

REL351 The Geography of Faith: Paul, and the Emergence of Christianity in the Aegean Summer 2019 Cameron Afzal

Course Description

The purpose of this class is to introduce students to the work and thinking of Paul as well as to the social impact the emergence of Christianity had on the Greco-Roman world. This will be accomplished with a combination of lectures and discussion on both the life and teaching of Paul of Tarsus as well as a general overview of Greco-Roman religion and society. Students will be introduced to Paul's letters and the social world implied therein. The introductory classroom experience in Athens will equip the students to explore the ancient streets and byways of some of the major urban sites of the ancient Greek world. We will have the occasion to study, beginning in a classroom in Athens, the major classical sites in Athens and then continue in the ancient streets and byways of some of the major cities where Paul worked and taught: Philippi, Thessaloniki, and Corinth. In this environment students will also be introduced to life in the Greek city in the first century of the Common Era. The class will also make visits to Eleusis and Delphi which were major centers of Greek religious life in the first century. We will be aided in our study with visits to museums like the National Archeological Museum in Athens. In addition to focusing on the life and work of Paul we will also explore the impact that Paul's work ultimately had in the region with visits to various Byzantine sites, which will include the New Museum of Byzantine Culture in Thessalonica, and a trip to the Monastic site of Meteora among others from Late Antiquity.

Assignments and Grades

Students will participate in an intensive seminar setting with assigned readings and discussion of primary texts, as well as on-site discussion and conversation.

The course will conclude with a take-home open book final exam essay of short essays.

Students will be evaluated: 50% on attendance, participation, discussions;
50% on the final exam.

Class Participation: Your attendance and in class writing and analysis – is vitally important to your success in this course.

Use of Laptops: In-class or on-site use of laptops and other devices is permitted if that facilitates course-related activities such as note-taking, looking up references, etc. Laptop or other device privileges will be suspended if there are not used for class-related work.

Attendance: Students are expected to report for classes promptly. CYA regards attendance in class and on-site as essential. Absences are recorded and have consequences. Illness or other such compelling reasons which result in absences should be reported immediately in the Student Affairs Office.

Policy on Original Work: Unless otherwise specified, all submitted work must be your own, original work. Any excerpts from the work of others must be clearly identified as a quotation, and a proper citation provided. (Check Student handbook, pg. 9)

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: If you are a registered (with your home institution) student with a disability and you are entitled to learning accommodation, please inform the Director of Academic Affairs and make sure that your school forwards the necessary documentation.

Books, Course Materials, Moodle

This list comprises a set of books which provide background to and a deepening of what will be discussed in class, and which are available in the CYA library. It is a suggested bibliography on the subjects which we will touch upon during our discussion and is not meant to be either required or exhaustive.

Burkert, Walter. *Greek Religion*. Cambridge: Harvard, 1995.

[This is the classic and erudite survey of Greek religion in antiquity.]

Klauck, Hans-Josef. *Magic and Paganism in early Christianity*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003.

[An excellent study of the cultural contrasts engendered by the emergence of Christianity in the Greco-Roman-World.]

Klauck, Hans-Josef. *The Religious Context of Early Christianity; a Guide to Graeco-roman Religions*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003.

[This is a general introduction to religion life of the pre-Christian Graeco-Roman world; basically an excellent reference work, a compliment to Burkert.]

Koester, Helmut. *Paul and His World*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007.

[A collection of articles on the historical and archeological context of Paul's writing from one of the premiere scholars of archeology and the New Testament.]

Meeks, Wayne A. *The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul*. 2nd ed. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003.

[This is the classic social-scientific study of urban Pauline Christianity.]

Murphy-O'Connor, J. *Paul a Critical Life*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996.

[A major monograph on the life of Paul.]

Murphy-O'Connor, J. *Paul: His Story*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006.

Murphy-O'Connor, J. *St. Paul's Corinth: Text and Archaeology*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2002.

Roetzel, Calvin J. *The Letters of Paul: Conversations in Context*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998.

[This is a clear and erudite introduction to Paul's writings, highlighting the importance of reading these texts as letters which relate to specific cultural contexts.]

Sanders, E. P. *Paul: A Very Short Introduction* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001.

[The title says it all, a good short introduction to Paul, especially his theology.]

Wright, N. T. *Paul: In Fresh Perspective*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2009.

[A good introduction to Paul's theology.]

Class Schedule

The following is a syllabus indicting the topics to study and their respective readings

Introduction: The Jewish and Greek Religious Background

1. **The Origins of Christianity in the Resurrection Experience and the Jesus Movement**
The Book of Acts (if you haven't read the NT, perhaps also Luke or Matthew)
Newsome, *Greeks Romans and Jews*, "The Spread of Hellenism"

Esler, *The Early Christian World*, "Mediterranean Context of Early Christianity"

Barrett, *NT Background: Selected Documents* "Rabbinic Literature and Rabbinic Judaism"

2. Greek Religion

Homeric Hymn to Demeter

Homeric Hymn to Pythian Apollo

Martin, *The Early Christian World*, "Greco-Roman Philosophy and Religion"

Barrett, *NT Background: Selected Documents* "Mystery Religions"

Rice & Stambaugh, *Sources for the Study of Greek Religion* on Delphi, Eleusinian Mysteries, Dionysian Mysteries and the Kabeiroi at Samothrace

Burkert, *Greek Religion*, "Individual Gods," "Mystery Sanctuaries: The Kabeiroi and Samothrace, Eleusis, and Bacchica"

3. Women and the Greco-Roman World

Kramer, *Maenads, Martyrs, Matrons and Monastics* (excerpts)

Portefaix, *Sisters Rejoice* "Part 1" pp. 9-58

The Life of Paul

4. Paul, a Pharisee, Conversion and Questions of Chronology

Galatians 1 (Acts 9)

Martin, *The Early Christian World*, "Paul and the Development of Gentile Christianity"

[Eleusis--Tuesday 4 June—day trip]

The Birth of a Mixed Jewish and Gentile Community

5. "The Antioch Incident"

Galatians 1-2 (Acts 13-15)

Meeks, *The First Urban Christians*, "The Urban Environment of Paul"

Meeks, *The First Urban Christians*, "The Social level of Pauline Christians"

Paul's Missionary Journeys in Asia Minor and Greece

[Thessaloniki, Philippi, Meteora, Delphi—Friday 7 - Friday 14 June]

6. Ephesus: Mission to the Gentiles

Galatians 3-5, Philemon (Acts 16:1-10)

Murphy O'Connor, *St. Paul's Ephesus*

Meeks, *The First Urban Christians*, "The Formation of the Ekklesia"

Balch, *Paul and the Greco-Roman World*, "Paul, Households, and Families"

7. Thessaloniki: The Church and Persecution

1 Thessalonians, (Acts 17)

Malherbe, *Paul and the Thessalonians*, "Founding the Christian Community"

Jewett, *The Thessalonian Correspondence: Pauline Rhetoric and Mediterranean Piety*, "The Setting in Thessalonica"

H. Koester, "Archeology and Paul in Thessalonike" in *Paul and His World*

8. Philippi: Christian Identity and The Role of Women in Paul's Churches

Philippians (Acts 16:11-40)

Portefaix, *Sisters Rejoice* pp. 59-128

H. Koester, "Paul and Philippi" in *Paul and His World*

9. **Corinth: Christians among Gentiles [Corinth--Tuesday 18 June —day trip]**
(Acts 18)
The Corinthian Correspondence
Balch, *Paul and the Greco-Roman World*, "Paul, Households, and Families"
Murphy O'Conner, *St. Paul's Corinth*
10. **Back to Athens: Conclusions**

Course schedule, in terms of subjects and readings, may be subject to change to benefit student learning and in keeping up to date with current research

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