

McMaster Divinity College
The Pauline Epistles

NT 3XP3
Biblical Studies (BS)
Pastoral Studies (PS)

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Fall 2014
Saturdays 9 a.m. - 4 p.m., Sep 13, Oct 4, Nov 1 & 29

I. Course Description

The Pauline Epistles are intriguing and exciting on many levels. They are associated with the apostle Paul, who is one of the most important figures of the early church. These Epistles include some of the earliest Christian texts and they have been foundational for Christian theology and ethics. This corpus is effective for spiritual formation as well as doctrinal formation but also contains a number of challenging and interesting issues that continue to occupy scholarship. The course will focus on Paul, the Pauline corpus, and Pauline theology.



II. Course Objectives

Specific Objectives – Through reading, lectures, discussion and the completion of assignments the student will:

Knowing

1. Understand Paul's identity, life narrative and mission in his first century context, as well as the controversies that surround him and his letters.
2. Know the message and structure of individual Pauline Epistles in light of the critical issues and historical contexts that are foundational to uncovering the meaning of the texts.
3. Learn key Pauline themes and doctrines.

Being

4. Appreciate scripture and its production through meaningful encounters with the content and the people involved (Paul, the churches, the individual recipients).
5. Have a worldview that coherently processes and reflects Pauline theology.
6. Emerge transformed by appropriately interacting with and responding to Paul's teaching and exhortations.

Doing

6. Each student will research and write a paper on a key Pauline passage, theological topic/doctrine, church practice, spiritual discipline or other topic in Pauline studies.
7. Each student will create a Portfolio Project suitable for their specialization.
8. Each student will present their Portfolio Project in a creative or traditional venue.

III. Course Requirements

A. Class Participation (15%)

Student participation and interaction with lectures and class and group discussions is expected, based on your readings for the course session including, items of particular exegetical interest in terms of background, other contexts or controversy, key theological insights, the outline & content of the epistles or Pauline theology, and possible applications to contemporary Christian living.

Students are expected to make an average of two weekly contributions to the online discussion on Avenue to Learn.

B. Reading (10%)

See the Reading Schedule at the end for the precise dates and pages.

1. Read the assigned reading before each class session.
2. Read the Pauline Epistles three times during the course in three different translations.
3. At the end of the term, each student will submit a reading report by e-mail before **midnight, December 5.**

C. Research Paper (35%)

Each student will write a research paper on a key Pauline passage (exegesis), a Pauline theological topic/doctrine, church practice, spiritual discipline or other topic in Pauline studies.

Length & style: It should be no more than 3000 words (about 12 pages) of text, excluding footnotes and bibliography. For all matters of style and form, consult the MDC style guide.

It will be due **Friday, November 7 at midnight**. All submissions should be made by e-mail to westfal@mcmaster.ca. Late papers lose 1% for 7 days, and then 4% a day after that up to a maximum of 30%.

D. Portfolio Project (30%)

Each student will create a Portfolio Project for Pauline studies that is suitable for their specialization. The focus of the project to make a text, a Pauline doctrine or a Pauline issue accessible to a target group in a specific contemporary context, with appropriate visual aids and/or other methods or mediums. It will be due **December 5, midnight**. All submissions should be made by e-mail to westfal@mcmaster.ca. Late projects lose 1% for 7 days, and then 4% a day after that up to a maximum of 30%.

Each project should be discussed in advance with the professor and a written statement describing the project and specific contemporary context targeted shall be submitted by **9 a.m. November 1.**

Some suggestions for the project include:

Write a study guide that will assist young adult learners in exploring or understanding all or part of a Pauline Epistle. Include questions, explanations, directions and other

material that both enlightens the text in its historical context and helps learners to connect the text or topic with life today.

Design a movie presentation, critical review and discussion which encapsulates a Pauline theme or passage with a modern metaphor.

Write a parable or allegory that utilizes significant or powerful contemporary imagery, symbols or metaphors that express a Pauline message, content or theme.

Write a collection of poetry or songs that explore Pauline thought, themes and/or emotions.

Design an experience for a small group that simulates the situation of the recipients and the achievement of the goal(s) of the author.

Describe connections between the characters, contexts and themes in your life story and the Pauline Epistles.

E. Presentation of the Portfolio Project (10%),

Each student will present their project by **December 12**, either by appointment with the professor, or to the target group, or in a creative venue such as a blog (in such cases, the professor should be provided with a description of the presentation).

F. Grading Summary

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|-------------------------|-----|
| 1. Participation | 15% |
| 2. Reading | 10% |
| 3. Research Paper | 35% |
| 4. Portfolio Project | 30% |
| 5. Project Presentation | 10% |

IV. Textbooks and Materials

Required

1. A good New Testament introduction such as deSilva, David A. *An Introduction to the New Testament: Contexts, Methods & Ministry Formation*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004.
2. Hawthorne, Gerald F., Ralph P Martin, and Daniel G. Reid. *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1993.
3. Holland, Tom. *Contours of Pauline Theology: A Radical New Survey of the Influences on Paul's Biblical Writings*. Mentor, 2010.
4. Petersen, Norman R. *Rediscovering Paul: Philemon and the Sociology of Paul's Narrative World*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985.

Recommended

1. Bird, Michael, ed. *Four Views on the Apostle Paul*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012 .
2. Dunn, James D.G. *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997.
3. Schreiner, Thomas R. *Paul, Apostle of God's Glory in Christ: A Pauline Theology*. Downers Grove, Ill. : Leicester, England: InterVarsity Press, 2001.
4. Witherington, Ben. *Paul's Narrative Thought World: The Tapestry of Tragedy and Triumph*. Louisville, Ky.: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1994.

V. Classroom Behavior

A. Attendance

1. Students should be on time to class or be prepared to offer an explanation to the professor.
2. Students are expected to stay for the entire class session, unless arranged in advance.

B. Participation

1. Please respect the opinions of others without disrespect or ridicule, even if you do not agree with them. However, feel free to respond logically and critically in an orderly manner.
2. Students are not expected to be doing work on any other subject except that which is appropriate in the course outline.
3. Students are not to carry on off-topic conversations in class.
4. Students are not to use the internet, check e-mail or utilize other electronic devices except what is appropriate in pursuing course work.
5. Students may eat or drink in class if they do not distract others and they clean up their desks. Students who fail to respect these guidelines will be dismissed from the class with consequences.

VI. MDC Policies

A. Textbook Purchase

All required textbooks for this class are available from the College's book service, READ On Bookstore, Room 145, McMaster Divinity College. Texts may be purchased on the first day of class. For advance purchase, you may contact READ On Bookstore, 304 The East Mall, Suite 100, Etobicoke, ON M9C 5K1: phone 416.620.2934; fax 416.622.2308; email books@readon.ca. Other book services may also carry the texts.

B. Academic Honesty

Academic dishonesty is a serious offence that may take any number of forms, including plagiarism, the submission of work that is not one's own or for which previous credit has been obtained, and/or unauthorized collaboration with other students. Academic dishonesty can result in severe consequences, e.g., failure of the assignment, failure of the course, a notation on one's academic transcript, and/or suspension or expulsion from the College.

Students are responsible for understanding what constitutes academic dishonesty. Please refer to the Divinity College Statement on Academic Honesty ~

<http://www.mcmasterdivinity.ca/programs/rules-regulations>

C. Gender Inclusive Language

McMaster Divinity College uses inclusive language for human beings in worship services, student written materials, and all of its publications. In reference to biblical texts, the integrity of the original expressions and the names of God should be respected. The NRSV and TNIV are examples of the use of inclusive language for human beings. It is expected that inclusive language will be used in chapel services and all MDC assignments.

D. Style

All stylistic considerations (including but not limited to questions of formatting, footnotes, and bibliographic references) must conform to the McMaster Divinity College Style Guidelines for Essays and Theses:

<http://www.mcmasterdivinity.ca/sites/default/files/documents/MDCStyleGuide.pdf>

Failure to observe appropriate form will result in grade reductions.

Disclaimer

This syllabus is the property of the instructor and is prepared with currently available information. The instructor reserves the right to make changes and revisions up to and including the first day of class.

Appointments & office hours

Contact me if I can assist you in any way via email: westfal@mcmaster.ca

Phone: 905.525.9140 ext. 23605

Office hours Mondays 3-5 p.m., Tuesdays 1:30-3 p.m., Wednesdays 1-2:30 p.m., or by appointment

Course Schedule

- Sept 13 Paul the Person
Getting to know the individual
Paul's relationship to Jewish & Greco-Roman Context
New Perspectives on Paul
Understanding Paul in the context of Acts.
Understanding the epistles in a Pauline narrative
- Oct 5 Pauline Epistles A
Letter writing—the power of context and personal relationships
Critical issues—authorship (amenuensis, allonymity, pseudonymity), undisputed and disputed letters
Galatians, 1-2 Thessalonians 1-2 Corinthians
- Nov 1 Pauline Epistles B
Romans, Philemon, Ephesians, Colossians, Philippians, Titus, 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy
- Nov 29 Pauline Thought & Pauline Theology
Working towards a coherent understanding of the details in the bigger picture

Reading Schedule TBA