

REL 323: Paul & His Letters

California Lutheran University
Mon & Wed 2:45-4:35 pm
HUM 109

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Office Hours:
Tue & Thu 4-5 pm
by appointment
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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

The 13 letters attributed to the apostle Paul dominate the New Testament. Their influence across Western history extends far beyond what Paul could ever have imagined. This course introduces students to Paul's social world and theology through discussion and analysis of his writings. Students learn a basic historical approach to the study of Paul's letters and explore creative ways of analyzing primary and secondary texts. Students will have the opportunity to choose and pursue a topic of their own interest in an on-going project that relates service learning in our world, to particular topics of interest to Paul.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

Critical Thinking:

- Students will be able to read, interpret, and think critically about the Pauline letters by working with the primary historical sources.
- Students will demonstrate critical thinking in 5 exegetical outlines and final project.
- Students will understand some basic ways that translation from the original Greek to the English impacts the theology and meaning of Paul's letters.

Cultural Competency and Diversity:

- Student will understand and reconstruct the local situation of Paul's letters in the larger first century Mediterranean Social World through lectures, videos, slide shows, primary and secondary readings, and research.
- Students will see and experience the possible range of interpretation of Paul's letters through listening to their classmates, reading articles, and compiling research on the history of interpretation.
- Students will further become aware of language use and grammar by following the Inclusive Language Policy (see final page of syllabus) in written and oral communication.

Field Specific Knowledge and Experience:

- Students will understand and use the historical-critical and literary methods of biblical interpretation in the classroom and in their own research projects.
- Students will learn to use proper biblical citation following the *SBL Handbook of Style*.

Communication Skills:

- Students will shape their own learning process by constructing and completing a final project that utilizes both written and oral communications skills.
- Students will express themselves orally and develop listening skills in discussion with classmates in class.

NB: All students are responsible for knowing and following the University policies on Academic Honesty, Dishonesty and Plagiarism found in the *Student Handbook*, pp. 29-30.



COURSE REQUIREMENTS

This course fulfills one upper level Core requirement in Religion.

Class participation refers to each student's contribution to our learning community.

Class participation includes 1) consistent attendance, 2) consistent preparation of the assigned readings, 3) consistent contributions to other students' learning through constructive conversation, asking questions, volunteering responses, sharing ideas, and active listening.

Exegetical Outlines are a one page, single spaced analysis of a Pauline letter, or a passage from a letter.

Concept Maps are a single page visual presentation of concepts using the *Inspiration 8* software available in the CLU Library Computer Lab, OR in free hand using shapes, space, and directional arrows.

* Students must complete 2 outlines and 2 maps, and then may choose which analytical tool they prefer to use for the final 2 assignments (6 total).

Inclusive Language shows respect for one's classmates and colleagues and demonstrates a nuanced understanding of the ways in which language shapes thought and action. Participants in this class are required to use inclusive language in all written course work, and encouraged to use inclusive language in class discussions and group work. (See statement at end of syllabus).

The Service and Learning Project is an opportunity for each student to research and study a theme or topic from Paul's letters in relation to a place of service in Ventura County or LA county. Students will 1) identify a subject of interest related to Paul and his letters, 2) propose a local place of service which they will relate to this topic (Community Service Center), 3) develop a bibliography of articles, books, and interviews for study, 4) and communicate their learning from research and service to the class (*via* paper, presentation, portfolio, collection of poetry, visual art form, play, teach-in, opera, video, etc.).

EVALUATION

Active Class Participation	20%
6 Exegetical Outlines/Maps (drop lowest score)	50%
Service & Learning Project	30%

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS

The Harper Collins Study Bible. With the Apocryphal/ Deuterocanonical Books. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1993. (*HCSB*)

Wayne A. Meeks. *First Urban Christians*
 Charles B. Cousar. *The Letters of Paul*.

COURSE OUTLINE

Introduction

- Jan 23 Wed: Introduction to the course
 [Read: Clarence Jordan's "Paul's Letter to the Christians in Columbus"]
- Jan 28 Mon: History of Mediterranean World
 Read: Meeks "Chapter 1" (about 40 pages)
- Jan 30 Wed: Paul: Diaspora Jew, apostle of Christ, Peripatetic, Writer of letters
 Read: Meeks "Intro" (abt 8 pages)

Pauline Letters

- Feb 4 Mon: Reading a Letter
 Writing an Exegetical Outline
 Read: Cousar "Foreword," "Intro," and "Chapter 1" (abt 15 pp)
 Read: I Thessalonians (*HCSB*)
- Feb 6 Wed: **Exegetical Outline due on I Thessalonians**
 Read: I Thessalonians (again)
- Feb 11 Mon: Read: Romans (*HCSB*)
 Read: Meeks "chapter 2" (abt 23 pp)
- Feb 13 Wed: **Exegetical Outline due on Romans**
 Read: Romans (again)
- Feb 18 Mon: Read: Romans (again)
 Read: Cousar "chapter 2" and "chapter 3" (abt 28 pp)
- Feb 20 Wed: Read: Romans (again)
 Service Learning workshop in class
- Feb 25 Mon: **Proposal for Research and Service Learning Topic DUE** (2 pp)
 Service Learning Pre-form
- Feb 27 Wed: **Exegetical Outline due on I Corinthians**
 Read: I Corinthians (*HCSB*)
- Mar 3 Mon: Read: I Corinthians (again)
 Read: Meeks "chapter 3" (abt 35 pp)
- Mar 5 Wed: Read: I Corinthians (again)
 Read: Cotter (article: ERes)
- Mar 10 Mon: SERVICE LEARNING PROJECTS
 Conferences with professor Fogg
- Mar 12 Wed: SERVICE LEARNING PROJECTS
 Conferences with professor Fogg
- Mar 15-24th SPRING BREAK**

Mar 26 Wed: **Exegetical Outline due on Philemon**

Read: Philemon (*HCSB*)

Read: Callahan's article (ERes)

Mar 31 Mon: **Exegetical Outline due on Philippians**

Read: Philippians(*HCSB*)

Apr 2 Wed: Read: Philippians (again)

Read: Stower's article (ERes)

Read: Perkins' article (ERes)

Apr 7 Mon: **Mid-Service Evaluation & Conferences**

Concept Map(s) for Project Due

Apr 9 Wed: **Mid-Service Evaluation & Conferences**

Apr 14 Mon: **Exegetical Outline due on Ephesians**

Read: Ephesians (*HCSB*)

Read: Cousar "chapter 4" (abt 12 pp)

Apr 16 Wed: Read: Ephesians (again)

Read: Cousar "chapter 6" (abt 13 pp)

Apr 21 Mon: **Exegetical Outline due on Galatians**

Read: Galatians (*HCSB*)

Read: Meeks "chapter 6" (abt 30 pp)

Apr 23 Wed: Read: Galatians (again)

Read: Cousar "7" (abt 10 pp)

Apr 28 Mon: Read: Cousar "chapter 8" and "chapter 9"

Apr 30 Wed: Read: Cousar "chapter 10"

May 5 Mon: Project Presentations

May 7 Wed: Project Presentations

ALL PROJECTS DUE by May 7th

Topics and Themes for research and service from Pauline letters

revelation	collecting money for the poor	community unity
sin	sexuality (abstinence/marriage)	social intervention
salvation	care for the body	friendship
suffering	hospitality	citizenship
worshipping idols	slave and free	humility
what you eat	enslaved	excommunication
how to dress while praying	following the law	working with hands
role of women	grace, gift	prayer

Inclusive Language

Inclusive language is language which assumes that women and men are fully equivalent participants in humanity. In other words, inclusive language is not biased in such a way that it perpetuates the tacit assumption that men are the standard form of human being. One strategy of the civil rights struggle included a repudiation of language which implied that whiteness was the paradigm of humanity or virtue (e.g., "that's mighty 'white' of you."). It became apparent that language was infected with racist stereotypes and assumptions. **Language is not a neutral or innocuous system of signs but can be a bearer of corrupt and degrading ideas. A recognition of the full humanity of all peoples should prompt an attempt to speak and think in ways which include all human beings and degrade none.**

Language which refers to all human beings need not reflect the assumption that all people are men. The identification of a general class (human) with a subset of it (men) naturally works in favor of the subset and to the detriment of the rest. (Think how certain advertisers would like for all soft drinks to be called "cokes" or all brands of tissue to be called "Kleenex"). Words like people, the world, us, human being, humanity, etc. can replace man, mankind, men. Likewise, the pronoun "he" can usually be replaced by the plural (human beings/they, rather than man/he). Another alternative is to alternate masculine and feminine pronouns (the scientist/she). We invite the students taking classes with us to participate in our experiments with inclusive language.

Quoted from the Department of Religion at Emory University "Statement on Inclusive Language"

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<http://www.emory.edu/COLLEGE/RELIGION/about/statement.html>

Exegetical Outline

FORM of Exegetical Outline:

One page, single spaced, Times New Roman 12 point font. 1 inch left and right margins, 1.5 inch top and bottom margin.

Student's name, course number, date

Name of letter:

Author:

Date:

Place:

Paul's tone as he writes:

Focus of Paul's thanksgiving (is the thesis of the letter):

Themes (identify 2-4 themes across the letter):

In 5-7 lines, give a brief outline of the letter: