Course Profile

Course # and Title: RHS 403: Paul’s Life and Letters
Course Delivery: Fully Online (Asynchronous) with Optional Synchronous Sessions
Instructor: Andrew Guffey
Semester/Year: Fall 2020

Course Rationale and Description:
(Why do we offer this course? Which of LSTC’s degree program learning outcomes does it address?):

Paul of Tarsus, the Apostle Paul, Saint Paul, “the Christian Proteus,” stands like an enigmatic colossus at the beginnings of the Christian religion. Paul’s letters hold some of the most lyrical lines of the New Testament, and have given occasion to some of the most violently contested positions on the true legacy of Christianity. In this online course we will seek to come to terms with Paul and the letters attributed to him. We will study the letters on their own terms and in their historical, literary, and cultural contexts—striving to understand how Paul fit into and shaped the earliest history of Christianity: who he was, what he wrote, and what he strove toward. In the process, we will see that Paul’s letters possess extraordinary theological power, and that they have great potential for speaking to our contemporary world.

The course has three principle aims:
- To introduce students to the critical, academic study of the letters attributed to St. Paul in their historical, literary, and cultural environments;
- To foster habits of thought, analysis, and criticism sensitive to social, economic, and cultural contexts; and
- To empower students to draw on the Scriptures, especially the Pauline letters, for their theology and practice of ministry.

Course Learning Outcomes:

The course therefore seeks to address the following competencies for Master of Divinity and Master of Arts students at LSTC. With dedicated engagement and upon completion of the course, learners will be able to:
- Demonstrate an understanding of the Bible that is thorough and comprehensive, to communicate effectively and embody the witness of Scripture for ministry, [especially such ministries as preaching, teaching, pastoral care, and church leadership (M.Div.)] (ATS Area: Religious Heritage [Scripture]);
- Demonstrate a knowledge of and ability to communicate the Christian heritage in its rich diversity, and especially in its Lutheran expressions—faithful to Scripture, ecumenically sensitive, and intellectually defensible—with an ability to evaluate, interpret, and integrate that heritage with contemporary knowledge and experience [for the sake of the proclamation of the Gospel and the theological life of the church (M.Div.)] (ATS Area: Religious Heritage [Traditions]);
- Demonstrate the ability to think contextually, with cultural sensitivity, creatively engaging a pluralistic world in interpreting the message of the Gospel (ATS Area: Cultural Context)
Strategies for Learning:

This is an online course: Students will need to consult the online course content regularly for readings, video lectures, activities, assignments, and quizzes.

1. Students will work through the course content in Brightspace, including video lectures, activities, quizzes, and weekly written assignments.
2. Weekly reading assignments from the course textbooks will supplement the online materials.
3. Weekly online discussion of the course content.
4. Students will write a final paper in which they make a reasoned and well-researched argument regarding some issue or problem addressed during the course of the semester.
5. Weekly Zoom colloquy (optional): The instructor will also host weekly meetings by Zoom for course participants to discuss key texts and course materials, to raise important questions, and to give and receive feedback for one another. We will try to hold these sessions at a mutually convenient day/time.

Assessment:
(How shall we know if we—students and instructors—have been successful in achieving the outcomes?)

Assessments will be made by the instructor with respect to progress in online content, the quality of participation in online discussions, and the quality of the final paper. Criteria for assessments in these areas will be outlined in the syllabus.

Bibliography:

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<tr>
<th>Required Texts:</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>ISBN# (Required)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Navigating Paul</td>
<td>Bassler, Jouette</td>
<td>978-0-664-22741-8</td>
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<td>See additional note below</td>
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<td>Recommended Texts:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paul: The Pagans’ Apostle</td>
<td>Fredriksen, Paula</td>
<td>978-0-300-24015-3</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Writings of St. Paul</td>
<td>Meeks, Wayne, and John Fitzgerald, eds.</td>
<td>978-0-39-397280-1</td>
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<tr>
<td>HarperCollins Study Bible</td>
<td>Attridge, Harold, et al., eds.</td>
<td>978-0060786854</td>
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Additional Note:

Course participants will need either the Meeks and Fitzgerald volume listed under “Recommended Texts” or a quality, academic study Bible, preferably based on the New Revised Standard Translation. I recommend The HarperCollins Study Bible (revised edition), and I would suggest purchasing the slightly more expensive hardcover edition, as the paperback edition tends to wear out quickly. The New Oxford Annotated Bible (now in its fourth edition), the New Interpreter’s Study Bible, the CEB Study Bible, or the Catholic Study Bible (revised edition) are four other good options. The Jewish Annotated New Testament (2d ed.) is also worth investing in.