

Christian Commitment and Excellence in Learning

NT 745
Perspectives on Paul
Spring Term, 2009
Thursdays, 6-9 P.M.
Due West Campus
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Course Description: This course introduces students to critical issues related to the person, ministry, theology and writings of the Apostle Paul. Theological and sociological reconstructions of Paul, both past and present, are examined, with particular attention given to contemporary research and exegesis. *Prerequisite:* In order to receive exegesis credit for this course, students must have successfully completed BI 502 Principles of Exegesis and BI 503 Introduction to Biblical Languages (or Greek I&II) prior to taking this class. *Exegesis/Elective. Three hours credit.*

- I. Course Objectives:** The mission statement of Erskine Seminary indicates that its purpose is to educate its students “for service in the Christian Church”, in particular, the study of the Bible “in its own literary, historical and theological settings”, so that the student may “interpret it with relevance and meaning applicable for today.” This New Testament course is designed to introduce the student to the primary figures and points of discussion revolving around recent methodological innovations and historical reconstructions within Pauline scholarship. Topics of critical investigation are the relationship between Jesus and Paul; the role of traditional material in forming the Pauline ethic; feminist reconstructions and Paul; Paul’s relationship to Jewish tradition and soteriology and the “New Perspective” on Paul.
- II. Required Textbooks: (Note: Required textbooks are available from the Erskine Theological Seminary Bookstore at <http://www.ecampus.com/erskine>.)**

The following books are primary reading materials and represent only a portion of the reading which will be required as preparation for the various segments of the course. Although the topics in this course will be broad in scope, the required texts are weighted towards the current debate regarding Paul’s relationship to Judaism and his understanding of justification (the “New Perspective”). A

detailed listing of assigned readings (articles, book sections, relevant ancient texts, etc.) will be given in a detailed course outline (handout).

Dunn, James D.G. *Paul and the Mosaic Law*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001. ISBN # 0-8028-4499-5.

Sanders, E.P. *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1977. ISBN # 0-8006-1899-8.

Schweizer, Albert. *The Quest for the Historical Jesus*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998. ISBN # 0-8018-5934-4.

VanLandingham, Chris. *Judgment and Justification in Early Judaism and the Apostle Paul*. Peabody: Hendrickson, 2006. ISBN # 978-1-56563-398-8.

Wright, N.T. *The Climax of the Covenant*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993. ISBN # 0-8006-2827-6.

In addition, there will be small reading assignments and/or handouts throughout the course to help the student organize and understand the relatively large and diverse amount of material to be learned.

III. Course Requirements: Students are expected to attend every class meeting. If a student must be absent due to an emergency or illness for all or part of a session, the student is responsible for all work done and due for that session. *Under normal circumstances, only one session may be missed.* Students are expected to be adequately prepared for each class session. Adequate preparation includes the assigned readings found in the syllabus and a readiness to introduce thoughtful and critical questions for discussion. Each student will prepare an 18-20 page exegetical research paper for presentation and defense in the class. This presentation will include guiding the discussion that follows the paper's presentation. Copies of the paper will be submitted to the professor and each of the students no later than the class period the week before the presentation. Because these papers are the basis for the day's discussion it is essential that all work is submitted on time. The revised final draft of this paper will reflect the benefits of the class interaction. The final version of the paper will be submitted in hard copy to the professor. Guide sheets will be provided for the preparation and presentation of seminar papers. Secondly, there will be two book reviews of approximately 4 pages each, taken from the required reading list. A guide sheet will be given for the formatting of these reviews. Finally, there will be one test administered, which will cover the introductory background material of the course.

IV. Evaluation: The Seminary grade scale (*Catalog*, p. 42 f.) will be used in determining a letter grade. The student's final grade will be calculated as follows:

- 40%: Exegetical Research Paper
- 20% Book Review
- 20% Book Review
- 20% Backgrounds Test

V. **Class Meeting Dates:** This course will meet on Thursday afternoons, from 6-9:00 P.M., in Due West. Class room TBA.

VI. **Seminary Policies:** Once you have completed, signed, and submitted your registration to the Registrar for this class, it is a binding contract. The student is encouraged to read the Erskine Seminary 2009-2010 *Catalog* for important information regarding drop/add procedures and deadlines (p. 4, 47), class withdrawal (p. 37), as well as the correct manner of dealing with the grade status of “incomplete” (p.44). Please consult the Student Handbook for policies re. writing style and ethics, e.g., inclusive language and plagiarism, as well as the Seminary Catalogue, p. 40f. A brief summary of these policies is as follows:

A grade of “**incomplete**” is not a privilege if the student. It is the prerogative of the professor. It can be given as a final grade only when (1) the student has completed most of the assigned coursework and (2) when the student has been providentially hindered from completing the rest. The student and professor must complete the appropriate form before an “incomplete” can be given. The final date that an “incomplete” can be changed to a grade for the Spring semester is August 1, 2009. After this date, the grade of “incomplete” will automatically become an “F”, and cannot be altered. Note that there is a fee associated with “incompletes”.

Drop/Add/Withdrawal Once a student has completed, signed, and submitted his/her registration to the Registrar for this class, it is a binding contract and billing will be based on this registration. If the student decides not to take this class, he/she must complete a “drop/add” form and secure the appropriate signatures prior to the drop/add deadline during the second week of the semester or term. If one wishes to withdraw from the course after the drop/add deadline, one must complete a withdrawal form, and tuition will be refunded on a pro rated basis. Failure to withdraw from the class properly will result in the student’s receiving a grade of “F” for the course and full tuition charges will apply. No exceptions will be made to this policy.

Language about God and Humanity Although God transcends the distinction between male and female, the Bible and the Church’s historic creeds and confessions use masculine language in reference to God. Thus, the Seminary encourages all students to retain this masculine usage when speaking and writing about God. Furthermore, the Seminary recognizes that all human beings, male and female, are created equally in the image of God (Gen. 1:26-27), and believers of both sexes are fellow heirs of the grace of life (1 Pet. 3:7). Accordingly, whenever students are speaking and writing about males and females, they should use language that clearly includes both men and women (for example, by saying/writing “humanity” rather than “man” or “people” rather than “men”).

Conduct in Theological Discussions Erskine Seminary is committed to the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church, and it expects its students to show respect for all who identify with that one Church. In all written work, oral presentations, and discussions both inside and outside the classroom, the Seminary expects students to conduct discussions of controversial issues in a context of respect for those with whom one disagrees. Please see the Community Life Statement in the *Catalog* for more information.

Papers submitted in this class should be submitted in typed, double-spaced format, and written according to Erskine Seminary's "Style and Form Standards for All Master's Level Programs". The student must be especially careful regarding citation of sources in all Seminary course work, including both footnotes and a full bibliography. Failing to cite a reference, or claiming other's material as one's own constitutes a type of fraud known as **plagiarism**. A charge of plagiarism is serious, and can result in the student's expulsion from the Seminary.

Course Outline

Weeks 1-4, February 5, 12, 19 and 26:

Introduction/Lectures: The Backdrop of Pauline Studies: Expressions of Judaism, Jesus and Paul and Early Reconstructions. Models, Methods and Heuristic Devices. Radical Approaches and Hermeneutics.

A complete and detailed list of weekly readings will be handed out on February 5, as well as guide sheets for the presentation and evaluation of student papers as well as the book review format.

Weeks 5-8, March 5, 12, 19 and 26: Pauline Reconstructions; Covenantal Continuity and the Church; Sexual Ethics and Paul; Paul, Freedom and Human Relationships; Paul, the Law and Justification;

Student papers.

Weeks 9-13, April 2, 16, 23, 30 and May 7: Paul and His Theology: Assessment and Discussion

Note that there will be *no class on April 9*, due to the Holy Week break, April 4-12. Student papers.