I. INTRODUCTION

A. PURPOSE AND DESCRIPTION

The goal of this course is to better understand the life, theology, and especially the writings of the Apostle Paul. We will focus on the letters of Paul, excluding Romans.

Reading is both a top-down and bottom-up process. That is, we read in terms of what we already know, and as we read “what we know” is always changing and developing. The class embraces that natural process. We will begin with a “top-down” overview of the life and thought of Paul. What was his pastoral and missionary context? How did that motivate his writings? Was there a central idea or orientation that made him tick? Some of this will overlap with another class, Acts and Romans, but we will try to focus on the other epistles of Paul in this class.

The bulk of our time, however, will be spent in a more inductive “bottom-up” reading of Paul’s epistles. Our purpose here is not so much to “synthesize and systematize” Paul, but rather to see how each epistle is unique, and provides a perspective on the whole. Each book arises from a particular context, and understanding that context helps us to better appreciate Paul’s personality, character, mission, and thought.

B. DATES AND TIMES.

Class will be held from January 19-23 from 8:30-5:30. All graded materials are due on Friday March 13th, 2015.

C. INSTRUCTOR

Thomas Keene
email: keenetommy@gmail.com (this is the fastest way to reach me)
Phone: 215-346-6717

D. COURSE WEBSITE

You can find all course documents and some of the readings online. The URL will be provided the first day of class, or can be requested by email.

II. REQUIRED READING

There is a good bit of reading to do in this class, but it will reward your time. By far the densest is the Ridderbos reading, so don’t start there. Students who want to get ahead should begin with the readings under “Paul’s Life” and “Paul’s Writing.” Next, start working through Gaffin’s Resurrection and Redemption, then finally Ridderbos, which will be slow, but rewarding, so stick with it! Save the Wright/Gaffin lectures for the many hours you will spend in the car commuting to class. Any items with a * will be provided for you in class.

A. PAUL’S THEOLOGY


Wright, N. T. and Gaffin, R. B. Sessions from the Auburn Avenue Pastor’s Conference from 2005 on The Apostle Paul and His Theology. Listen to sessions 3 (Gaffin), 4 (Wight), 5 (Q/A; free on
YouTube), 6 (Wright), 7 (Gaffin), and 8 (Q/A, free on YouTube). You can purchase sessions at http://www.auburnavenue.org/media/mp3.html (scroll to the bottom); sessions 5 and 8 are available on YouTube (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rp9gCEkELlc, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hQyKkQknKcQ).

B. **Paul’s Life**

C. **Paul’s Writings**
   Read all of Paul’s epistles in English (but not Romans).
   Read the special introduction section for each book in the Pauline corpus (excluding Romans) from one of the following:

III. **ASSESSMENT**

   Your final grade will be determined by three factors: (1) your completion of the required reading, (2) a 10-15 exegetical paper on a text of your choosing, (3) a three-question final exam.

A. **Reading (15%)**
   On the day you take the final exam you will also be required to fill out a form stating the percentage of reading that you completed. Each of your required reading assignments will be listed and you will be required to estimate, on your honor, the percentage of each you completed. I consider a book “read” if you have made every effort to understand its main points and the various justifications offered for that point. This usually requires reading and comprehending each paragraph, but not necessarily each word or sentence. In short: skimming is permissible at certain points and in certain cases, but not skipping.

B. **Paper (50%)**
   1. **Overview**
      You are required to write a 10-15 (double-spaced) page exegetical research paper on a text of your choosing. You can choose any text in the Pauline Epistles (except Romans). The paper should be submitted by email no later than midnight on the due date listed above.
   2. **Text Selection**
      Text selection can make or break an exegetical paper, so choose your text carefully. Your text needs to be short enough that you can do it justice in the space of 10-15 pages, but long enough that it can stand on its own and has its own integrity. Aim for about a paragraph, maybe two if necessary. It is not always easy to determine where your paragraph begins and ends—different English translations and Biblical commentaries divide the text differently (there are no paragraphs in the “original,” at least not as we might consider them), so you will need to do a little research before coming to a final decision. I suggest you pick a section of Scripture (a verse or two) that seems interesting to you, then do a little research on those verses to determine the beginning and ending of the paragraph in which they occur. That final paragraph (or two) should be the center-point of your paper.
   3. **How to Write an Exegetical Paper**
An exegetical paper, unlike a theological or thematic one, is centered upon one particular pericope of Scripture (a paragraph or two, depending on genre). That text is the heart of your paper, and your goal should be to explain what that text means in both its immediate and canonical context.

Once you have picked a text that interests you (see above), begin your research by reading your text (and its surrounding context) over and over again. Go verse by verse and ask yourself tons of questions (and write them all down). No question is too simple (or too complex)! Sometimes the key to a text is found in the questions that seem “too obvious.” Make sure at least one of these questions is “What is the point?” In fact, several of your questions should be variations on that all-important idea. Why does Peter say it that way? Why does John include this in his argument? Why does the author of Hebrews go there? These are all purpose questions, and they are the most important ones to ask.

Now start answering your questions. Don’t pick up a book or a commentary quite yet. Answer your questions first by prayerfully and humbly looking at the text itself. You will need to look at the immediate context of your passage. How does it fit into the flow of the book as a whole? How does it further the author’s main point? Outline your text, and outline the book in which it occurs. These types of activities help you view the text as a small piece of a larger whole.

Once you have started to explore your text a little more a “main point” should begin to coalesce in your mind. Try to write down that main point in a sentence or so. Aim for a “tweetable” main point. Then broaden your horizons. What is the main point of this section of the book? What is the main point of the book as a whole? And how does this book contribute to our overall understanding of the canon, of redemptive history, and of the Christian life?

Only after you have at least preliminary answers to these questions are you ready to crack open a commentary. Start researching your passage in reliable commentaries and articles (the Word series of commentaries usually have excellent bibliographies you can consult). In the course of your research you will be able to refine and develop (or reject) the ideas you have already come to on your own.

Now it’s time to start writing. Sketch up a preliminary outline. Your organization will of course be dependent on your passage and the main point you want to make, but I suggest you start narrow (that is, with the details of your text) and work your way out (that is, with the literary and then canonical context of your text). After a brief introduction, start by explaining the immediate concerns of the text you picked. Are there any translation issues to note? Any strange words? Describe the flow of the argument and tell us the main point being made. Next, describe how your passage fits into the broader context of the book—start with the immediate context and then increasingly “zoom out” until the whole book is in view. As a final concern, show how your passage deepens our understanding of the Bible as a whole, how it fits into the Gospel of our redemption (this is not the major emphasis of an exegetical paper, but it’s good to do). Along the way, or at the end, you can feel more than free to make some “practical applications.”

4. Greek Requirement
If you have taken Greek please use it in your paper. Provide your own translation of the passage that you picked and justify that translation when appropriate. Use Greek when appropriate throughout. You do not need to be detailed here, but if you know Greek use it!

5. Format
Your paper should be double spaced with 1-inch margins. Use Times New Roman or equivalent font, 12pt. Cite all your sources following the guidelines laid out in the SBL Handbook, or the Chicago Manual of Style (I’m fine with either the “standard” method or the newer author-date format) You might want to considering using bibliography software, such as the free Zotero plugin for Firefox to
make this process easier. Include a bibliography with all the works you cited in your paper as described in the aforementioned guides.

C. Final (40%)
The final exam will be posted online on the last day of class. It will consist of three essay questions. The first question will be a “special introduction” question over one of the books we have covered. Some examples include “Discuss the purpose of the Corinthian Correspondence?” or “How would you describe the historical backdrop of Philemon?” The second question will be about a theological idea central to Paul and ask you to explicate it in light of Paul’s epistles; for example: “Discuss Paul’s view of the law, looking at specific passages where that view is described.” The last question will be more synthetic and practical; for example: “How does Paul encourage those who are suffering in his epistles, and how does that relate to the contemporary church?” For each question you should be able to critically interact with both the readings and lectures while simultaneously demonstrating your understanding of the actual book.

You will need to complete the exam by the due date listed above. You may download the exam at any time but please do not look at it until you are ready to complete the exam in one 3-hour sitting. Include your name, email address, and your start and completion times on the exam.

You may use an unannotated English or Greek bible during the exam, but no other helps are permitted.

D. Grading Scale

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<th>Grade</th>
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<tr>
<td>97-100</td>
<td>A+</td>
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<tr>
<td>93-96</td>
<td>A</td>
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<tr>
<td>90-92</td>
<td>A-</td>
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<td>87-89</td>
<td>B+</td>
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<td>83-86</td>
<td>B</td>
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<td>&lt;60</td>
<td>F</td>
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IV. OUTLINE
An outline of lecture material will be provided on the first day of class to assist you in studying. I will also provide slides of my lecture material as we proceed in class. An extended bibliography will also be provided.

V. SCHEDULE
A detailed outline will be provided on the first day of class, but you can expect us to proceed roughly as follows:

- Monday: Paul’s Life and Theology
- Tuesday: Paul’s Theology, Galatians, The Corinthian Correspondence
- Wednesday: The Corinthian Correspondence, Thessalonians
- Thursday: Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians
- Friday: The Pastorals