

# ***Paul and Early Christianity***

**Religion 116**

**Classroom:** 111 Comenius Hall

**Class times:** TTh 10:20-11:30

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**Professor:** Jason Radine

**Office:** 108 Comenius Hall, ext. 1314

**Office Hours:** TTh 4-5pm

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 (5<sup>th</sup> 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	January 14 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Background and the Life of Paul</b>	
Cultural Context <i>Readings:</i> Roetzel ch. 1	January 16 <sup>th</sup>
Luke's Account of Early Christianity before Paul <i>Readings:</i> Acts 1-10	January 21 <sup>st</sup> -23 <sup>rd</sup>
Luke's Account of the Life of Paul <i>Readings:</i> Acts 11-28	January 28 <sup>th</sup>
Luke's Account of the Life of Paul (continued) <i>Readings:</i> Acts 11-28	January 30 <sup>th</sup>
<b>The Authentic Pauline Epistles</b>	
Paul's Oldest Surviving Letter <i>Readings:</i> I Thessalonians, Roetzel 85-90	February 4 <sup>th</sup>

The Corinthian Letters <i>Readings: I Corinthians, Roetzel 90-105</i>	February 6 <sup>th</sup> -11 <sup>th</sup>
The Corinthian Letters, Continued <i>Readings: II Corinthians, Roetzel 90-105</i>	February 13 <sup>th</sup>
Paul versus James <i>Readings: Galatians, Roetzel 105-110</i>	February 18 <sup>th</sup>
Paul and his vision of the future <i>Readings: Romans, Roetzel 110-122</i>	February 20 <sup>th</sup>
Paul and the church at Philippi <i>Readings: Philippians, Roetzel 122-125</i>	February 25 <sup>th</sup>
Paul and Slavery <i>Readings: Philemon, Roetzel 125-126</i>	February 27 <sup>th</sup>
First exam	
<b>The Deutero-Pauline Epistles</b>	
Colossians <i>Readings: Colossians, Roetzel 141-148</i>	March 11 <sup>th</sup>
Ephesians <i>Readings: Ephesians, Roetzel 148-155</i>	March 13 <sup>th</sup>
II Thessalonians <i>Readings: II Thessalonians, Roetzel 155-159</i>	March 18 <sup>th</sup>
The Pastoral Epistles <i>Readings: I and II Timothy, Titus, Roetzel 159-166</i>	March 20 <sup>th</sup>
The Heavenly Priest <i>Readings: Hebrews</i>	March 25 <sup>th</sup>
Second Exam	
<b>Apocryphal Paul</b>	
Paul and Thecla <i>Readings: Ehrman 109-121</i>	March 27 <sup>th</sup>
Apocryphal Epistles <i>Readings: Ehrman 155-166</i>	April 1 <sup>st</sup>

## **Non-Pauline Canonical Epistles**

On the Importance of Works <i>Readings: James, Chester 1-62</i>	April 3 <sup>rd</sup>	
Jude, brother of Jesus <i>Readings: Jude, Martin 63-86</i>	April 8 <sup>th</sup>	
The Johannine Letters <i>Readings: The Letters of John</i>	April 10 <sup>th</sup>	
The Petrine Letters <i>Readings: I Peter, Martin 87-133</i>	April 15 <sup>th</sup>	
The Petrine Letters, continued <i>Readings: II Peter, Martin 134-163</i>	April 17 <sup>th</sup>	
Third exam		
<b>Apocryphal Acts</b>		
John and Drusiana <i>Readings: Ehrman 93-108</i>	April 22 <sup>nd</sup>	
Acts of Peter, Acts of Paul <i>Readings: Ehrman 135-154</i>	April 24 <sup>th</sup>	
Final Exam	8:30am!	May 2 <sup>nd</sup>