

# Paul's Epistles (04NT520) –Fall 2017 (3 hours)

## Syllabus

### INSTRUCTOR

Dr Bruce Lowe received his first doctorate in Analytical Chemistry and taught, consulted and researched in a university setting over several years in both Chemistry and Chemical Engineering. He then completed his MDiv at RTS Orlando, becoming an ordained Presbyterian minister and working in university ministry, as a youth pastor, and in church revitalization. He completed his doctorate in Ancient History / New Testament Studies where his thesis has focused on the purpose of Romans through attention to its cultural setting. **In this course students will not only gain a classic seminary understanding of Paul, but through interaction with Roman culture, understand him and his letters more broadly. In addition, it will be our purpose to understand how Paul thought as a Christians, so we might see how to think as Christians today.**

< Office hrs: M 12-1pm, 4-6pm; W 12-1pm, 4-5pm; Email to confirm appointment;  
[blowe@rts.edu](mailto:blowe@rts.edu) >

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

Little needs to be said about Paul. He and his letters are a vital part of how we are to understand the Christian faith. In this course there is both a theoretical and practical bent. You will be given an understanding of Paul himself, but will also be exposed to the cultures which shaped him. It is only as we understand both of these that we are truly in a position to see his mind and thus the way a Christian should think.

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. To provide a general understanding of each of Paul's letters.
2. To highlight the specific value of each of Paul's letters for today – particularly the counter-cultural message Paul presented in his own day and its relevance for us today.
3. To resolve the key issues & 'problem passages' in Paul and his writings.
4. To consider how a Christian should think.

Required Texts:

Donald Carson & Douglas Moo, *An Introduction to the New Testament* (Zondervan, 2005) ISBN 978-0-3102-3859-1<sup>1</sup>

Gerald Hawthorne, Ralph Martin & Daniel Reid (eds.), *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters* (IVP, 1993) ISBN 978-0-8308-1778-8<sup>1</sup>

David Williams, *Paul's Metaphors* (Baker, 2003) ISBN 978-0-8010-4807-4

Herman Ridderbos, *Paul: An Outline of His Theology* (Eerdmans, 1997) ISBN: 978-0-8028-4469-9

ASSESSMENT

- 5%** Canvas & Class Discussion<sup>2</sup>
- 10%** Review of 1<sup>st</sup> 2 chapters of Ridderbos **Due date: see schedule below.**<sup>3</sup>
- 5%** Summary 12 Metaphors (1 each chapter) **Due date: see schedule below.**<sup>4</sup>
- 40%** Research Paper; **Due date: see schedule below.**<sup>5</sup>
- 40%** Final exam; In Class Exam; **Due date: see schedule below.**

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<sup>1</sup> Students will be expected to read relevant entries for each of Paul's letters in these two books and on the **final exam confirm what % they have read** for percentage points on the exam.

<sup>2</sup> You will be required to read a short article posted on Canvas and then interact with other students on Canvas in preparation for class discussion in week 2. **On Canvas** you will be required to post your own thoughts on the paper and then interact with the summaries of two other people. **In class** (week 2) you will be required to interact in further brief discussion. Marks will be awarded based on your on-line interaction and that which takes place first hour of week 2.

<sup>3</sup> This assignment should be about 2 pages, single-spaced. You will want to structure it like this: A short paragraph summarizing the content of the first two chapters, then a lengthy section listing succinctly the things you liked about it, then a similar sized section on the things you didn't like. A brief conclusion will list things like and who you might recommend this book to. **REMEMBER**, the goal of this assignment is to prove to me that you have read the book... so adding specific details will help in this process.

<sup>4</sup> This will be about 4 pages single-spaced – approx. three summaries per page. The sections you choose will be examinable – so (e.g.) on the final exam you may be asked to write an essay on the metaphor you chose from the chapter on “Slavery and Freedom.”

<sup>5</sup> This will be **10-15 pages** (single spaced), *including bibliography*. It will be a critical paper in which I wish you to interact with secondary literature (At least 10 good sources: journal articles, monographs and a range of commentaries from at least three different traditions – e.g. Reformed/Evangelical; Roman Catholic; Liberal Protestant; Classical History). The topic will be one of your own choice, negotiated with me. If you are stuck for a topic, I can assign one to you – see posted list of topics. **IF THIS IS YOUR FIRST COURSE IN SEMINARY OR IF YOU ARE STILL FINDING THE ASSIGNMENT PROCESS CHALLENGING, I RECOMMEND YOU CHOOSE THE “SPECIAL TOPIC” I WILL ALSO HAVE AVAILABLE** –designed to help you get orientated to seminary research. This paper is to be uploaded into the relevant folder in **Canvas**.

WHEN IS THE COURSE BEING RUN?

**Monday** 1pm-4pm, August 28<sup>th</sup> – December 4<sup>th</sup>

## General Outline

| Session | Date                                    | Class Time                          |
|---------|---|-------------------------------------|
| 1       | A28                                     | The Center of Paul?                 |
| 2       | <b>S4</b><br><b>5% Discussion Due</b>   | Thinking like a Christian           |
| 3       | S11                                     | Galatians                           |
| 4       | <b>S18</b><br><b>10% Ridderbos due</b>  | Galatians                           |
| 5       | S25                                     | Philippians                         |
| 6       | O2                                      | 1Corinthians                        |
| 7       | O9                                      | 1Corinthians                        |
| 8       | O16                                     | 1Corinthians                        |
| 9       | <b>O23</b><br><b>10% Williams rev.</b>  | 1Thessalonians / 2Thessalonians     |
| 10      | O30                                     | Ephesians                           |
| 11      | N6                                      | Colossians / 2Corinthians           |
| 12      | N13                                     | 2Corinthians / Pastorals            |
| 13      | <b>N27</b><br><b>30% Research paper</b> | Pastorals / Review                  |
|         | <b>D4</b><br><b>30% Final</b>           | <b>Final Exam (3hours in Class)</b> |

## Course Objectives Related to MDiv\* Student Learning Outcomes

| <b><u>MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes</u></b>   |   | <b><u>Rubric</u></b>  | <b><u>Mini-Justification</u></b>  |
|---|---|---|---|
| <p><i>In order to measure the success of the MDiv curriculum, RTS has defined the following as the intended outcomes of the student learning process. Each course contributes to these overall outcomes. This rubric shows the contribution of this course to the MDiv outcomes.</i></p> <p><i>*As the MDiv is the core degree at RTS, the MDiv rubric will be used in this syllabus.</i></p> |   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Strong</li> <li>➤ Moderate</li> <li>➤ Minimal</li> <li>➤ None</li> </ul> |   |
| <b>Articulation<br/>(oral &amp; written)</b>  | Broadly understands and articulates knowledge, both oral and written, of essential biblical, theological, historical, and cultural/global information, including details, concepts, and frameworks.   | Strong  | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Lengthy exegetical essay.</li> <li>2. Informal class presentations of outcomes to group discussion</li> <li>3. Book reviews</li> </ol>  |
| <b>Scripture</b>  | Significant knowledge of the original meaning of Scripture. Also, the concepts for and skill to research further into the original meaning of Scripture and to apply Scripture to a variety of modern circumstances. (Includes appropriate use of original languages and hermeneutics; and integrates theological, historical, and cultural/global perspectives.) | Strong  | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Close interaction with the letters of Paul.</li> <li>2. Instructor to address key elements of key Greek words.</li> <li>3. Cultural background to the letters covered in detail.</li> </ol> |
| <b>Reformed<br/>Theology</b>  | Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards.  | Strong  | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Reformed doctrine is highlighted in dialogue with current alternative perspectives.</li> </ol>  |
| <b>Sanctification</b>   | Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student's sanctification.  | Moderate  | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Singing worship song in class.</li> <li>2. Group discussion of how text applies to life at various points.</li> </ol>   |
| <b>Desire for<br/>Worldview</b>   | Burning desire to conform all of life to the Word of God.   | Strong  | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A main focus of the text is how to think like a Christian (see above).</li> </ol>   |
| <b>Winsomely<br/>Reformed</b>   | Embraces a winsomely Reformed ethos. (Includes an appropriate ecumenical spirit with other Christians, especially Evangelicals; a concern to present the Gospel in a God-honoring manner to non-Christians; and a truth-in-love attitude in disagreements.)   | Strong  | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Study of key passages in Romans and Ephesians highlights the way predestination should be winsomely held and articulated.</li> </ol>  |
| <b>Preach</b>   | Ability to preach and teach the meaning of Scripture to both heart and mind with clarity and enthusiasm.  | Moderate  | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Application at various points will highlight how a given passage may best be taught.</li> </ol>   |
| <b>Worship</b>  | Knowledgeable of historic and modern Christian-worship forms;   |   | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Worship songs of ancient</li> </ol>   |

|                     |   |          |   |
|---------------------|---|----------|---|
|                     | and ability to construct and skill to lead a worship service.   | Moderate | origin.   |
| <b>Shepherd</b>     | Ability to shepherd the local congregation: aiding in spiritual maturity; promoting use of gifts and callings; and encouraging a concern for non-Christians, both in America and worldwide. | Moderate | 1. Practical illustrations of instructor's experience.  |
| <b>Church/World</b> | Ability to interact within a denominational context, within the broader worldwide church, and with significant public issues.   | Strong   | 1. The theme of how to think like a Christian has significant impact on relations with the world. |

### **Extension Policy**

All assignments and exams are to be completed by the deadlines announced in this syllabus or in class.

Extensions for assignments and exams due within the normal duration of the course must be approved beforehand by the Professor. Extensions of two weeks or less beyond the date of the last deadline for the course must be approved beforehand by the Professor. A grade penalty may be assessed.

Extensions of greater than two weeks but not more than six weeks beyond the last deadline for the course may be granted in extenuating circumstances (i.e. illness, family emergency). For an extension of more than two weeks the student must request an Extension Request Form from the Student Services Office. The request must be approved by the Professor and the Academic Dean. A grade penalty may be assessed. (RTS Catalogue [2017-19], p. 52-60; and RTS Atlanta Student Handbook, p. 14)

Any incompletes not cleared six weeks after the last published due date for course work will be converted to a failing grade. Professors may have the failing grade changed to a passing grade by request. (RTS Catalog p. 49)