



McMaster Divinity  
College

# PAULINE STUDIES

## NT 6R1080

McMaster Divinity College  
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Winter 2026  
Wednesday 9:00–10:50am

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will provide an overview of major developments in Pauline scholarship as well as an opportunity for students to pursue specialized research in Pauline studies. Class readings, discussions, and presentations will explore the history and current state of scholarship as regards key topics. Student research papers will seek to further advance our understanding of the Apostle Paul, his life, his writings, or his legacy.

### COURSE OBJECTIVES

Through their active participation in this course, students will:

#### KNOWING

- Become familiar with the current state of Pauline scholarship as regards both its methods and claims;
- Formulate well-informed opinions about Paul's life and letters;
- Become an expert on at least one specific area in Pauline studies;

#### 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 upon Paul's commitment to the calling he understood himself to have received;
- Learn from Paul's ministry experiences, including both his successes and his struggles;

#### DOING

- Survey academic literature on a topic in Pauline scholarship;
- Systematically outline the present state of Pauline scholarship as regards a particular topic;
- Give an effective academic presentation and then field questions and comments;
- Formulate a method that is capable of addressing an open question in Pauline scholarship;
- Write an effective research paper;
- Critically assess a research paper in order to identify its strengths and weaknesses.

## 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

*This is a graduate-level seminar, so students are expected to attend class and to participate in class discussions. Students who consistently fail to attend class will not be eligible for a passing grade in the course. If an absence is unavoidable, please email me in advance to explain your situation. If you are an in-person student and you are ill, you should email me in advance even if you plan to attend class online.*

*In addition, students are required to complete all of the course assignments. Failure to complete an assignment may serve as grounds for failure of the course. All assignments must be formatted according to the MDC Style Guide (i.e. standard page layout, appropriate citation formatting, proper spelling, etc.). Written assignments must be uploaded to Avenue to Learn as Word documents (.doc, .docx). Unless alternative arrangements are made in advance, a penalty of 2% per day will be applied to all late assignments. Late submissions (even ones with an extension) will not receive detailed comments from the professor and may not be returned at the same time as work submitted on time. Assignments cannot be submitted after the final week of class without written permission from the Office of the Registrar ([mdcreg@mcmaster.ca](mailto:mdcreg@mcmaster.ca)).*

### Readings and Seminar Discussions (30%)

Students are expected to read an overview textbook in keeping with the course schedule (i.e. Horrell's *Introduction to the Study of Paul*), as well as the additional primary and secondary readings made available each week on A2L. Assigned reading will be discussed each week, so students should come to class ready to participate discussions. In general, comments and/or questions should demonstrate both that the student is acquainted with Pauline studies and that they are thoughtfully assessing the reading material.

### Syllabus or Book Review (15%)

Students can choose either to produce a course syllabus or to write a book review. The chosen assignment must be submitted by **Tuesday, March 31<sup>st</sup> at 11:59pm**.

The course syllabus must use a format that conforms to the syllabus expectations of a specific post-secondary institution (of the student's choosing), and the course topic must be either Paul and his letters (in general), Pauline theology (more specifically), or some Pauline sub-corpus (meaning a particular letter or group of letters). The syllabus must include a select bibliography for students in addition to required textbooks or other readings.

The book review must evaluate, in approximately 2,500 words, a book published within the past fifteen years. It should be suitable for publication in a research periodical. Students should employ the rubric supplied on A2L when assessing their chosen book, and their use of the rubric should be visible in the final review (in the substance of its evaluation, if not in the form of its presentation).

### Draft Research Paper & Presentation (15%)

Each student will write a research paper on a topic of his or her own choosing (provided that the topic fits within the field of Pauline studies). The final paper is to be **7,000–8,000 words in length** (see below). For students who are uncertain about what constitutes an effective research paper, a detailed grading rubric is available on A2L.

Initial paper drafts must be submitted by **Tuesday, March 3 @ 11:59pm**. These drafts will be distributed on the following day to all other seminar participants. On subsequent weeks, **each student will lead a class discussion** of their research project. This will begin with a 20-minute presentation that covers the chosen research topic, a survey of prior research concerning the topic, the main thesis of the student's research paper, and the student's own assessment of the paper's current strengths and weaknesses. There will then be thirty minutes of interactive Q&A. The draft paper, the student's presentation of it, and the ensuing class discussion should provide seminar participants with a clear understanding of the student's research question and his or her current approach to answering it. Ideally, presenters should go away with some concrete steps for improving their draft paper.

### Final Research Paper (40%)

Each student will revise their draft paper in keeping with feedback both from the professor and from fellow seminar participants. Each student will then submit a final research paper that is suitable for publication in a research periodical. Final papers must be submitted by **Tuesday, March 31<sup>st</sup> at 11:59pm**.

## GRADING SUMMARY

Readings and Seminar Discussions	30%
Syllabus <i>or</i> Book Review	15%
Draft Research Paper & Presentation	15%
<u>Final Research Paper</u>	<u>40%</u>
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.).

Horrell, David G. *An Introduction to the Study of Paul*. 3rd ed. London: T&T Clark, 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](mailto:books@readon.ca). Other book services may also carry the texts.

## MEETING SCHEDULE

*NB: Every effort will be made to avoid cancelling classes, but if a class must be cancelled or moved online then an announcement will be posted on Avenue to Learn (A2L). Please check for announcements each week before coming on campus.*

Date	Course Topics	Meeting Agenda
Jan 7	Introduction to Pauline Studies Resources and Strategies for Research	Personal Introductions Discuss Research Paper Topics
Jan 14	Paul's Life	Discuss Assigned Readings
Jan 21	Paul the Letter Writer	Discuss Assigned Readings
Jan 28	Paul the Theologian	Discuss Assigned Readings
Feb 4	Paul, Israel, and the Jewish Law	Discuss Assigned Readings
Feb 11	Perspectives on the Pauline Assemblies	Discuss Assigned Readings
Feb 18	<b>Reading Week (No Class Meeting)</b>	
Feb 25	Evaluating Paul's Legacy Today	Discuss Assigned Readings
Mar 4	Discuss Draft Research Papers	
Mar 11	Discuss Draft Research Papers or Student-Suggested Topics/Passages	
Mar 18	Discuss Student-Suggested Topics/Passages	
Mar 25	Discuss Teaching/Preaching Paul	
Apr 1	Discuss Final Research Papers	
Apr 8	Concluding Discussions & Course Evaluations	

## SUBMISSION SCHEDULE

Date	Submission Due (@11:59pm)
Mar 3	Draft Research Paper
Mar 31	Syllabus or Book Review
Mar 31	Final Research Paper

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

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

## 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.

## *ABSENSE DUE TO ILLNESS*

If you must miss class due to an illness, you must contact me (via email) as soon as possible to let me know. Likewise, if I should become ill, I will communicate with you via A2L about how we will make up class sessions.

Although much of the course content will be made available via A2L, it would still be a good idea to have a friend take notes for you, if possible.

## *Inclement Weather*

If on a class meeting day MDC closes due to inclement weather, I reserve the right to move the lessons and, where possible, class activities for the week to A2L (asynchronous format). This will help to ensure that we stay on target in the course.

**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.**