Course Profile

Course # and Title  RHS 601B NT GBS 1 Corinthians: Eat, Pray, Love
Instructor: Eunyung Lim          Semester/Year: Spring 2021

Short Description: This advanced exegesis seminar pursues a close reading of 1 Corinthians, focusing on the (original Greek) text’s literary style, textual-critical issues, use of rhetoric, and historical context. We will also reflect upon a variety of theological and socio-cultural issues we encounter in 1 Corinthians, thereby exploring their implications for today’s ministry and cultural life.

Delivery Mode: Synchronous Zoom sessions (every Tuesday, 1:00–2:40 pm), asynchronous lecture videos, and two strongly recommended in-person meetings (A ‘Meet and Greet’ on Feb. 2nd, i.e., first class meeting, to be offered in person in room 201 while accommodating remote students. Depending on the improvement in pandemic conditions, a class field trip to the Art Institute of Chicago to be organized; date and time TBA).

Course Rationale and Description:

Rationale

This is a 600-level graduate biblical seminar, geared towards advanced master’s students and ThM/PhD candidates who are interested in the New Testament. Placing heavy emphasis on historical contextualization, this course offers students an opportunity to situate one of the most-read Pauline letters within the socio-cultural milieu of the ancient Mediterranean. This process will allow students not only to revisit the all-too-familiar “Christian” text from a fresh perspective, but also to draw from the ancient text a set of critical insights into diverse theological and cultural challenges we face in our modern world. In addition, students will learn about various interpretive methods and hermeneutics, which will help them synthesize exegetical “skills for visionary Christian leadership in the public sphere” (LSTC mission statement).

Long Description

Why would it be shameful for a woman to speak in church? What does it mean for slaves to be holy in body and spirit? How should we “eat, pray, and love” when the end of the world is so near? Asking how our knowledge of ancient Greek and Greco-Roman culture might help us better understand these puzzling questions and more, this course pursues a close reading of 1 Corinthians. We will discuss the original text, focusing on its literary style, textual-critical issues, use of rhetoric, and historical context. We will also reflect upon a variety of theological and socio-cultural issues we encounter in 1 Corinthians, such as gender and ministerial leadership, sex and marriage, slavery and social classes, food and economic inequality, worship and spiritual practices, religion and politics, and so on. While exploring the text’s different interpretive possibilities in the ancient context, we will navigate ways in which to engage 1 Corinthians for preaching, Bible study, pastoral care, community building, and social activism in our ministerial settings.

Course Learning Outcomes:

Upon the successful completion of this course, students will be able to do the following.
1) (For advanced students) To translate the Greek text of 1 Corinthians into English and discuss its (possibly wide) range of meanings for ancient audiences.
2) To explore ancient literary evidence and material culture in the first-centuries BCE– CE ancient Mediterranean, which helps to understand the Pauline corpus within its historical context.
3) To learn about exegetical tools to interpret 1 Corinthians, including but not limited to historical-critical methods, rhetorical analysis, and feminist, postcolonial, queer, reader-response criticisms.
4) To reflect upon the social, cultural, and/or political implications of 1 Corinthians in both ancient and modern religious life.
5) To develop ethical sensitivity to a variety of theological and socio-cultural questions that 1 Corinthians raises for the contemporary church and world.

Strategies for Learning:

This course acknowledges that all participants, both students and teaching staff, are full members of a small, democratic academic community, in which the members share both freedom and responsibility with one another. Each member’s active and engaged participation in each class session is key to making all successful in this course.

In particular, students should make a weekly time commitment to each class session, read the assigned readings carefully—both biblical texts and scholarly writings—before coming to each Zoom class, and complete weekly translation (or journal) assignments on time. Advanced Students (ThM/PhD and/or Students with knowledge of Greek) should be prepared to translate each week’s assigned Greek pericope in a literal manner, without consulting a modern English translation. Students who do not know Greek (yet) will select a commentary from the course bibliography, read the portions of the commentary pertaining to each week’s text, and write a brief “intrigue journal” every week. It is also important for students to identify a pericope of interest or research topic early on and keep track of different course assignments throughout the semester (e.g., book review, research proposal, oral presentation), as this process will allow enough time to work on their final projects. Most of all, students are encouraged to share any insight emerging from their social location and cultural backgrounds in both synchronous and asynchronous class activities. Using inclusive language and showing respect to others are also essential components for successful learning in this course.

Assessment:

In addition to punctual and regular attendance, careful listening, and close engagement in both synchronous and asynchronous conversations, students’ achievements of the learning outcomes will be evaluated at various stages of this course, focusing on both writing and oral presentation skills and leadership roles in class discussions. As this course adopts ‘assignment scaffolding,’ (i.e., guiding students towards completing their final projects through smaller, different assignments), students will constantly receive written or oral feedback and other kinds of support from the instructor throughout the semester in order to narrow down their project topics and improve their research and writing. Students are also encouraged to give peers constructive suggestions as they lead discussions and make oral presentations. In turn, how well students integrate their knowledge, research ideas, and feedback from the class takes up an important part in this course’s assessment.

Bibliography:
(Recommended texts and a comprehensive bibliography to be provided in course syllabus)
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resource</th>
<th>Author(s)</th>
<th>ISBN</th>
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<tr>
<td>Any NRSV Bible such as Harper Collins, Oxford, etc.</td>
<td>Eberhard Nestle and Erwin Nestle, together with Barbara Aland and Kurt Aland, Johannes Karavidopoulos, Carlo M. Martini, and Bruce M. Metzger, eds.</td>
<td>9781619700307</td>
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<td>OR AccordanceBible Software: <a href="https://www.accordancebible.com/">https://www.accordancebible.com/</a></td>
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