

Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago

RHS 601B
Graduate Biblical Seminar

1 Corinthians: Eat, Pray, Love

Spring 2019
Tue 1:00–4:00 PM

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Course 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, food and economic inequality, idolatry and spiritual practices, 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.

Objectives

Upon the successful completion of this course, students will be able to do the following.

- 1) ThM #2, 6; PhD #3:
(For advanced students) Translate the Greek text of 1 Corinthians into English and discuss its possibly wide range of meanings for ancient audiences
- 2) ThM #2; PhD #2, 3:
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) MDiv #2, 5; MATS #2, 4; MAM #2, 5; ThM #2, 3, 6; PhD #2, 5, 6:
Learn exegetical tools to interpret 1 Corinthians, including but not limited to historical-critical methods, rhetorical analysis, and feminist, postcolonial, reader-response criticism, etc.

- 4) MDiv #4, 5; MATS #4; MAM #4, 5; ThM #5; PhD #2:
Reflect upon the social, cultural, and/or political implications of 1 Corinthians in ancient religious life
- 5) MDiv #4, 5; MATS #4; MAM #4, 5; ThM #5; PhD #2:
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

- *For Advanced Students: While this course aims to foster a linguistic competence in ancient Greek, it is not intended to overwhelm you with a plethora of grammatical or philological knowledge. Still, it is important to note that your active and engaged participation in each seminar session is key to making all of us successful in this course. Please be prepared to translate each week's assigned text completely.
- Please read the assigned readings, both scriptural and scholarly, before coming to each class. Bring at least two exegetical questions with you.
- Please be vocal and feel free to jump in during class discussions if you have a question. If you prefer, bring up your questions and concerns in office hours.
- When you respond to fellow students in class, please show respect to them. It is equally as important to listen well as it is to speak well.
- Please use inclusive language (*2018–2019 LSTC All Students Handbook*, p. 60).
- Laptops can be used for note taking and searching online tools.
- Plan ahead and allow enough time to write papers (book review and exegesis). For your final exegesis paper, please consult the instructor at least two weeks before the proposal due. Papers written with clarity and grace will be deeply appreciated.
- Unexcused absences from either class or workshop will incur grade penalty (i.e., lowering the participation grade by a third of a letter for each class missed).

Required texts:

Nestle, Eberhard and Erwin Nestle, together with Barbara Aland and Kurt Aland, Johannes Karavidopoulos, Carlo M. Martini, and Bruce M. Metzger, eds. *Novum Testamentum Graece*, 28th edition. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2012. (*A must-have for advanced students in New Testament; 27th edition is ok.)

Nasrallah, Laura S. "1 Corinthians." Pages 427–472 in *The Letters and Legacy of Paul: Fortress Commentary on the Bible Study Edition*. Margaret Aymer, Cynthia Briggs Kittredge, and David A. Sánchez, eds. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2016.

Recommended:

Conzelmann, Hans. *1 Corinthians: A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians*. Hermeneia series. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975.

Fitzmyer, Joseph A. *First Corinthians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. Anchor Yale Bible 32. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008.

Martin, Dale B. *The Corinthian Body*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995.

Mitchell, Margaret M. *Paul and the Rhetoric of Reconciliation: An Exegetical Investigation of the Language and Composition of 1 Corinthians*. Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1991.

Stanley, Christopher D. *The Colonized Apostle: Paul through Postcolonial Eyes*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2011.

Thiselton, Anthony C. *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000.

Wire, Antoinette Clark. *The Corinthian Women Prophets: A Reconstruction through Paul's Rhetoric*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990.