

University of Waterloo – Winter 2015
Religious Studies 236 – The Apostle Paul: Life and Letters



(fresco of St. Paul, catacomb of St. Domitilla, Rome, 4th century CE)

Time: Tuesdays, 7-9:50 pm

Place: Conrad Grebel University College (CGUC), Room 1302

Instructor: Dr. Alicia Batten

Office: CGUC 2116

Office Hours: Tuesdays, 2-4 pm; Wednesdays 11-12 pm & by appointment

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Catalogue Description: The career and thought of a pioneer of Christian religion as seen in his writings, with attention to issues such as spirit, grace and law, freedom and slavery, Christ and church, women and men.

The aim of this course is to familiarize students with the life, work, thought and writings of the Apostle Paul, arguably the most important of the ancient roving apostles who founded small “Christian” (note that Paul does not use the word “Christian,” however) communities in various regions throughout the Roman Empire. The course examines sources for studying Paul, with a focus on the letters attributed to him. While these letters became an important part of the Christian Scriptures, we will study them within their ancient Mediterranean contexts, with attention to diverse forms of Judaism, Greco-Roman philosophy and religion, the political climate of the Roman Empire as well as some of the cultural and social values important to ancient Mediterranean peoples. We will examine the structure and tone of the letters attributed to Paul in light of the diverse set of circumstances, questions and problems posed by the people who received them. Occasionally, we will address how these texts have had an impact, both historically and in the contemporary world. *The course does not presume background knowledge of the Bible, of Christianity nor religious convictions regarding the material.*

Objectives

1. To acquaint students with the life and literature attributed to Paul, including some of his most significant ideas, and the major issues of debate regarding his letters.
2. To introduce students to some of the methods used in the academic study of the Bible and ancient literature.
3. To reflect upon the process of interpretation.
4. To practice and strengthen critical thinking skills through reading, writing and discussion.
5. To understand how Paul and this literature have had an impact upon historical and theological developments.

Texts

1. A **Bible**. It is vital that you bring a Bible with you to class so that we can examine and discuss the texts. Here are some other translations that you could use: *New Revised Standard Version*, *Revised Standard Version*, *New American Bible*, *New Jerusalem Bible*, *English Standard Version*, *New King James Version*. Paraphrases such as *The Living Bible* or *The Message* are not suitable for the course. You can also access different translations on the internet. One good website for this is *The New Testament Gateway* (www.ntgateway.com). Study Bibles, such as the *New Oxford Annotated Bible*, are excellent as they provide footnotes explaining terms, cross-references etc If you are interested in non-canonical early Christian texts, the website www.earlychristianwritings.com is useful as a source of bibliography and primary sources.
2. Walter F. Taylor, *Paul. Apostle to the Nations. An Introduction*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2012. This textbook has questions, suggested readings and websites listed at the end of each chapter. Available at the bookstore.
3. A few articles that I will post on the LEARN site for the course. All assignments will be posted on this site and distributed in class.

Course Requirements

Participation (10%) – To do well in this course you need to attend class as a good deal of information (which will be on the tests) will be shared in class that is NOT in the text book. You should come to class having read and prepared notes about the readings and questions assigned for that day's class. You should take notes (you retain more if you take them by hand and not on a laptop), and engage in class through attentive listening, asking questions, and offering comments. Please note that this mark will suffer if electronics are used in class for purposes other than taking notes. Please make use of my office hours if you have any questions or concerns about this course and assignments. I am happy to look at outlines and drafts, but I request that you bring them in in person (not through email).

In-class writing (10%) – Throughout the semester I will ask you to do some in-class writing that will relate to the readings for that day. This writing could include asking you to come up

with a question, identifying something you learned from the reading, or requesting your comments about the reading, questions assigned from Taylor and other ideas under discussion. You can miss doing this **once** but this writing cannot be made up. Each one is marked out of 2. You automatically get 1 point for your name; then you need to demonstrate that you have done the reading and answered the questions for the other point. You can use your notes for this writing, but not the textbook. This writing can often form the basis for discussion in class.

Short Writing Assignment (10%): You are required to write a 3-4 page (double-spaced, 12 point font -750-1000 word) **letter** that imitates Paul's general letter structure, use of traditions, rhetoric etc More instructions will be provided in class. This is due on **March 3rd. Please bring a hard copy to class and submit an electronic copy through Dropbox on the LEARN site.**

Mid-term Term in Class Test (20%) – February 10th – Students will receive further information about this test.

Essay (25% - due March 24th) : Students will complete an 8-10 page paper (2000-2500 words) on a passage from one of the undisputed Pauline letters (including 1 Thessalonians, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Philippians, Philemon, Romans, Galatians). The paper will require a bibliography that includes at least 5 academic sources that can include commentaries, books, chapters in books, or articles. *Online sources, such as websites, are not acceptable.* You can use online databases, which will direct you to peer reviewed bibliography. Also note that Taylor's chapters contain good bibliography, that you can consult. A **topic/question and 5 source bibliography** (Taylor can count as one of the sources) is due on **March 10th** at the latest (you can submit this earlier if you wish). The topic and bibliography is intended to help you get going on the essay. More instructions about this will follow. **Please bring a hard copy of your final paper to class and submit an electronic copy through Dropbox on the LEARN site.**

There are many other resources available on Paul in the CGUC library (Milton Good Library), at St. Jerome's library, Renison Library and at the Dana Porter library. Again, *The New Testament Gateway* is very useful as a resource for bibliography. The library liaison at the Porter library for Religious Studies is Sandra Keys (skeys@library.uwaterloo.ca) (X32279). For articles on Paul and his world, the best database is the ATLA database, available through the library website. The subject guide for Religious Studies is available at <http://www.lib.uwaterloo.ca/discipline/religious/index.html>

Take-Home Final Examination (25%): There will be a final take-home exam that will consist of essay questions. **It is due on April 10th by 5 pm. You must hand this this exam through the Dropbox on the LEARN site. Late finals will not be accepted.**

ELECTRONICS IN CLASS: Cell phones must be turned off before class. Studies show that taking notes using pen and paper leads to better retention of material. Please note that the 10% participation mark will suffer substantially if you are using a computer for purposes other than to take class notes. It affects the ability of others who want to concentrate on class material and can be considered rude.

HANDING IN ASSIGNMENTS: Assignments require a word count and it must include the following signed sentence on the front or title page of the paper: “I have read UW’s Policy 71 regarding plagiarism and academic discipline, and know the consequences of not complying with it: _____.”

RE-WRITING ASSIGNMENTS: You have the option to re-write assignments, but you must hand them in by **April 7th**. No rewritten assignments will be accepted after that date. You would receive the average of the two marks (note that your mark could go up or down).

LATE ESSAYS: Students are required to complete the assignments by the due dates indicated and hand them in at the beginning of class. Late assignments receive a decrease of 2% off per day late. Exceptions will be made only in the case of illness (see below for documentation of illness) or some other emergency, and then only if permission has been granted prior to the due date.

Schedule (can be subject to change)

Jan 6

Introduction to the course and to the academic study of the Bible & early Christianity

Jan 13

Methods and Sources for Studying Paul; Paul’s World

Reading: Taylor, 3-50; 298-307; The Book of Acts 8-9; 11-28 (Optional: Excerpt from the Acts of Paul – on the LEARN site and also on www.earlychristianwritings.com)

Questions: Taylor, page 34, questions 1-2; page 50, questions 3-4.

Jan 20

Paul’s World – Judaism and Hellenism

Reading: Taylor, 51-89; Galatians 3-4; Romans 9:1-5; 1 Corinthians 15

Questions: Taylor, page 89, questions 1-5.

Jan 27

Paul’s Work – How did Paul Start churches? The Nature of his Letters

Reading: Taylor, 91-141; 1 Thessalonians

Questions: Taylor, page 123, questions 1-4; page 140, questions 3-5.

Feb 3

Galatians – Judean Law, Faith

Reading: Galatians; Romans 9-11; Taylor, 143-59

Questions: Taylor, page 159, questions 1-6.

Feb 10 – Mid term

The test will take 80 minutes. For the remainder of the class, we will talk more about the main essay for the course; how to structure it, find resources etc

Feb 17 – Reading Week – Read ahead for the class on Romans (Romans is Paul’s longest, and probably most complex, letter)

Feb 24

Romans

Reading: Romans, Taylor, 223-253.

Questions: Taylor, page 252, questions 1-4.

March 3 – Short paper due (please hand in a hard copy in class and submit an electronic copy to the LEARN DROPBOX)

Philippians; Philemon – Paul and Politics; Paul and Slavery

Reading: Philippians; Philemon, Taylor, 255-88.

Questions: Taylor, page 275, questions 2-5; page 288, questions 1-3.

March 10 – Topic/Question and Bibliography due by this date.

Film and Introduction to 1 Corinthians

Reading: Robert Jewett, “*Babette’s Feast* and the Shaming of the Poor in Corinth” (on the LEARN site); Read 1 Corinthians, Taylor, 161-88

March 17

1 and 2 Corinthians – Community Problems

Reading: Review 1 Corinthians; 2 Corinthians (Optional: Taylor, 189-221)

Questions: What are some of the other major problems in Corinth, based upon 1 Corinthians? How does Paul use the metaphor of the *body* in 1 Corinthians? As you read 2 Corinthians, do you notice any major changes in Paul’s tone? Does his emotional state shift at different points in this letter?

March 24 – Essays due in class and to the LEARN DROPBOX.

2 Thessalonians, Colossians, Ephesians, Pastoral Epistles

Reading: 2 Thessalonians; Colossians; 1 Timothy; Taylor, 289-98

Questions: What similarities and differences do you notice between 2 Thessalonians, Colossians and 1 Timothy and the “undisputed” letters of Paul that we have read?

March 31

Revisiting Major Issues in Paul’s Letters and Legacy

FINAL TAKE-HOME IS DUE TO THE LEARN DROPBOX BY APRIL 10th, 5 pm.

Academic Integrity: In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility. [Check www.uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/ for more information.]

Discipline: A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid academic offences, and to take responsibility for his/her actions. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offence, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offences (e.g. plagiarism, cheating) or about “rules” for group work/collaboration should seek guidance

from the course professor, academic advisor, or the Undergraduate Associate Dean. When misconduct has been found to have occurred, disciplinary penalties will be imposed under Policy 71 – Student Discipline, www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy71.htm. For typical penalties check Guidelines for the Assessment of Penalties, www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/guidelines/penaltyguidelines.htm.

Grievance: A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of his/her university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read policy 70 – Student Petitions and Grievances, Section 4, www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy70.htm.

Appeals: A student may appeal the finding and/or penalty in a decision made under Policy 70 – Student Petitions and Grievances (other than regarding a petition) or Policy 71 – Student Discipline if a ground for an appeal can be established. Read Policy 72 – Student Appeals, www.Adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy72htm.

Academic Integrity Website (Arts):
http://arts.uwaterloo.ca/arts/ugrad/academic_responsibility.html

Academic Integrity Office (UW):
<http://uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/>

Note for Students with Disabilities: The Office for persons with Disabilities (OPD), located in Needles Hall, Room 1132, collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with the OPD at the beginning of each academic term.

Illness: From time to time students become ill or have ongoing medical conditions that prevent them from meeting academic obligations. The University is committed to assisting students who are ill and has established the following policy:

Students in an on-campus course who are ill and unable to meet assignment due dates or write a term test or final examination should seek medical treatment and provide confirmation of the illness to the instructor within 48 hours by submitting a completed uWaterloo Verification of Illness Form to support requests for accommodation due to illness. The uWaterloo Verification of Illness Form is normally the only acceptable medical documentation and is available online at: <http://uwaterloo.ca/health-services/student-medical-clinic/services>

Students who consult their physician or use the services of an off-campus walk-in clinic must provide this form to the attending physician for completion. Doctor's notes and forms created by the physician or clinic are normally not acceptable.