

# SC-617: The Pauline Letters

## SPRING 2020 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.*

*Students should also make sure they have access to **Canvas**, as some assignments will be online.*

***24/7 Canvas Hotline: 877-249-4494***

### 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

1. Margaret Aymer, Cynthia Briggs Kittredge, and David A. Sanchez, eds., *The Letters and Legacy of Paul: Fortress Commentary on the Bible Study Edition* (Minneapolis, MI: Fortress Press, 2016).
2. Victor Furnish, *The Moral Teaching of Paul: Selected Issues* (3<sup>rd</sup> edition; Abingdon, 2009).
3. Joseph A. Marchal, ed., *Studying Paul's Letters: Contemporary Perspectives and Methods* (Minneapolis, MI: Fortress Press, 2012).
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. Midterm Paper (30% of Final Grade) Due: March 16, 2020

Students will write a **7-page research paper** on a topic or biblical passage related to this course employing one of the methodological approaches discussed in class. In addition to some of the readings from the course, the paper must also incorporate at least four works that were not assigned. ***Paper topics must be approved by the instructor by March 2, 2020.***

Papers will show a critical engagement with both primary and secondary texts. This includes, but is not limited to:

- the student's interpretation of the text (based on an examination of the immediate and broader literary context)
- engagement of the text with one of the methodological approaches discussed in class
- implications of such an interpretation (who might benefit or suffer from it?)
- a recapitulation of the secondary author's main arguments
- critical assessment of the secondary texts (agree or disagree, and why?)

**Paper specifications:** Times New Roman, 12-point font, 1-inch margins, double-spaced. ***I will not read beyond the maximum word limit. Students will be penalized for whatever is missing.***

### C. Presentation (30% 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. Sign-up sheet to be distributed.

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. Book review is due one week prior to presentation.

*Sign-up sheet to be distributed.*

#### **D. Final Reflection Paper and Presentation (25% of Final Grade) Due: April 27, 2020**

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](mailto: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 Academic policies are listed 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 – Monday, January 27: Introduction to the Course**

#### **Secondary Reading:**

- Joseph Marchal, “Asking the Right Questions? Perspective and Approach” in *Studying Paul’s Letters*, pp. 1-12.
- Kwok Pui-lan, “Reading the Christian New Testament in the Contemporary World,” in *Fortress Commentary*, pp. 5-30.

### **Week 2 – Monday, February 3 ONLINE CLASS!: 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 - Monday, February 10: 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.
- Melanie Johnson-DeBaufre, “Historical Approaches: Which Past? Whose Past,” in *Studying Paul’s Letters*, pp. 13-31.
- Todd Penner and Davina C. Lopez, “Rhetorical Approaches: Introducing the Art of Persuasion in Paul and Pauline Studies,” in *Studying Paul’s Letters*, pp. 33-42, 49-52.

### **Week 4 – Monday, February 17: Philemon**

#### **Primary Reading:**

- Philemon

#### **Secondary Reading:**

- Eric D. Barreto, “Philemon,” in *Fortress Commentary*, pp. 613-620.
- Jennifer A. Glancy, “The First Christian Slaveholders,” in her *Slavery as Moral Problem in the Early Church and Today* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2011), pp. 28-50.

- Jeremy Punt, “Postcolonial Approaches: Negotiating Empires, Then and Now,” in *Studying Paul’s Letters*, pp. 191-208.
- Demetrius K. Williams, “African American Approaches: Rehumanizing the Reader against Racism and Reading through Experience,” in *Studying Paul’s Letters*, pp. 155-173.

### **Week 5 - Monday, February 24: Galatians**

#### **Primary Reading:**

- Galatians

#### **Secondary Reading:**

- Caroline Johnson Hodge, “Apostle to the Gentiles: Constructions of Paul’s Identity,” *Biblical Interpretation* 13 (2005): 270-88.
- 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 - Monday, March 2: Romans**

*Deadline for Midterm Paper Topic Approval! Send to ssmith@hartsem.edu.*

#### **Primary Reading:**

- Romans

#### **Secondary Reading:**

- Cynthia Briggs Kittredge, “Romans” in *Fortress Commentary*, pp. 395-426.
- Peter S. Oakes, “Economic Approaches: Scarce Resources and Interpretive Opportunities,” in *Studying Paul’s Letters*, pp. 75-91.

### **Week 7 - Monday, March 9: 1 Corinthians; Paul on Divorce and Women in the Church**

#### **Primary Reading:**

- 1 Corinthians

#### **Secondary Reading:**

- Victor Paul Furnish, “Sex, Marriage, and Divorce” pp. 28-54, and “Women in the Church” pp. 94-130.
- Cynthia Briggs Kittredge, “Feminist Approaches: Rethinking History and Resisting Ideologies,” in *Studying Paul’s Letters*, pp. 117-133.
- Laura S. Nasrallah, “1 Corinthians” in *Fortress Commentary*, pp. 427-471.
- Antoinette Clark Wire, “Women Prophets in the Corinthian Church” in *Conflict and Community in the Corinthian Church*, ed. J. Shannon Clarkson (New York: United Methodist Church Women’s Division, 2000), pp. 35-52.

### **Week 8 - Monday, March 16: Paul and (Anti-)Judaism; The “New” Perspective on Paul**

*Midterm Papers Due Today!*

*Bring a hardcopy to class and email a copy to ssmith@hartsem.edu.*

Primary Reading:

- Read all relevant Pauline texts we have discussed thus far.

Secondary Reading:

- Pamela Eisenbaum, “Jewish Perspectives: A Jewish Apostle to the Gentiles,” in *Studying Paul’s Letters*, pp. 135-153.
- Mark D. Nanos, “Paul and Judaism,” Central States Society of Biblical Literature Presentation, St. Louis, MO, March 28, 2004.

**Week 9 – Monday, March 23: Colossians, Ephesians**

Primary Reading:

- Read Colossians and Ephesians

Secondary Reading:

- Jennifer G. Bird, “Ephesians” in *Fortress Commentary*, pp. 527-542.
- Sylvia C. Keesmaat, “Colossians” in *Fortress Commentary*, pp. 557-572.

**Week 10 - Thursday, March 30: 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:

- Clarice J. Martin, “The *Haustafeln* (Household Codes) in African American Biblical Interpretation: ‘Free Slaves and Subordinate Women,’” in *Stony the Road We Trod: African American Biblical Interpretation*, ed. Cain Hope Felder (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), pp. 206-231.
- Elizabeth A. Castelli, “Paul on Women and Gender,” in *Women and Christian Origins*, ed. Ross Shepard Kraemer and Mary Rose D’Angelo (Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 221-235.
- Sandra Hack Polaski, *A Feminist Introduction to Paul* (St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2005), pp.12-25.

**Week 11 - Monday, April 6: Paul and Homosexuality(?)**

Primary Reading:

- Read all relevant Pauline texts we have discussed thus far.

Secondary Reading:

- Dale B. Martin, *Sex and the Single Savior* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006), pp. 37-64.
- Victor Paul Furnish, *The Moral Teaching of Paul*, pp. 55-93.
- Ronald E. Long, “Disarming Biblically Based Gay-Bashing” in *The Queer Bible Commentary*, ed. Deryn Guest emartint al (London: SCM Press, 2006), pp. 1-18.
- Joseph A. Marchal, “Queer Approaches: Improper Relations with Pauline Letters,” in *Studying Paul’s Letters*, pp. 209-227.

**Week 12 – Monday, April 13 ONLINE CLASS!: Philippians**

**Primary Reading:**

- Philippians

**Secondary Reading:**

- N. Clayton Croy, “‘To Die is Gain’ (Phil 1:19-26): Does Paul Contemplate Suicide?” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 122 (2003): 517-31.
- Julia Lambert Fogg, “Philippians,” in *Fortress Commentary*, pp. 543-556.
- Todd Penner and Davina C. Lopez, “Rhetorical Approaches: Introducing the Art of Persuasion in Paul and Pauline Studies,” in *Studying Paul’s Letters*, pp. 43-52.

**Week 13 - Monday, April 20: 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 - Monday, April 27: Final Reflection Paper Presentations & Course Conclusion**

*I am looking forward to this! ☺*