

## **REL 326: The Life & Thought of Paul: Body, Sin, & Sexuality**

Spring 2006

Dr. Lynn R. Huber

Monday, Wednesday 5:10-7:30

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“There are some things in [Paul’s letters] that are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction . . . .” (2 Peter 3:15-16)

### **Course Description:**

This course examines the writings and traditions associated with one of the most influential and controversial figures in Christian history, the apostle Paul. Paul’s letters and those of his followers demand our attention because they have contributed greatly to the shape of Western culture, including the ways many peoples think about ethnic and racial difference, gender roles, and the relationship between Judaism and Christianity.

Struggling to help the young Christian communities maintain a distinctive identity within a diverse society, Paul is deeply concerned with issues pertaining to the body (e.g. circumcision, resurrection, sexuality, celibacy, food, proper attire for worship). These issues arise directly from the experiences of the fledging communities and they will be the focus of our study in this course. In so doing, we will also examine other ways of understanding the body within Paul’s Jewish and Greco-Roman milieus. Seeing how Paul’s views on the body relate to other conceptions will help us understand Paul and his influence upon Western thought.

### **Course Objectives:**

- To introduce students to major themes within the Pauline corpus, in order to better understand the diversity of the Christian tradition and the ways that Paul’s views continue to influence Western thought and practice.
- To have students learn to recognize the different ways that religious thinking reflects, shapes, challenges, and legitimates the social, historical, and ideological assumptions of the culture in which it is embedded.
- To sharpen students’ critical reading and interpretation skills, specifically in regards to textual primary sources, while encouraging them to become sympathetic readers of perspectives other than their own.



### **Required Texts:**

Dale B. Martin, *The Corinthian Body* (1995).

Calvin J. Roetzel, *The Letters of Paul* (1998).

Harper Collins Study Bible.

\*Other course readings will be available on-line through the class Blackboard site.

## **Coursework and Grades:**

**Class Attendance and Participation:** Success in this course requires regular attendance and active participation. However, I understand that things happen (e.g. illness, court dates, etc.). As a result, you are allowed **two free absences** in this class. I don't need to know why you're absent. You have 2 absences available to you--use them wisely. If you miss more than 2 days, your "attendance/ participation" grade will be lowered by a third with each subsequent absence, regardless of the reason. Every absence after the first will result in this grade being lowered by a third (e.g. 3 absences = A-, 4 absences = B+). This grade will comprise 10% of the final grade. Additionally, negative class participation can cause this grade to be lowered.

**Class Preparations:** Since this course is an upper-level Religious Studies course, there is a considerable amount of reading to be completed for each class and your completion of these reading assignments *prior to* coming to class is crucial to the success of this course. For *each* assigned reading (with the exception of Roetzel and Harper Collins introductions) you will be expected to turn in a brief, typed, assignment. The assignment will contain three things: (1) the thesis of the reading, (2) a quote from the reading that resonated with you, and (3) a question that the reading generated in your mind. Satisfactory completion of all of these (excluding one "grace") will yield an A for the student's "class preparation" grade. Each missing or unsatisfactory assignment will lower the student's preparation grade by a third. These are due in class and *you must be present to turn it in yourself and no late work will be accepted*. These assignments will be worth 25% of the student's final grade. Students are asked to keep these assignments in a notebook or binder which will be handed in at the end of the semester.

**Exegetical Essays:** Exegesis is the art of reading a text closely and explaining how and why one might read the text in this way. Each student will complete two exegetical essays, 7-10 pages each, which offer close readings of ancient texts. The first essay will interpret an ancient Greco-Roman or Jewish text and the second will interpret a Pauline or pseudo-Pauline text. Instructions for writing the essay and possible passages will be distributed in class. The first essay is due March 15 and the second essay is due on the day of the final exam. *Late work will not be accepted*. Each essay will be assigned a letter grade and each will be worth 25% of the student's final grade.

**Paul Quiz:** At the beginning of the semester, Feb. 8, students will take a short quiz on Paul and his world. This will include information about the dates of the Pauline letters, a short map quiz, and information from the readings that have already been done. Information pertaining to this quiz will be distributed on the first day of class. This quiz will be graded and worth 5% of the student's final grade.

**Mid-Term and Final Self-Assessments:** At mid-term and on the day of the final exam, students will be asked to write an assessment of their work throughout the semester. You will be asked to reflect honestly on your participation in class and on your engagement with the class material, and you will comment specifically upon your daily reading assignments. The specific format for the self-assessments will be distributed to the class

before the day they are given. The assessments will be given letter grades and together these will comprise 10% of the student's final grade.

**Grading Breakdown:**

Attendance/ Participation	10%
Class Preparations	25%
Exegetical Essay 1	25%
Exegetical Essay 2	25%
Paul Quiz	5%
Mid-term and Final Self-Assessment	10%

**Elon Academic Honor Code:** Students in this course are expected to be familiar with and follow Elon's Academic Honor Code. According to this code, Elon students are expected to:

- refrain from cheating, including plagiarism.
- refrain from lying.
- express opinions with civility and with consideration for the opinions of others.
- respect shared intellectual property and resources.
- promote the importance of the honor code in all their interactions for the benefit of the learning community.

**Class Conduct:** This course assumes that learning best occurs in an environment that allows for a free exchange of ideas and opinions. We can learn from the different perspectives of those around us. In light of this, all class participants are encouraged to consider the perspectives of others, being respectful of the fact that we represent a variety of ethnic and social backgrounds, abilities, classes, genders, sexualities, and religious affiliations. This does not mean we refrain from critical inquiry and debate, rather in this classroom we will engage in critical conversations with an attitude of humility and grace toward one another.

**Course Schedule:\***

Feb 1 Introduction to the Course  
Syllabus & Method

**Setting the Context for Paul & the Body**

Feb 6 Situating Early Christianity & Paul  
**Reading:** The Book of Acts.  
Introduction to Acts from the Harper Collins Study Bible.  
Roetzel pp. 1-5.

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\* Please Note: This schedule is subject to change per the instructor's discretion.

- Feb 8            Situating Early Christianity & Paul  
**Reading:**      The Letter to the Galatians.  
                     Letter to the Philippians.  
                     Roetzel pp. 6-50.
- Suggested:**    “Paul’s Mission and Letters.” This is available at:  
<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/religion/first/missions.html>
- Feb 13            Body and Ideology  
**Reading:**      Martin *The Corinthian Body*, preface.  
                     Michel Foucault, “The Body of the Condemned” and  
                     “Docile Bodies” from *Discipline and Punish in The  
                     Foucault Reader* (ed. P. Rainbow; NY: Pantheon Books,  
                     1984), pp. 170-87.
- The Ancient Body**
- Feb 15            The Ancient Jewish Body: Life, Gender, Sex and Sin  
**Reading:**      Genesis 1-3, 6:1-8, 9, 17.  
                     Leviticus 1, 11-13, 20:10-27.  
                     Deuteronomy 4:15-20.
- Feb 20            The Ancient Jewish Body: Death  
**Reading:**      James Tabor, “What the Bible Says about Death, the  
                     Afterlife and the Future.” Available online at  
<http://www.religiousstudies.uncc.edu/jdtabor/future.html>  
                     1 Enoch and 4 Ezra, selections.
- Feb 22            The Jewish Body in Conflict in the Greco-Roman World  
**Reading:**      1 Maccabees 1-4  
                     Tacitus, “The Histories,” selection.  
                     “Ancient Surgery,” esp. sections on circumcision and  
                     removing marks. Available online at  
<http://www.channel4.com/history/microsites/H/history/a-b/ancientsurgery6.html>
- Feb 27            The Body in the Greco-Roman World  
**Reading:**      Martin, *The Corinthian Body* pp. 3-35, 139-62.  
                     Aristotle, “On the Generation of Animals,” selections.  
                     Available online at  
<http://www.stoa.org/diotima/anthology/wlgr/wlgr-medicine339.shtml>  
                     Hippocrates, “The Diseases of Women,” selections.  
                     Available online at  
<http://www.stoa.org/diotima/anthology/wlgr/wlgr-medicine343.shtml>

Hippocrates, "On Generating Seed and the Nature of the Child," selections. Available online at

<http://www.stoa.org/diotima/anthology/wlgr/wlgr-medicine341.shtml>

Hippocrates, "On Virgins," selections. Available online at

<http://www.stoa.org/diotima/anthology/wlgr/wlgr-medicine349.shtml>

- Mar 1            The Female Body and the Law in the Greco-Roman World  
**Reading:**      Bruce W. Winter, *Roman Wives, Roman Widows* pp. 17-74.
- Mar 6            Sexual and Enslaved Bodies in the Greco-Roman World  
**Reading:**      Keith Bradley, "Resisting Slavery in Ancient Rome."  
Available online at  
[http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/ancient/romans/slavery\\_01.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/ancient/romans/slavery_01.shtml)  
Two contracts for wet nurses. Available online at  
<http://www.stoa.org/diotima/anthology/wlgr/wlgr-medicine381.shtml>  
Legal opinion on a slave bearing a child. Available online at  
<http://www.stoa.org/diotima/anthology/wlgr/wlgr-romanlegal118.shtml>

### Reading the Body in Paul

- Mar 8            Bodies in Motion: Paul's Apocalyptic Vision  
**Reading:**      1 and 2 Thessalonians.  
1 Corinthians 15.  
Roetzel pp. 51-83, 119-132.
- Mar 13          Negotiating Identity: The Letter to the Galatians  
**Reading:**      The Letter to the Galatians.  
Roetzel pp. 96-103
- Mar 15          Negotiating Identity: The Letter to the Galatians  
**Reading:**      The Letter to the Galatians.  
Roetzel pp. 96-103

### Due: Exegetical Essay 1

Mar 18-26      Spring Break

- Mar 27          No class  
**Reading:**      Daniel Boyarin, "Circumcision, Allegory, and Universal 'Man,'" *A Radical Jew: Paul and the Politics of Identity*, pp. 13-38.

- Mar 29 Sin and the Social Body: 1 Corinthians  
**Reading:** 1 Corinthians  
 Roetzel pp. 83-96.  
 Martin, *The Corinthian Body* pp. 39-136.
- Apr 3 Sex and the Social Body: 1 Corinthians, cont.  
**Reading:** Martin, *The Corinthian Body* pp. 163-251.
- Apr 5 1 Corinthians, cont.  
**Reading:** Margaret Y. MacDonald, "Reading Real Women Through the Undisputed Letters of Paul," *Women and Christian Origins*, pp. 199-220.  
 Elizabeth A. Castelli, "Paul on Women and Gender," *Women and Christian Origins*, pp. 221-235
- Apr 10 Queer Bodies, Sin & the Book of Romans  
**Reading:** The Letter to the Romans  
 Roetzel pp. 103-113.  
 Bernadette Brooten, "Paul's Views on the Nature of Women and Female Homoeroticism," *Immaculate and Powerful: The Female in Sacred Image and Social Reality*, pp. 61-87.
- Apr 12 The Suffering Body: 2 Corinthians.  
**Reading:** Re-read 2 Corinthians  
 Calvin Roetzel, *Paul: The Man and the Myth*, 52-60 and 170-177.  
 Ariel Glucklich, "Religious Ways of Hurting" in *Sacred Pain* (Oxford UP, 2001), pp. 11-39.
- Apr 17 No class.
- Apr 19 The Enslaved Body: The Letter to Philemon  
**Reading:** Philemon  
 Roetzel pp. 116-118.  
 Allen Callahan, "'Brother Saul': An Ambivalent Witness to Freedom," *Semeia* (1998): 235-250
- Apr 24 Modern Pauline Bodies?  
**Reading:** Rosemary Radford Ruether, "St. Paul, Friend or Enemy of Women?" Available online at  
[http://www.beliefnet.com/story/142/story\\_14272.html](http://www.beliefnet.com/story/142/story_14272.html)  
 Other selections TBA.

### Reading/ Writing the Pauline Corpus

- Apr 26 Paul's Early Christian Legacy: Ephesians and Colossians  
**Reading:** Ephesians  
 Colossians  
 Roetzel pp. 134-148.  
 Clarice J. Martin, "The *Haustafeln* (Household Codes) in African American Biblical Interpretation: 'Free Slaves' and 'Subordinate Women,'" *Stony the Road We Trod: African American Biblical Interpretation*, pp. 206-231.
- May 1 Paul's Early Christian Legacy: The Pastorals  
**Reading:** 1 & 2 Timothy  
 Roetzel pp. 153-160.
- May 3 Paul's Early Christian Legacy: The Acts of Paul and Thecla  
**Reading:** The Acts of Paul and Thecla  
 Roetzel pp. 161-190.
- May 8 Tying up the Pauline Body: Who's in Bondage?  
**In class viewing:** Reading Paul through Robert Mapplethorpe
- May 12 Final  
**Due: Exegetical Essay 2**