uncertain about what constitutes an effective research paper, a detailed grading rubric is available on A2L. Papers are due on **March 24th at 11:59pm**.

Peer Reviews (10%)

Once major research papers have been submitted, they will be distributed to all participants in the seminar. You must read and assess each fellow student's paper in a manner such as would be appropriate for a peer-reviewed journal (i.e. you should assess the work both in terms of its internal argument and in terms of its contribution to the field). To facilitate this process, you will be given a peer-review rubric that details five criteria. In the body of your review, you will assign a score out of ten for each criterion, giving reasons for your scores in brief paragraphs. Also, each review should begin with a brief introduction that summarizes the paper under consideration, as well as a brief conclusion that summarizes the overall results of the review. These anonymous peer reviews must be uploaded to A2L by **March 31st at 11:59pm**, in separate files so that they can be more easily disseminated to fellow students.

GRADING SUMMARY

Seminar Preparation & Participation	20%
Critical Review Paper	30%
Paper Proposal	10%
Research Paper	30%
Peer Reviews	10%
Total	100%

TEXTBOOKS

Students are required to possess:

A standard edition of the Greek New Testament, such as the Nestle-Aland *Novum Testamentum Graece* (26th–28th ed.) or the UBS *Greek New Testament* (4th–5th ed.).

Students are recommended to possess:

Land, Christopher D. *The Integrity of 2 Corinthians and Paul's Aggravating Absence*. New Testament Monographs 36. Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2015.

All required textbooks for this class are available from the Hurlburt Family Bookstore located beside the MDC chapel entrance. For advance purchase, you may contact READ On Bookstore, 5 International Blvd, Etobicoke, ON, M9A 3C3: phone 416.620.2934; mobile 416.668.3434; email books@readon.ca. Other book services may also carry the texts.

MEETING SCHEDULE

Date	Discussion Topics
Jan 9	Introduction to the Course Presentation of Peer-Review Rubric Introduction to Zotero Introduction to Hypothes.is Scheduling of Student Participation
Jan 16	1 Corinthians: Integrity, Structure, Register, and Situation 1 Cor 8:1–11:1
Jan 23	2 Corinthians: Integrity, Structure, Register, and Situation 2 Cor 5:11–7:16
Jan 30	A Chronology of Paul's Corinthian Ministry 2 Cor 1:3–2:13; 12:11–13:10
Feb 6	The History, Geography, and Sociology of Corinth and Its Christ-Followers 1 Cor 1:10–3:23
Feb 13	Paul's Jewish Message to the Nations 1 Cor 16:1–12; 2 Cor 8–9
Reading Week (No Class)	
Feb 27	Apocalyptic Eschatology 1 Cor 7; 15
Mar 6	Purity, Ethics, and Communal Discipline 1 Cor 4–6
Mar 13	Communal Disorder and Disunity 1 Cor 11:2–14:40
Mar 20	Colleagues and Critics 2 Cor 10:1–12:10
Mar 27	Assessing Paul and His Legacy 2 Cor 2:14–5:11
Apr 3	Student Research Papers
Apr 10	Concluding Reflections Course Evaluations

BIBLIOGRAPHY

An introduction to Zotero (www.zotero.org) will be presented during the first seminar meeting, and then Zotero bibliographies will be made available on A2L.

To further accelerate your research, please note the two following publicly available resources: (1) Bieringer, Reimund, Emmanuel Nathan, and Dominika A. Kurek-Chomycz, *2 Corinthians: A Bibliography*,

Biblical Tools and Studies 5 (Leuven: Peeters, 2008); (2) an online bibliography made available through the Corinthian Studies Zotero Group, available at https://www.zotero.org/groups/corinthian_studies/items.

STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC HONESTY

Academic dishonesty is not qualitatively different from other types of dishonesty. It consists of misrepresenting the ownership of written work by deception or by other fraudulent means. In an academic setting this may include any number of forms such as: copying or using unauthorized aids in tests, examinations; plagiarism, i.e., submitting work that is not one's own (regardless of the means of its production, including AI) but passing it off as if it is; submitting work for credit in a course for which credit is being or has already been given, unless the previously submitted work was presented as such to the instructor of the second course and has been deemed acceptable for credit by the instructor of that course; aiding and abetting another student's dishonesty; giving false information for the purposes of gaining admission or credit; giving false information for the purposes of obtaining deferred examinations or extension of deadlines; forging or falsifying McMaster University or McMaster Divinity College documents.

Students are responsible for understanding what constitutes academic dishonesty. Please refer to the Divinity College Statement on Academic Honesty at: <http://www.mcmasterdivinity.ca/programs/rules-regulations>

A useful guide to avoiding plagiarism is the Harvard Guide to Using Sources: <http://usingsources.fas.harvard.edu/icb/icb.do>

In this course, we will be using a web-based service (Turnitin.com) for plagiarism detection and the student's continuation in the course represents his or her consent to the use of this service. If a student has objections to the use of this service, alternate arrangements for assignment submission must be made with the professor in advance of the assignment deadlines.

A special note about AI: You are expected to do your own thinking and to write your own papers, etc., and not to have AI do this work for you. There may be value in using an AI tool to help you locate and collate resources or to help you "tidy up" your English grammar, usage, and mechanics, especially if English is not your native language. However, using AI to create content for you and then submitting that content as if you created it is considered plagiarism (i.e., submitting work that is not one's own as if it is one's own) and is a violation of the academic honesty policy.

STYLE

All stylistic considerations (including but not limited to questions of formatting, footnotes, and bibliographic references) must conform to the latest edition of the McMaster Divinity College *Style Guidelines for Essays and Theses*: <https://www.mcmasterdivinity.ca/sites/default/files/documents/mdcstyleguide.pdf>

Failure to observe appropriate form will result in grade reductions.

GENDER INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE

McMaster Divinity College uses inclusive language for human beings in worship services, student written materials, and all its publications. It is expected that inclusive language will be used in chapel services and all MDC assignments. In reference to biblical texts, the integrity of the original expressions and the names of God should be respected, but you will need to use gender-inclusive language for humans, and you will need to quote from a gender-inclusive version such as, for example, the following: NRSVue (2022), TEV/GNB/GNT (1976), CEV (1995), NLT (1996), NIV (2011), and the CEB (2011).

AODA

In accordance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), the content of this course is intended to be accessible to all students who are enrolled in the course, including those with disabilities. If a student requires accommodation to participate fully in this course, that student is to contact SAS at McMaster University, who will then work directly with the McMaster Divinity College Registrar to negotiate reasonably appropriate accommodation for the student. The MDC Registrar will communicate with faculty regarding necessary accommodations. Please note that an accommodation is not retroactive and must be requested in advance to allow sufficient time for implementation.

This syllabus is for information only and remains the property of the respective professor. This syllabus is prepared with the best information available, but the professor reserves the right to change the content and format of the course.