

Paul and Early Christianity

Religion 116

Classroom: 105 Comenius Hall

Class times: TTh 1:10-2:20

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Professor: Jason Radine

Office: 108 Comenius Hall, ext. 1314

Office Hours: M-Th 2:30-3:30pm
and by appointment.

Course Content

This course will provide an introduction to all of the non-Gospel material in the New Testament, as well as apocryphal traditions about the early apostles. The first half of the course will be on Paul, his epistles, and legends about him, and the second half will be on the letters and traditions regarding Peter, Jude, James, and John. The course will include significant amounts of non-canonical texts about these and other figures of early Christianity.

Approach

The approach will be literary and historical, not religious, as the epistles and other biblical texts will be studied like any other work of ancient literature. This course will employ the scholarly, academic approach of biblical criticism, without privileging any particular religious view. “Biblical criticism” does not refer to negatively criticizing the Bible, but instead to the careful analysis of biblical texts using the most current methods from a variety of disciplines. This approach, used in biblical criticism in colleges and universities around the world, attempts to be as neutral as possible, and to let the biblical texts speak for themselves, even if it runs counter to later religious traditions. While you are not required to agree with the presentations of the texts in this class, you are required to understand them and be able to demonstrate that understanding in exams.

Required Books

- 1) The New Revised Standard Version translation of the Bible, with Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books (Oxford University Press).
- 2) *The Letters of Paul: Conversations in Context*, by Calvin J. Roetzel (5th ed), Westminster/John Knox, 2009.
- 3) *The Theology of the Letters of James, Peter, and Jude*, by Andrew Chester and Ralph P. Martin, Cambridge University Press.
- 4) *Lost Scriptures: Books that Did Not Make It into the New Testament*, by Bart D. Ehrman

Grading and Class Policies

- 1) Four exams, a mix of essay and short answer.
- 2) Generally bi-weekly take-home essays (typed, 12pt font, double spaced, 1-2 pages), assigned on Thursdays and due on Tuesdays. The essays will be based on questions drawn from the textbook that I will give out. Grading will be based on an average of the exams altogether, averaged with the essays, which will count altogether as the value of two exams. Plagiarized papers will receive F grades, and will result in a one-letter grade reduction for your course grade overall at least, and a failing grade in the class at most. Students who wish to request accommodations in this class for a disability should contact Elaine Mara, Assistant Director of Learning Services for Disability Support at 1307 Main Street, or by calling 610-861-1510). Accommodations cannot be provided until authorization is received from the Academic Support Center.
- 3) Active, in-class participation is important. Cell phones must be silenced in class and texting in class is not allowed.
- 4) Attendance. After two unexcused absences, each further unexcused absence will reduce your overall course grade by one third of a letter. Two times late unexcused counts as one unexcused absence.

Lecture and Readings Schedule

Introduction	August 28 th
Background and the Life of Paul	
Cultural Context <i>Readings:</i> Roetzel ch. 1	August 30 th
Luke's Account of Early Christianity before Paul <i>Readings:</i> Acts 1-10	September 4 th
Luke's Account of the Life of Paul <i>Readings:</i> Acts 11-28	September 6 th
Luke's Account of the Life of Paul (continued) <i>Readings:</i> Acts 11-28	September 11 th
The Authentic Pauline Epistles	
Paul's Oldest Surviving Letter <i>Readings:</i> I Thessalonians, Roetzel 85-90	September 13 th

The Corinthian Letters <i>Readings:</i> I Corinthians, Roetzel 90-105	September 18 th
The Corinthian Letters, Continued <i>Readings:</i> II Corinthians, Roetzel 90-105	September 20 th
Paul versus James <i>Readings:</i> Galatians, Roetzel 105-110	September 25 th
Paul and his vision of the future <i>Readings:</i> Romans, Roetzel 110-122	September 27 th
Paul and the church at Philippi <i>Readings:</i> Philippians, Roetzel 122-125	October 2 nd
Paul and Slavery <i>Readings:</i> Philemon, Roetzel 125-126	October 4 th
First exam	
The Deutero-Pauline Epistles	
Colossians <i>Readings:</i> Colossians, Roetzel 141-148	October 11 th
Ephesians <i>Readings:</i> Ephesians, Roetzel 148-155	October 16 th
II Thessalonians <i>Readings:</i> II Thessalonians, Roetzel 155-159	October 18 th
The Pastoral Epistles <i>Readings:</i> I and II Timothy, Titus, Roetzel 159-166	October 23 rd
The Heavenly Priest <i>Readings:</i> Hebrews	October 25 th
Second Exam	
Apocryphal Paul	
Paul and Thecla <i>Readings:</i> Ehrman 109-121	October 30 th
Apocryphal Epistles <i>Readings:</i> Ehrman 155-166	November 1 st

Non-Pauline Canonical Epistles

On the Importance of Works <i>Readings:</i> James, Chester 1-62	November 6 th	
Jude, brother of Jesus <i>Readings:</i> Jude, Martin 63-86	November 8 th	
The Johannine Letters <i>Readings:</i> The Letters of John	November 13 th	
The Petrine Letters <i>Readings:</i> I Peter, Martin 87-133	November 15 th	
No class on November 20 th due to Society of Biblical Literature Conference		
The Petrine Letters, continued <i>Readings:</i> II Peter, Martin 134-163	November 27 th	
Third exam		
Apocryphal Acts		
John and Drusiana <i>Readings:</i> Ehrman 93-108	November 29 th	
Acts of Peter <i>Readings:</i> Ehrman 135-154	December 4 th	
Apocalypses (time permitting)		
Revelation of John of Patmos <i>Readings:</i> Revelation	December 6 th	
Final Exam	8:30am!	December 11 th