

Paul and Early Christianity

Religion 116**Classroom:** 213 Comenius Hall**Class times:** Tues/Thurs 1:10-2:20**E-Mail:** radine@moravian.edu**Professor:** Jason Radine**Office:** 108 Comenius Hall, ext. 1314**Office Hours:** Fridays 1:00-3:00pm
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 Laurie Roth, Director of Academic and Disability Support at the Academic Support Center on the first floor of Monocacy Hall, or by calling 610-861-1401). 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	September 1 st
Background and the Life of Paul	
Cultural Context <i>Readings:</i> Roetzel ch. 1	September 3 rd
Luke's Account of Early Christianity before Paul <i>Readings:</i> Acts 1-10	September 8 th
Luke's Account of the Life of Paul <i>Readings:</i> Acts 11-28	September 10 th
Luke's Account of the Life of Paul (continued) <i>Readings:</i> Acts 11-28	September 17 th
The Authentic Pauline Epistles	
Paul's Oldest Surviving Letter <i>Readings:</i> I Thessalonians, Roetzel 85-90	September 22 nd

The Corinthian Letters <i>Readings: I Corinthians, Roetzel 90-105</i>	September 24 th
The Corinthian Letters, Continued <i>Readings: II Corinthians, Roetzel 90-105</i>	September 29 th
Paul versus James <i>Readings: Galatians, Roetzel 105-110</i>	October 1 st
Paul and his vision of the future <i>Readings: Romans, Roetzel 110-122</i>	October 6 th
Paul and the church at Philippi <i>Readings: Philippians, Roetzel 122-125</i>	October 8 th
Paul and Slavery <i>Readings: Philemon, Roetzel 125-126</i>	October 15 th
First exam	
The Deutero-Pauline Epistles	
Colossians <i>Readings: Colossians, Roetzel 141-148</i>	October 20 th
Ephesians <i>Readings: Ephesians, Roetzel 148-155</i>	October 22 nd
II Thessalonians <i>Readings: II Thessalonians, Roetzel 155-159</i>	October 27 th
The Pastoral Epistles <i>Readings: I and II Timothy, Titus, Roetzel 159-166</i>	October 29 th
The Heavenly Priest <i>Readings: Hebrews</i>	November 3 rd
Second Exam	
Apocryphal Paul	
Paul and Thecla <i>Readings: Ehrman 109-121</i>	November 5 th
Apocryphal Epistles <i>Readings: Ehrman 155-166</i>	November 10 th

Non-Pauline Canonical Epistles

On the Importance of Works <i>Readings:</i> James, Chester 1-62	November 12 th
Jude, brother of Jesus <i>Readings:</i> Jude, Martin 63-86	November 17 th
The Johannine Letters <i>Readings:</i> The Letters of John	November 19 th
Third exam	
The Petrine Letters <i>Readings:</i> I Peter, Martin 87-133	December 1 st
The Petrine Letters, continued <i>Readings:</i> II Peter, Martin 134-163	December 3 rd

Apocryphal Acts

John and Drusiana <i>Readings:</i> Ehrman 93-108	December 8 th	
Acts of Peter <i>Readings:</i> Ehrman 135-154	December 10 th	
Final Exam	8:30am!	Friday, December 18 th