

**PAUL  
NT 501  
Instructor: Harry O. Maier  
Spring 2025**

Office Hours: Wednesday 12-2 PM  
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**Purpose**

To introduce students to the major themes of Pauline theologies represented by New Testament texts and, where appropriate, other New Testament and extra-canonical literature. To situate these theologies in the social matrix of antiquity and to identify the interaction of theology and culture implicit in these theologies. To assess the relevance of these theologies for Christian existence in society and the critical issues entailed in their contemporary appropriation. To explore a variety of approaches to Pauline texts (minimally feminist, non-eurocentrist, post-structuralist). To introduce students to the critical scholarly debates in Pauline studies. To introduce students to an understanding of textual criticism, manuscript traditions, and scholarly debates concerning the formation of the Christian canon.

**Competence Objectives**

1. To demonstrate a level exegetical and interpretive skill compatible with a first year of theological study in the critical historical, literary and socio-historical study of contested and uncontested Pauline texts.
2. To demonstrate knowledge of the differences between the contested and uncontested corpus through discussion in two papers, one identifying a main theme in the uncontested Pauline corpus and a second comparative paper that takes up a similar theme in the contested corpus.
3. Through exegetical discussion to demonstrate an understanding of the social context, literary influences, ideological considerations, and historical environment that shaped Paul and the developments of his theology, as well as the scholarly reconstructions of that theology and its developments.
4. To develop an increasing ability to write an abstract of a critical journal article that identifies scholarly methods of interpretation, formulates the main outlines of a scholarly article, and assesses the relative strengths and weaknesses of academic Pauline scholarship, as well as to communicate orally one's findings to student peers.

5. To be able to describe the Reformation treatment of Paul and the Paul of the “new perspective, “ to compare and contrast them, and to assess their relative strengths and weaknesses.
6. The ability to offer a contextual analysis of Pauline and contested Pauline writings by situating them in their historical, social, and cultural contexts.
7. To identify the location of Pauline thinking in the currents of Intertestamental “Judaism” and to show how Paul reflects and develops his Jewish heritage.
8. To gain a familiarity with New Testament textual criticism, its practices, and its uses in the interpretation of New Testament texts.

**In the normal course of the programme, students learn the Greek Alphabet in NT 500 (The Synoptic Gospels) – the usual first New Testament course in the Biblical Division. If students elect to take Paul as their first introductory New Testament course they will be given the resources to learn the alphabet, in preparation for the part of the course devoted to textual criticism, where a working knowledge of the Greek alphabet is presupposed. Students should weigh this when considering their workload.**

#### **Format**

One three-hour class weekly. Lecture with small group discussion. In addition, one hour of class per week will be devoted to student-led small group discussion of a series of secondary readings which model differing approaches to and interpretations of Pauline themes and texts. Students will write a weekly précis of an assigned reading. In the textual criticism part of the course this model will be modified slightly.

#### ***Distance Education***

In addition to watching the lectures, discussion of précis will be facilitated by on-line discussion of each others’ submissions. For the final exam distance education students should familiarize themselves with the procedures for arranging the writing of their exam. The details can be found on pp. 22 of the Student Handbook (<https://vst.edu/students/current/academics/handbook> ).

#### **Content**

- I. Paul
  - A. Luke as a Source for Paul
  - B. The Social Context of Paul
  - C. Paul and Apocalyptic
  - D. Jews, Gentiles and Justification
  - E. Ethics and Eschatology
  
- II. Contested and Deutero-Paul
  - A. Pseudonymous Literature and Tradition in Hellenism
  - B. Transpositions of Paul
    - a. Colossians

- b. Ephesians
- C. The Battle for Paul in the Pastoral Epistles and Gnosticism
- D. The Rehabilitation of Paul in Irenaeus
- E. The Legacy of Paul

### III. An Introduction to Textual Criticism and the Formation of the Christian Canon

#### Evaluation

1. Class attendance and participation. To receive credit for the course 80% attendance of lectures is required. This means missing more than two complete sessions will constitute a Not Approved for the course. Students absent from a lecture will write a 2-3 page single-spaced synopsis of the missed lecture due at the start of the class following the one missed. IN the case of a missed part of a lecture, students will complete a précis of the missed part due at the start of the class following the part of the class missed.
2. A reading journal of a page per week which records reflections on the secondary sources read in preparation for small group discussion. **In order to gain credit for this course assigned exercises must be handed in on each meeting date and any missed assignment must be completed by the start of the following class.** E-mail submissions are required. Please attend to the rubrics outlined in the guide to email submissions, which will be distributed early in the term.
3. Two papers on the topics listed below. ***Please note the word limit; papers that exceed the limit by less or more than 10% will be turned back for resubmission. Bibliography and footnotes are NOT included in the word limit.***
  - a. Pauline Theology (paper description to be distributed in class). 2000-2500 words/8-10 pages that uses at least 10 -15 bibliographical entries in proper Chicago Manual of Style bibliographical citation form beyond the course texts as research resources (**Due Friday March 7**). ***This is a strict deadline and only in exceptional cases will there be extensions beyond this date. Students are encouraged to begin their work on their papers early in the term and to familiarize themselves with the Academic Calendar in requesting extensions.*** Papers must be submitted as email attachments. Only Microsoft Word versions will be accepted.
  - b. The Development of Pauline Theology (paper description to be distributed in class). 2000-2500 words (**Due Friday, April 18**). that uses at least 10 - 15 bibliographical entries in proper bibliographical citation form beyond the course texts as research resources. ***This is a strict deadline and only in exceptional***

***cases will there be extensions beyond this date. Students are encouraged to begin their work on their papers early in the term and to familiarize themselves with the Academic Calendar in requesting extensions.*** Papers must be submitted as Microsoft Word email attachments. Only or Microsoft Word versions will be accepted. This paper is to identify a theme common to the genuine and pseudonymous Pauline literature and to discuss the differing ways that theme is treated in the corpus.

4. A final exam of map, short identification of technical terms, concepts, and essay questions.

### ***Asynchronous Distance Students:***

In addition to the above, a 2-3 single-spaced précis of each lecture due by the start of the following class.

### **Rewrites**

Students who wish to graduate in May 2023 must submit rewrites of Not Approved papers by **2 May**. Rewrites of Not Approved papers for other students are due **11 June**. Medical Extension papers for non-graduating students are due **26 May**.

### **Textbooks**

A Bible of choice, but no paraphrases, and preferably a critical study edition (Oxford NRSV; HarperCollins; NIV; etc.). If the King James Version is preferred students are obliged to bring another translation. An excellent study Bible for the class is Amy Jill-Levine, ed. *The Jewish New Testament*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011). ISBN 978-0195297706.

Maier, Harry O. *New Testament Christianity in the Roman World. Essentials of Biblical Studies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), ISBN 978-0190264406. This book is currently out of print and is available as an ebook at the VST library.

Maier, Harry O. *Picturing Paul in Empire: Imperial Image, Text and Persuasion in Colossians, Ephesians and the Pastoral Epistles* (London/ New York: T&T Clark, Bloomsbury, 2013). ISBN 978-0567059956. This is available as an ebook at the VST library.

Roetzel, Calvin J. *The Letters of Paul* (Atlanta: John Knox, 2015). ISBN 978-0664233921.

Keck, L.E. *Paul and His Letters* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990), ISBN 978-0800623401.

Pregeant, Russell. *Engaging the New Testament: An Interdisciplinary Approach* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1998). ISBN 978-0800631154.

Schüssler-Fiorenza, Elisabeth. *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins* (New York: Crossroad, 1994). ISBN 978-0824513573.

Greenlee, J. Harald. *Introduction to New Testament Textual Criticism*, Rev. ed. (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1998). ISBN 978-0801046445.

### **Recommended**

Nestle, Eberhard and Aland, Barbara and Kurt, eds. *Greek-English New Testament*, 28<sup>th</sup> Ed. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2013). 978-3438051622.