SC-617: The Pauline Letters
SPRING 2018 SYLLABUS

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Meeting Dates and Times: Thursdays 4:00pm-6:45pm
Contact Information: ssmith@hartsem.edu
Office Hours: By appointment

Email Policy: The instructor will use the official Hartsem student email addresses for all communications. Please check your Hartsem email account regularly.

I. Course Description

The Apostle Paul. Legendary? Father of Christianity? A “man’s man?” A misogynist? Anti-Jewish? Who is he? What texts has he written, and why? For whom? Would Paul roll over in his grave if he knew that his texts are not only considered sacred, but also viewed as readily transferrable to contemporary times? That they are used as “proof texts” to justify the construction of social values and “norms”? To affirm or reject homosexuality, the creation of the “other,” views on marriage and divorce, and the ordination of women or women’s “place” in the world,” to name a few? These are just some of the questions we will tackle in this course employing critical methodologies such as historical, literary, rhetorical, and postcolonial criticisms, gender studies (including feminist theory, womanist biblical hermeneutics, and masculinity studies), and our own brains! Don’t be scared. Join me. I double dare you!!

II. Course Objectives

- To examine the Pauline letters in their ancient contexts, and engage in literary and rhetorical inquiry, considering questions such as how, why, and for whom these texts were written.
- To discuss major methodological approaches to Pauline interpretation.
- To analyze the political, theological, and ethical implications for contemporary society due to various interpretations of Pauline literature.
- To develop skills of critical analysis by reading Pauline texts closely, engaging secondary literature, constructively contributing to discussions, and crafting scholarly writing assignments.

III. Identified Seminary Learning Outcomes:

- To demonstrate foundational and critical knowledge of one’s own religion.
- To demonstrate knowledge and skills for dialogical and constructive engagement with diversity.
IV. Required Texts


4. The *New Revised Standard Version* of the Bible. Students will bring a *print* Bible to each class – no smartphone/electronic Bibles.

V. Course Requirements and Assessments

A. Presence, Participation, and Preparation (15% of Final Grade)

Regular attendance at all class sessions and active participation in discussions are expected. If you are unable to attend a class session, please notify the professor in advance or at the earliest opportunity. Please plan to arrive promptly to class, and stay for its duration. *It is also important that students return promptly after class breaks.*

B. Research Paper (40% of Final Grade) Due: Thursday, March 15, 2018.

Students will write a research paper on a biblical passage related to this course employing one of the methodological approaches discussed in class. Students will introduce (summarize) the approach, then apply it to produce an original reading of a Pauline biblical passage, taking into consideration the text’s historical, cultural, social, and immediate and broader literary context. Your engagement with the text will also include any implications of your interpretation (who might benefit or suffer from it?).

Quality papers will show evidence of being thoroughly researched. In addition to some of the readings from the course, the paper must also incorporate at least five works that were not assigned. Footnotes and a properly formatted bibliography shall be included.

*Preliminary info due Thursday, March 1, 2018. (Send to ssmith@hartsem.edu by 4pm.)*

This includes selected text(s), methodological approach being used, preliminary thesis, and five works to be used (books and/or articles that are not on the syllabus). (Preliminary info makes up 5% of research paper grade.)

*Professor reserves the right to require a re-write if needed.*

Paper specifications:

- Times New Roman, 12-point font, double-spaced, no justified margins, 1-inch margins
- **Masters students:** 8-10pp; **D.Min./Ph.D. students:** 15-17pp

*Note: I will not read beyond the maximum page limit.*
C. Presentation (25% of final grade)

Masters/Certificate Students will give a 10-minute presentation that analyzes the ways in which some element of Paul, Pauline literature, and/or its reception is represented, alluded to, or otherwise “recycled” in a contemporary cultural artifact (e.g. a sermon, a song, a TV show, a [political] speech, or a visual work of art). Your presentation must not overlap significantly with your other writings. Take heed to the time limit; rehearse beforehand. Be creative with your presentation, and have fun! Presentation ideas must be approved by the professor in advance.

PhD/DMin Students will write a 750-1000-word book review on a scholarly examination of (a text of) Pauline literature. They will then give a 7-10 minute presentation that will include an examination of the text’s title (Is it accurate? Does it match the content?); an overview of the text’s main argument(s) and how the author arrived there; and her or his own overall assessment of the work. Two questions to facilitate dialogue should also be included. Books must be approved by the professor in advance.

Sign-up sheet to be distributed.

D. Final Reflection Paper and Presentation (20% of Final Grade)  Due: April 26, 2018

In this reflection, which will be read on the last day of class, students will write a “Dear Paul” letter. In consideration with the Pauline texts and methodological approaches discussed in class, students will critically reflect on the impact and implications of the aforementioned on today’s society. How are they used? Against or for whom? For what agenda? To what end? Who benefits? Who suffers? Why does it matter? What change would you like to see? What do you propose? Is Paul turning over in his grave, or is he in a perpetual state of fist pumping? What must you say to Paul?

Students must show evidence that they actually took this course! In other words, include scriptural citations, aspects of secondary scholarship, etc. Nevertheless, I want to hear your voice! This is NOT a research paper!

Essay specifications:
- Length: Four pages (minimum 1200 words) once word limit is reached, I will stop reading.
- Double-spaced, 12 pt. font, Times New Roman, no justified margins, 1-inch margins

Students will bring TWO hardcopies to class, & email a copy to ssmith@hartsem.edu by 4pm.

VI. Learning Resources and Expectations

Hartford Seminary Grading Scale

Master’s Students:
A (95-100) Demonstrates excellent mastery of the subject matter, a superior ability to articulate this, and provides helpful connections to daily life or contemporary issues. Exceeds expectations of the course.
A- (90-94) Demonstrates mastery of the subject matter, ability to articulate this well, and makes connections to daily life or contemporary issues. Exceeds expectations of the course.

B+ (87-89) Demonstrates a very good understanding of the subject matter, able to articulate lessons learned in the assignment well. Meets expectations of the course.

B (83-86) Demonstrates an understanding of the subject matter and the ability to articulate lessons learned. Meets expectations of the course.

B-(80-82) Demonstrates an understanding of the material at hand, has some difficulty articulating this, and basic connection of the material to daily life or contemporary issues/life. Meets basic expectations for the course.

C+ (77-79) Demonstrates a basic comprehension of the subject matter, weak articulation and connections. Does not meet expectations for the course.

C (70-76) Demonstrates a minimal comprehension of the subject matter and has difficulty making connections. Does not meet expectations of the course.

F (below 70) Unable to meet the basic requirements of the course.

- Grades range from A to C and F; A+’s and C-’s are not part of the grading system.
- On a 4.0 GPA scale – A (4.00), A- (3.66), B+ (3.33), B (3.00), B- (2.66), C+ (2.33), C (2.00) and F (0.00). A grade point average of no less than B- (2.66) is required to maintain good standing. The minimum G.P.A. required for graduation is 2.75.

DMin students: High Pass (95-100), Pass (83-94), Low Pass (70-82), and Fail (below 70)

Plagiarism and Academic Integrity
Academic honesty and integrity are expected of all students. Plagiarism exists when: a) the work submitted was done, in whole or in part, by anyone other than the one submitting the work, b) parts of the work, whether direct quotations, ideas, or data, are taken from another source without acknowledgement, c) the whole work is copied from another source [especially a web based source], or d) significant portions of one’s own previous work used in another course. See “Plagiarism” at http://www.hartsem.edu/current-students/policies/.

Appropriate Classroom Etiquette and Use of Technology:
In order to respect the community within the classroom: 1) Mute all cell phones during class; 2) Utilize laptops for the sole purpose of taking class notes. Please do not surf the web, email, or other programs during class time. Such use of the computer during class is disrespectful of the class and professor, and may result in lowering your participation grade.

Inclusive Language:
Hartford Seminary is committed to a policy of inclusion in its academic life and mission. All members of the community are expected to communicate in language that reflects the equality of genders, openness to diverse cultural and theological perspectives, and sensitivity to one another’s images of God.

Extensions:
Extensions for papers will be given for illnesses or family emergencies only in consultation with the instructor.
Official Handbooks:
For all other questions you might have regarding policies or procedures, please check the student handbook [http://www.hartsem.edu/current-students/student-handbook/] and seminary policies at [http://www.hartsem.edu/current-students/policies/]

CLASS SCHEDULE AND READING ASSIGNMENTS

**Please note that all readings are subject to change.
Students will be notified in advance.**

Week 1 – Thursday, January 18: Introduction to the Course
Secondary Reading:

Week 2 – Thursday, January 25: Paul and the World in Which He Lived
Secondary Reading:
- Neil Elliott, “Situating the Apostle Paul in His Day and Engaging His Legacy in Our Own” in Fortress Commentary, pp. 365-393
- Victor Furnish, The Moral Teaching of Paul: Selected Issues, pp. 9-27
- Lawrence M. Wills, “Negotiating the Jewish Heritage of Early Christianity,” in Fortress Commentary, pp. 31-45.

Week 3 - Thursday, February 1: Introduction to Paul’s Letters, and 1 and 2 Thessalonians
Primary Reading:
- 1, 2 Thessalonians

Secondary Reading:
- Edward Pillar, “1, 2 Thessalonians” in Fortress Commentary, pp. 573-588.

Week 4 – Thursday, February 8: Philemon
Primary Reading:
- Philemon

Secondary Reading:

Week 5 - Thursday, February 15: Galatians
Primary Reading:
• Galatians

Secondary Reading:
• Brigitte Kahl, “Galatians” in Fortress Commentary, pp. 503-525.
• Sandra Hack Polaski, A Feminist Introduction to Paul (St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2005), pp. 64-75.

Week 6 - Thursday, February 22: Romans
Primary Reading:
• Romans

Secondary Reading:
• Cynthia Briggs Kittredge, “Romans” in Fortress Commentary, pp. 395-426.

Week 7 - Thursday, March 1: 1 Corinthians; Paul on Divorce and Women in the Church
Preliminary research paper info due today! Send to ssmith@hartsem.edu by 4pm.

Primary Reading:
• 1 Corinthians

Secondary Reading:
• Victor Paul Furnish, “Sex, Marriage, and Divorce” pp. 28-54, and “Women in the Church” pp. 94-130.
• Laura S. Nasrallah, “1 Corinthians” in Fortress Commentary, pp. 427-471.
Week 8 - Thursday, March 8: Paul and (Anti-)Judaism; The “New” Perspective on Paul
Primary Reading:
- Read all relevant Pauline texts we have discussed thus far.

Secondary Reading:

Week 9 – Thursday, March 15: Colossians, Ephesians
Research Papers Due Today!
Bring a hardcopy to class and email a copy to ssmith@hartsem.edu.

Primary Reading:
- Read Colossians and Ephesians

Secondary Reading:

Week 10 - Thursday, March 22: The Household Codes; Paul on Women’s Roles
Primary Reading:
- Re-read Colossians 3:18-4:1; Ephesians 5:21-6:9 and all relevant Pauline texts regarding women’s roles we have discussed thus far.

Secondary Reading:

***Thursday, March 29 – NO CLASS – Maundy Thursday***

Week 11 - Thursday, April 5: Paul and Homosexuality(?)
Primary Reading:
- Read all relevant Pauline texts we have discussed thus far.

Secondary Reading:
Week 12 – Thursday, April 12: Philippians
Primary Reading:
• Philippians

Secondary Reading:
• Julia Lambert Fogg, “Philippians,” in Fortress Commentary, pp. 543-556.

Week 13 - Thursday, April 19: The Pastoral Letters
Primary Reading:
• 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, and Titus

Secondary Reading:
• Deborah Krause, “1, 2 Timothy,” and “Titus” in Fortress Commentary, pp. 589-611.

Week 14 - Thursday, April 26: Final Reflection Paper Presentations & Course Conclusion

I am looking forward to this! 😊