



**Grace Communion Seminary**

**NT04 Epistles of Paul**

### **Short Syllabus**

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### **Course Description**

In this course, students examine the 13 letters attributed to Paul in the New Testament canon. Students will learn the circumstances in which each letter was written – the problems Paul was attempting to address and the way in which he addressed them. Discussion will include questions of date and authorship, theological considerations involved in what Paul wrote, and how students can find modern significance in these letters. Two papers are required – an exegetical analysis of a passage, and written reaction to one of the textbooks.

### **Required Textbooks**

Capes, David B., Rodney Reeves, and E. Randolph Richards. *Rediscovering Paul: An Introduction to His World, Letters and Theology*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2007. ISBN 978-0-8308-2598-1.

Fee, Gordon. *Paul, the Spirit, and the People of God*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1996. ISBN: 978-1-5656-3170-0.

### **Recommended Resources**

Bruce, F. F. *Paul: Apostle of the Heart Set Free*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1986.

Hawthorne, Gerald F., Ralph P. Martin, and Daniel G. Reid, eds. *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1993.

Horrell, David G. *An Introduction to the Study of Paul*. 2nd ed. London: Clark, 2006.

Witherington, Ben. *The Paul Quest*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1998.

Wright, N.T. *What Saint Paul Really Said*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1997.

## Student Learning Outcomes:

Students will be given an opportunity to:

1. Understand how Paul's letters fit into the sequence of his missionary travels.
2. Become informed about the date and circumstances of each letter, and how those circumstances affected the way that Paul wrote.
3. Become aware of how different sections of each letter are related to other parts of the same letter.
4. Analyze how these letters are used in theology and ministry today.

## Requirements

Students should read both required textbooks and all the lectures; students should also participate in online or email discussions. This accounts for 20 percent of the final grade.

One exegetical paper is required at the mid-point of the class. It should reflect an awareness of the historical and exegetical questions, and some thought regarding the pastoral or expository use of the text. This counts for 40 percent of the grade.

1. **Reading:** Read both textbooks.
2. **Research and writing:** Write a 5-10 page paper on a passage in one of Paul's letters. Five passages will be suggested; students will choose one of those five to examine and explain. Students must consult and interact with at least two modern<sup>1</sup> scholarly books, including at least one major commentary. (*Modern* means within the last 25 years, and *major* means at least 200 pages devoted to Romans or each Corinthian letter; at least 100 for other letters – see the appendices for approved commentaries.) Students may need to obtain these through an interlibrary loan, so they should select

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<sup>1</sup> This does *not* mean that older commentaries are bad. However, new information or analyses will occasionally help us see that a new interpretation is better. If we do not consult more recent commentaries, we may be unwittingly perpetuating a mistake. Another advantage of modern commentaries is that they may address modern questions that older commentators simply did not deal with. We won't know whether they are helpful unless we consult them.

a passage and identify potential resources as soon as the class starts.

3. **Analyzing:** Write a 3-5 page paper interacting with the textbook by Fee. Identify at least two passages in the book that you found helpful, and explain *how* they are helpful. Identify at least one passage in the book that you found confusing, unpersuasive, or just plain wrong, and comment on that passage. This is 40 percent of the final grade.
4. **Participation:** Student interaction is an important part of this course. Students will be expected to read and participate in the email discussions.

### Weekly Topics and Assignments

Week number	Date	Lecture topics	Reading assignments
1	Jan. 19	Studying Paul – how his letters differ from the Gospels and Acts. Philemon as an example of pastoral tact.	Capes, chapters 1-3
2	Jan. 26	Galatians, and the question of how Gentiles can be in the people of God.	Galatians Capes, chapter 4 Fee, pages viii-23
3	Feb. 2	1 & 2 Thessalonians, and Paul’s comments about the return of Christ.	1 & 2 Thessalonians Capes, chapter 5 Fee, chapter 3
4	Feb. 9	1 Corinthians: A confusing mix of sociology and spirituality.	1 Corinthians Capes, chapter 6 Fee, chapter 4
5	Feb. 16	2 Corinthians: Paul confronts challenges to his authority	2 Corinthians Capes, chapter 10 Fee, chapter 5
The first assignment is due on Feb. 23. Choose one passage [_____] and analyze what it means.			
6	Feb. 23	Romans, part 1: The gospel of salvation, and being in Christ.	Romans 1-8 Capes, chapter 7 Fee, chapters 6-7
7	Mar. 2	Romans, part 2: How Israel fits into God’s plan, and Christian behavior.	Romans 9-16 Capes, chapter 11 Fee, chapters 8-9
8	Mar. 9	Philippians, and the question of	Philippians

		pseudepigraphy.	Capes, chapter 8 Fee, chapter 10-11
9	Mar. 16	Colossians and Ephesians and the cosmic victory of Christ.	Colossians, Ephesians Capes, chapter 12 Fee, chapters 12-13
10	Mar. 23	The Pastoral Epistles, and some concise advice for the early church.	1 & 2 Timothy, Titus Capes, chapter 9 Fee, chapters 14-15
Final paper is due in two weeks – on April 6. Easter is on April 12.			