

Paul Through Jewish and Christian Eyes, Rel. 217

Tues/Thurs, 10:20 – 11:30, Comen. 218

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Office hours: T/Th 2:30 – 4:00 or by appt. You're also free to pop by and see if I'm in.

Description: This course will introduce students to the wild, complex, perilous and fascinating world of New Testament biblical interpretation through focus on a contemporary and robustly debated topic in the world of religion scholars: how to understand Paul, his letters and his theology in light of the history of Christian anti-judaism and antisemitism, and in light of contemporary biblical criticism, archeology and other scientific findings. This course will disturb assumptions of biblical monolithic meaning and expose learners to the ethical challenges and quandaries inherent in biblical interpretation. The purpose and central goal of the course can be summed up with this statement from Paula Fredriksen and Adele Reinhartz in the introduction to their book, *Jesus, Judaism and Christian Anti-Judaism: Reading the New Testament after the Holocaust*:

Anti-Jewish traditions run deep in church teachings in large part because they rest on particular readings of Christianity's core canon. . . Throughout the long centuries that stand between the earliest followers of Jesus and ourselves, these readings have come to have the force and weight of historical description. . .

Unless we can distinguish between Paul and his historical interpreters, gauge the distance that separates Jesus' words and acts from the Gospels' renditions of his teachings, or measure the gap between the Gospels and their subsequent interpretations, we have little hope of overcoming Christian anti-Judaism.

The expectation in this course is that many (or most) students will have had very little contact with New Testament literature. I propose the following questions to guide our study over the semester: 1) what does the biblical text say? What should we know about the historical setting out of which it emerges? 2) How has it been understood at different moments/contexts in history? How have Christians (of varying times) understood the text, and to what ends? 3) What challenges to such understanding are brought to bear by the Jewish/Christian dialogue and historical experiences such as the holocaust and growing awareness of historical Christian anti-judaism and anti-semitism?

Course Books (available in the bookstore):

The New Oxford Annotated Bible, New Revised Standard Version with the Apocrypha, Third Edition (Paperback College Edition 9730A), Michael D. Coogan, Marc Z. Brettler, Carol A. Newsom, PHEME PERKINS, eds.

(any student wishing to use a different translation of the New Testament must have it approved by the instructor; I prefer that you use this translation)

The Letters of Paul: Conversations in Context, Calvin J. Roetzel

Jesus, Judaism and Christian Anti-Judaism: Reading the New Testament after the Holocaust, Paula Fredriksen and Adele Reinhartz, eds.

A Radical Jew: Paul and the Politics of Identity, Daniel Boyarin [you do not need to purchase this book, but will be reading a good part of it. I have placed it on reserve in the library. You will need to make your own copy of the selections we will read, or purchase a copy.]

Plus additional articles, book chapters as assigned (available either as handouts or in Blackboard documents)

Required Course Films (to be seen in class)

From Jesus To Christ, Part II,
Frontline, 1998

Peter and Paul and the Christian Revolution, Part II,
PBS Home Video, 2005

Additional Resources:

There are a number of fine websites with great material on Paul, his world, his letters, and the latest on Pauline scholarship. Plan on spending time throughout the semester surfing and exploring these links. These are links you especially will wish to utilize in your group research projects on the Corinthian correspondence.

<http://www.textweek.com/pauline/paul.htm>

<http://ntgateway.com/paul/>

http://www.wabashcenter.wabash.edu/Internet/bible_new.htm (find the Paul link)

<http://www.thepaulpage.com/>

Course Requirements:

- 1) Your consistent, prepared, engaged and intelligent participation in EVERY class is a must. There are no excused absences for this class, except in cases of serious illness, family emergency and/or religious observance. Please note: any absence you wish to have excused must be cleared with the professor IN ADVANCE of the class missed (I prefer that you call me if you need to inform me about a necessary absence – please call me at the office, x7104). Bring your New Testament to class with you; and whatever other text(s) we are studying every class period. As you thoroughly prepare every reading assignment (in advance of class!), read with a pen or pencil in hand (not a highlighter!) so that you can underline and even more importantly, write notes, summaries, questions and other shorthand in the margin of all your texts (including the New Testament). This will help you to remember and synthesize your reading. Additionally, stretch yourself into the habit of regularly contributing orally in class with your reactions, observations, questions, confusion. We will run the course very much in “seminar” style, with a great deal of class discussion and group study. **15% of your grade will be determined by this component of the course.** Pushing yourself to grow as a class participant who can speak intelligently, raise pertinent questions, listen and respond thoughtfully to others, and raise new ideas all are

- key ingredients of becoming a life-long, liberal arts learner. Work on these skills in this course! Your grade from your group presentation on the Corinthians correspondence will be included in this component of your grade. Unexcused absences, non-participation in class and lack of preparation all will severely affect this component of your grade. I encourage you to speak with me individually if you want to talk about your performance in any of these areas.
- 2) Short 15 minute quizzes have been scheduled at regular junctures. These will be short answer/brief essay quizzes covering all of the material, both reading and class-oriented. I will provide study guides for each quiz, and encourage students to study together over dinner or other convenient times. **Quizzes account for 25% of your total grade.**
 - 3) The course mid-term will be a one-hour, twenty minute examination including both short answer and longer essay questions, and will account for **30% of your total grade.** On the midterm exam you will be responsible for everything we have studied up to that point of the semester.
 - 4) Each student will write a final 8-10 page paper, not requiring any extra class research, in which you will demonstrate your own critical grappling with Paul's letters, Boyarin's interpretation of Paul, Eisenbaum and Wright's responses to Boyarin, and all this in juxtaposition with our service learning component of Jewish/Christian text study. More details to come! Your final paper will account for **30% of your total grade.**
 - 5) I am working on a service-learning event for us that is still in the planning stages, but that I very much hope we can participate in together. This will be a dinner/text study with members of a local Jewish community (perhaps student Hillel). This will be an evening event, and I will get you the date as soon as I have it. It will be very near the end of the semester, so as to take advantage of all the learning we have accomplished about Paul and his writings. This is a required service-learning component of our course, and will heighten our awareness regarding the complexity of interpreting texts and the impact of one's religious background and identity on hermeneutics. If other commitments make it impossible for you to participate in this opportunity, you should drop the course now. Your learning from this interaction will form one part of your final paper for this course.

Schedule of Classes:

Week One:

Jan. 19 Introduction to Course; view selection: *From Jesus to Christ, Part II*

Jan. 21 Read: Thessalonians I and II

Before our next class make sure you carefully peruse the resources below:

Resource: Paul and his Letters, from online resource:

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/religion/first/missions.html>

Resource: Chronology of early Christianity:

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/religion/maps/cron.html>

(suggestion: print out this timeline and study it carefully – it may very well appear on your first quiz!)

Resource: The Spread of Early Christianity

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/religion/maps/christ.html>

Week Two:

Jan. 26: Read: Roetzel, “Introduction: Contrary Impressions” and Chapter One, “Paul and His World”

Jan. 28: re-read: I and II Thessalonians; go to the index of Roetzel’s book and read every selection on Thessalonians listed there.

Bring with you to class: an outline of each letter; your outline will be organized according to 1) the different types of material contained in the letter; and 2) the different themes/questions/concerns addressed in the letter. Should be no more than 1 page for each letter. Please type your outline; you will hand this in.

Study Sheet for Monday’s Quiz will be posted in Blackboard Documents

Week Three:

Feb. 2: In class: **Quiz #1 (including all material from first day of class through Jan. 28th’s assignment)**

Feb. 4: Read: from *The Educated Person’s Thumbnail Introduction to the Bible*

Chapter 5, “What it Really Really Says: The Meaning of a Text

Through Time,” and Chapter 7, “Authority and Bible Reading” (handout)

Week Four:

Feb. 9 Read: Roetzel, Chapter Two, “The Anatomy of the Letters”

In class: view: *Peter and Paul and the Christian Revolution*

Suggestion: Print out the timeline of Paul’s life and mission from the website for the film:

<http://www.pbs.org/empires/peterandpaul/history/timeline/index.html>

(Hint! Your next quiz may include questions based on this timeline)

Study Sheet for quiz will be posted or handed out

Feb. 11 Read: from *Educated Person’s Thumbnail Introduction*

Chapter 11, “What ‘Modern’ Biblical Studies Do” (handout)

Roetzel, Chapter Three, “Traditions Behind the Letters”

In class: **Quiz #2**

In groups: begin working on the Corinthians correspondence (three groups)

Every group should read the both Corinthians I and II in their entirety, and should be able to clarify just how your particular group’s material fits into the totality of this correspondence.

Group 1: 1 Cor. (Paul’s 2nd letter)

(assigned: “Paul as Organic Intellectual: Reshaping Jewish Apocalyptic Myth from the Margins,” from *Paul, a Jew on the Margins*, Calvin Roetzel; and “5: Love Rather Than Integrity,” *Paul Among Jews and Gentiles*, Krister Stendahl; on reserve in Reeve’s)

Also study: Roetzel on Corinthians (again, consult the index for selected passages); also: go online the websites for this course and find additional material

Group 2: 2 Cor. 10 – 13 (plus background material: 2 Cor. 2:3-4, 9, 7:8-12) (Paul's 3rd letter)

(assigned reading: "4: Weakness Rather than Sin," *Paul Among Jews and Gentiles*, Krister Stendahl, on reserve in Reeve's)

Also study: Roetzel on Corinthians (consult the index); also: go online the websites for this course and find additional material

Group 3: 2 Cor. 1:1-6:13; 7:2-9:15 (Paul's 4th letter)

(assigned: "Death and Resurrection: A Theology Forged at the Margins," from *Paul, a Jew on the Margins*, Calvin Roetzel; on reserve in Reeve's)

Also study: Roetzel on Corinthians (consult the index) and find online applicable material in our course websites

Additional resources you may wish to consult:

Ed. James D.G. Dunn, *The Cambridge Companion to St. Paul*, Cambridge University Press, 2003

Borg, Marcus J., *The first Paul : reclaiming the radical visionary behind the Church's conservative icon*, HarperOne, 2009

Ehrman, Bart D., *Peter, Paul and Mary Magdalene: the followers of Jesus in History and Legend*, Oxford University Press, 2006

Amy-Jill Levine, Marianne Blickenstaff, *A feminist companion to Paul*, T&T

International, 2004 [this last one I have ordered and hope it arrives at our library in time for us to use it for this project]

Week Five:

Feb. 16 Group Presentations (see guidelines in Blackboard documents)

Feb 18 Group Presentations and class discussion of the Corinthian correspondence

Week Six:

Feb. 23 Read: "The Birth of Christianity and the Origins of Christian Anti-Judaism," *Jesus, Judaism and Christian Anti-Judaism*

Also read: Galatians

Feb. 25 Read: "Jesus, Ancient Judaism, and Modern Christianity: The Quest Continues," E.P. Sanders, *Jesus, Judaism and Christian Anti-Judaism*

Also read "Paul, the Apostle of Judaism," John Gager, *Jesus, Judaism and Christian Anti-Judaism*

Also read: Roetzel on Galatians

In class: continue study of Galatians

Study Sheet for exam will be posted

Week Seven:

Mar. 2 Read: Roetzel, Chapter Five, "Paul and His Myths"

In class: finish Galatians, prepare for mid-term

Mar. 4 **mid-term exam**

Week Eight: spring break: Mar 6 – Mar 15

Week Nine: Christian anti-Judaism: Chrysostom and more

Mar. 16 Read: material on anti-semitism

“Anti-semitism,” *Oxford Companion to the Bible* [available through the Oxford Reference online; accessible through Reeve’s library homepage]

Also read: “Against the Jews: Homily 1” by John Chrysostom [you can find this in “The Medieval Sourcebook,” located on the following website: http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/chrysostom-jews6.html#HOMILY_I]

Mar. 18 Read: “On the Road to a New Encounter between Judaism and Christianity: A Personal Journey” in *For the Sake of Heaven and Earth: The New Encounter between Judaism and Christianity*, Irving Greenberg (handout)

Week Ten: Romans

Mar. 23 Read Romans. Come to class with a two-page outline of the text, in which you identify the lynchpins of the themes and arguments developed by Paul

Mar. 25 Read: Roetzel on Romans

Also review: “Jesus, Ancient Judaism, and Modern Christianity: The Quest Continues,” *Jesus, Judaism and Christian Anti-Judaism*

Week Eleven:

Mar. 30 Christian Anti-Judaism: selection from Luther, *On the Jews and their Lies*
On reserve in Reeve’s in *Luther’s Basic Theological Writings*

Study Sheet posted for quiz

Apr 1 Re-read Romans

Also read Roetzel, Chapter Seven, “Currents and Crosscurrents”

In class: **Quiz # 3**

Week Twelve: Paul and the Politics of Identity

Apr 6 Read: Boyarin, Introduction

Apr 8 Read: Boyarin, Chapter 1, pp 23-38

Week Thirteen:

Apr 13 Read: Boyarin, Chapter 2

Write one sentence on each of the “Five current views on Paul” that summarizes the main elements pertinent to each. Be prepared to hand this in during class.

Study Sheet posted

Apr 15 Read: Boyarin, Chapter 6; review Galatians

In class: **Quiz #4**

Week Fourteen:

Apr 20 Read: Boyarin, Chapter 7; Romans 5-8; 1 Cor. 6; Gal 5-6

Apr 22 Read: Boyarin, Chapter 9; Romans 11;

Week Fifteen:

Apr 27 Read: N.T. Wright's Review of Boyarin's book

Apr 29 Eisenbaum's review of Boyarin's book

Take home final handout

Final course musings and evaluation

Final Paper due on May 6, by 4 pm, in the professor's office