



River City School of Leadership

Syllabus for
BIB 102 Pauline Epistles
Fall 2024

Professor
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I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

- A. The Pauline Epistles are foundational letters written by the Apostle Paul that have shaped Christian theology and practice throughout history. This course will examine these letters and their life-changing teachings on the nature of Jesus Christ, salvation, grace, and the role of faith, as well as Christian Living, Church Organization, various controversies and challenges faced by the early church, and ethical conduct.
- B. The Pauline Epistles consist of thirteen books of the New Testament, though only seven are considered to be authentically Paul's. This course will focus on Romans, 1st and 2nd Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians, 1st and 2nd Thessalonians, and Philemon.

II. COURSE GOALS

The purpose of this course is to enable the student to do the following:

1. Examine the background of Saul, the Pharisee, and his transformation to the Apostle Paul.
2. Examine Paul's theological foundation for Christian beliefs, especially concerning the nature of Jesus Christ, salvation, grace, and the role of faith.
3. Examine Paul's guidance on living a godly life, emphasizing love, sovereignty, and the work of the Holy Spirit.
4. Examine Paul's instructions for church organization and management, helping to shape the early Christian communities.

III. TEXTBOOK(S)

Dictionary of Paul and His Letters, Scot McKnight, Lynn H. Cohick, and Nijay K. Gupta; Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, Second Edition, 2023.

Paul's Theology in Context: Creation, Incarnation, Covenant, & Kingdom, James P. Ware, Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co, 2019.

The Holy Bible – English Standard Version (ESV) or New American Standard Bible (NASB).

The Holy Bible – New Living Translation (NLT) or The Message Bible (MSG).

IV. ASSIGNMENT & DUE DATES

A. Online/In-Class Discussion (10%), Every other Monday

On every other Monday (Sep. 9th, Sep. 23rd, Oct 7th, Oct. 21st, Nov 4th, and Nov. 18th), beginning on Sept. 9th, the professor will post a class discussion question under the “Discussions” portion of the online class portal. Provide a six to eight sentence response to that question by the Friday of the same week. Additionally, read and review your classmates’ comments for in-class discussion during the following class session. This bi-weekly assignment facilitates an online and in-class dialogue.

B. Theological Reflection Expository Essay (20%), Monday, October 28th

Write a 1500-word expository essay providing a clear and focused explanation or description of one of Paul’s key theological positions (i.e., salvation, grace, the role of faith) using two or three scriptures to develop and support your essay. Your research should be used to either support that view or a different view. It is advisable to begin gathering your research as early as possible to that the paper is an actual learning experience and not a rush job done at the last minute. Essay topics for your consideration can be found at Appendix 1.

When writing your essay, the following questions may help you formulate your ideas and the overall development of your paper. Utilize the Modern Language Association (MLA) formatting when writing your essay.

- a. What is the thesis statement and supporting ideas that sum up Paul’s theological position that you selected? Identify the thesis statement in the introduction and use it as a summation in the conclusion.
- b. What is Paul’s specific viewpoint that shapes the position of his theology that you selected?
- c. Show how each scriptural statement fits within its context using word studies and any background materials from your text and other commentaries.
- d. Include at least three published sources (not including the Bible) and cite them per MLA guidelines (You can consult various commentaries, Bible dictionaries, Greek lexicons, etc.)
- e. What insights were most helpful to you? How will you apply those insights to your life and ministry?

Submit your essay in a Word or PDF document under the “Assessment” portion of the online class portal.

C. Reading Report (20%), Monday, November 18th

The completion of class reading assignments is due before the lectures on the dates listed on the “Reading Report”. **The “Reading Report” itself will be due on November 18th.** You will find that report on the Resources page. Several articles will be read from *The Dictionary of Paul & His Letters* and *Paul’s Theology in Context: Creation, Incarnation, Covenant, & Kingdom*, according to the assignment schedule.

Read each Epistle **twice** according to the assignment schedule. Read each chapter once in ESV or NASB and once in the NLT or MSG. Submit the report in a Word or PDF document under the “Assessment” portion of the online class portal.

D. Exams (40%)

Mid-term Exam (20%), Monday, October 14th

The Mid-Term Exam will be available October 8th-14th. It will be found under the “Quiz” section of the online portal.

Final Exam (20%)

The Final Exam will be available December 3rd-6th. It will be found under the “Quiz” section of the online portal.

Both exams are **closed book**. You may not refer to any notes or study guides while taking the exams.

E. Weekly Participation (10%)

Complete all in-class assignments and participate in all in-class discussions.

V. POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

A. Grades and Assessments

1. Grading Scale

A 90 - 100%

B 80 - 89%

C 70 - 79%

D 60 - 69%

F 59% and below

2. Percentage of Final Grade per Assessment & Due Date

a) Online/In-Class Discussion (10%) Every other Monday

b) Theological Reflection Expository Essay (20%) Monday, October 28th

c) Reading Report (20%), Monday, November 18th

d) Weekly Class Participation (10%)

e) Exams

Mid-Term Exam (20%), Monday, October 14th

Final Exam (20%), Friday, December 6th

B. Correspondence

All correspondence with professors should be done through the email address provided in this syllabus.

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C. Academic Honesty

1. Plagiarism is copying someone else's ideas, words, or sentence structures and submitting them as one's own, which is claiming the work of others as your own without specific acknowledgment. It is always required that a student cite resources used in any paper that is written. Both students and faculty at River City School of Leadership are expected to deal ethically with other's materials, whether it is in the form of print, electronic, video, multimedia, or computer software.
2. Collaboration (e.g. writing a paper with someone else so that the resulting paper is not the product of the person turning it in) is not permitted unless specifically allowed by the instructor. Unless noted on the course syllabus a student should assume that the required work is meant to represent their own efforts. It is permissible to have a proofreader review one's paper and comment on the grammar and general paper structure; however, the thought and content of the paper must be the student's.

D. Late Assignment Policy

For each week that an assignment is late, it will receive a 10% grade deduction. An assignment will be considered late unless the student has prior permission from the instructor for a later due date. No homework will be accepted after the end of the term. Additional points can be docked by the teacher for not meeting assignment requirements or standards.

Example:

- 1-7 Days Late – Maximum Grade 90
- 8-14 Days Late – Maximum Grade 80
- 15-21 Days Late – Maximum Grade 70
- 22-28 Days Late – Maximum Grade 60
- 29+ Days Late – Maximum Grade 59

E. Absenteeism

An absentee is defined as not being present in-person or online when a class is being taught. Students are allowed to miss a **maximum** of three absences total per course in each semester. If a student misses more than three classes, they will be given an "I" (Incomplete) for the course. These three absences can be made up if a student watches/listens to the full video/audio content of a class that they missed, writes a 250-word response to the class video that was watched/listened to, and sends the notification

and the response to River City by email (info@rivercityschool.com) that they have made up the absence, noting the date of the absence. The latest a student can submit an email to this effect is the day following the last class of that semester.

F. Recorded Class Protocol

There are times when a professor might need to record a class meeting for students to view instead of meeting on the designated class night. If this does occur, in order for a student to be counted as present for that class week, the class recording will need to be viewed and then an email sent to info@rivercityschool.com notifying that the recording has been watched. No written response is needed.

VII. COURSE CONTENT / SCHEDULE

Week 1 (Sep. 9th): Course Overview and Introduction

- Course Overview and Introduction
- Introduction to the *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters* and *Paul's Theology in Context*
- Distinctive Emphases on Paul's Epistles
- Next week's reading: *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, pp 779-791; Acts 7-9.
- Discussion Question #1 due

Week 2 (Sep. 16th): Paul in Acts

- The Pre-Christian Saul/Paul
- Saul Encounters Jesus on the Road to Damascus
- Paul as a Believer
- Paul as a Collaborator
- Paul as Evangelist and Church Planter
- Next Week's Reading: Galatians 1-6; *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters* articles on "Letters to the Galatians", pp 344-354 and "Justification", pp 578-586; *Paul's Theology in Context*, Chapter 8 (pp 126-136)

Week 3 (Sep. 23rd): Galatians

- Gospel of Grace
- Justification by Faith
- Law & Grace
- Next Week's Reading: 1 Thessalonians 1-5; *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters* articles on "The Letters to Thessalonians", pp 1048-1049 and "Eschatology", pp 265-277; *Paul's Theology in Context*, Chapter 3

- Discussion Question #2 due

Week 4 (Sep. 30th): 1 & 2 Thessalonians

- Early Christian eschatology
- Eschatological corrections and clarifications
- Paul's pastoral care and encouragement
- Next Week's Reading: 1 Corinthians 1-16; *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters* articles on "Corinthians, Letters to the" and "Spiritual Gifts"; *Paul's Theology in Context*, Chapter 5

Week 5 (Oct 7th): 1 Corinthians and Mid-Term Review (Weeks 1-5)

- Addressing divisions and moral issues in the church
- Next Week's Reading: 2 Corinthians 1-13; *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters* articles on "Apostleship" and "Reconciliation"; *Paul's Theology in Context*, Chapter 6
- Discussion Question #3 due
- Mid-Term Exam available until Friday, October 14th

Week 6 (Oct 14th): 2 Corinthians

- Paul's defense of his apostleship
- Next Week's Reading: Romans 1-8; *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters* articles on "Romans, Letter to the" and "Righteousness"; *Paul's Theology in Context*, Chapter 7

Week 7 (Oct 21st): Romans (part 1)

- Introduction and themes of righteousness and faith
- Next Week's Reading: Romans 9-16; *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters* articles on "Israel" and "Law"; *Paul's Theology in Context*, Chapter 8
- Discussion Question #4 due

Week 8 (Oct 28th): Romans (part 2)

- Israel's Role in God's Plan
- Next Week's Reading: Philippians 1-4; *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters* articles on "Philippians, Letter to the" and "Joy"; *Paul's Theology in Context*, Chapter 9

Week 9 (Nov 4th): Philippians

- Joy and unity in Christ
- Next Week's Reading: Colossians 1-4; *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters* articles on "Colossians, Letter to the" and "Christology"; *Paul's Theology in Context*, Chapter 10
- Discussion Question #5

Week 10 (Nov 11th): Colossians

- Christ's supremacy and the new life in Christ
- Next Week's Reading: Ephesians 1-6; *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters* articles on "Ephesians, Letter to the" and "Church"; *Paul's Theology in Context*, Chapter 11

Week 11 (Nov 18th): Ephesians and Final Exam Review

- The Church as the body of Christ
- Next Week's Reading: 1 Timothy 1-6, 2 Timothy 1-4, Titus 1-3; *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters* articles on "Pastoral Epistles" and "Leadership"; *Paul's Theology in Context*, Chapter 12

Semester Break (Nov 25th)

Week 12 (Dec 2nd): Pastoral Epistles (1 & 2 Timothy, Titus)

- Church leadership and sound doctrine
- Final Exam available until Friday, December 6th

Final Course Grades Submitted to RCS Administrator (Dec 13th)

VIII. CHANGES

This syllabus is subject to change. It is the responsibility of the student to note any revisions when released.

IX. APPENDIX

Expository Essay Topics: Select a topic on which to write your 1500-word Expository essay. If you want to use a topic not on this list, please clear it with the professor.

1. The Theology of Justification in Romans: Explore Paul's understanding of justification by faith and its implications for Christian life.
2. The Role of the Law in Galatians: Analyze Paul's argument against legalism and the significance of freedom in Christ.
3. Suffering and Resurrection in 2nd Corinthians: Investigate how Paul addresses suffering and the hope of resurrection in this letter.

4. The Body of Christ in 1st Corinthians: Examine Paul's metaphor of the church as a unified body and its practical implications.
5. Ephesians: Unity and Diversity in the Church: Explore how Paul emphasizes unity while acknowledging diversity within the body of Christ.
6. The Pastoral Epistles and Church Leadership: Evaluate Paul's instructions on leadership roles, qualifications, and pastoral care.
7. The Eschatology of Thessalonians: Investigate Paul's views on the end times and the return of Christ.
8. Philemon: Forgiveness and Reconciliation: Explore the themes of forgiveness and reconciliation in this personal letter.
9. Theological Anthropology in Romans 7: Discuss Paul's complex portrayal of human nature and the struggle with sin.
10. The Holy Spirit in Romans 8: Analyze Paul's theology of the Spirit and its transformative power.
11. Paul's Apostolic Authority in 2nd Corinthians: Explore how Paul defends his authority and apostleship.
12. The Role of Faith and Works in James and Romans: Compare James's emphasis on works with Paul's focus on faith.
13. Paul's Missionary Journeys in Acts and His Letters: Trace Paul's travels and their impact on his epistles.
14. The Concept of Grace in Ephesians: Discuss Paul's rich theology of grace and its implications.
15. The Problem of Weak and Strong Believers in Romans 14: Analyze Paul's advice on handling disagreements within the church.
16. Paul's Personal Struggles in 2 Corinthians: Explore Paul's vulnerability and challenges as a minister.

17. The Theology of Resurrection in 1st Corinthians 15: Delve into Paul's teaching on the resurrection of the dead.