I. Purpose of the Course

The purpose of this course is to introduce the discipline of Pauline theology, as a subset of biblical theology, and to enable the student to take the first steps toward formulating his/her own integrated understanding of Paul's thought. To this end, the course will introduce the major theological themes of Pauline theology, especially as they derive from the centrality of the righteousness of God in Paul's thought, since one of the foci of the course is "the quest for the 'center' of Paul's thought" (GCTS catalog).

Pauline Theology is an integrative discipline that demands acute exegetical skills, creative theological formulation, and an awareness of contemporary social realities. Thus, this course is a hybrid of many different perspectives. The reading and thinking demanded in this course may therefore sometimes presuppose background that is lacking in the student's preparation. But do not despair. The goal of this course is not to create mature Pauline scholars in one semester (!), but to push us toward this all important task as an essential pillar of developing our own biblical theology (which is, of course, a life-long task).

II. Structure of the Course

In order to accomplish this goal, the student's time will be devoted primarily to confronting the issues of Pauline theology itself in order to learn by example. Practically, this means that the course is built around class discussions of readings that are designed to map out the biblical context and central content of Pauline theology. Pursing a Pauline theology requires time to think about the Paul's writings historically and holistically; the lectures and reading are simply stimuli to that end. The reason for this is that reading is simply the best kind of thinking - it is thinking with a pencil. The more actively one listens and reads (asking questions of the material is the key to going beyond it!), the more one will learn.

Hence, unlike my exegesis courses, the goal of these assignments is not to impart skills but to expose the student to "raw material" that will stimulate the student to use his/her own skills in the future to create the Pauline theology so needed by the Church today. Thus, the daily assignments focus on content rather than application. This does not mean that your memory is the only tool you will need in this course. Quite the contrary! If done properly, this course will demand the hardest of all work: thinking the thoughts of an author/lecturer after him to such a degree that one can produce the product of thought, namely good questions. Each class period will thus consist of two parts: a lecture on Pauline theology by the instructor, focused on the assigned Pauline passage for that day, and a discussion period focusing on the reading and the material covered in class.
III. Required and Recommended Textbooks and Readings


IV. Course Requirements

1. Prepare a Greek-reading notebook for the assigned biblical texts focusing on the difficult vocabulary, grammar, and syntax of each passage – these notes will be your reading notes for our class discussion.

2. Complete the reading of Schreiner and Campbell for each class period. Take the weekly quizzes on the reading of Schreiner and Campbell. Since the lectures and discussion periods presuppose this reading, we will have weekly quizzes for the material assigned for that day. This rewards diligence and prevents coming to class with a blank slate. I recognize that the reading load for this course is heavy; for this reason there is no research paper required; each week you will be doing research in our text books!

3. Prepare two discussion questions for Schreiner and Campbell for each class period. You will be asked to present your questions periodically to help lead our time together. These will be handed in at each class period. The best teacher I ever had taught me that "asking questions is the key to understanding."

Grading: The quizzes will count 60% of the final grade. The Greek-reading notebook will count for 20% of the final grade. The discussion questions will count for 20% of the final grade.

V. Proposed Daily Schedule and Assignments

1. Jan 26th: Intro to Course: Pauline Polarities and the Motivation of Paul's Ministry (the Thessalonian Correspondence).


READING WEEK


5. March 2nd: Schreiner, pp. 73-85; Campbell, pp. 313-411. Galatians 3:1-14

7. March 16th: Schreiner, pp. 219-249; Campbell, pp. 469-518  
   Rom 3:21-31

READING WEEK

8. March 30th: Schreiner pp. 251-270; Campbell, pp. 519-600.  
   Rom 4:1-25

   Rom 5:12-21

10. April 13th: Schreiner, pp. 307-329; Campbell, pp. 715-832.  
   Rom 8:1-17

VI. The Course and the Master of Divinity Goals

NT 680 is designed to meet the goals of the M.Div. degree in the following ways:

1. To gain competency with the biblical languages in order to develop exegetical and hermeneutical skills using the Hebrew text of the Old Testament and the Greek text of the New Testament (1): As a synthetic course, this elective does not focus on this goal, though there will be continual references to the biblical text and students will be responsible to work through significant texts in Greek.

2. To understand the basic content and themes of the Old and New Testaments in their historical and cultural settings, (1) as well as the historical and theological dimensions of the Christian faith (2): Meeting this goal is the primary purpose of this course; the understanding of Pauline theology, derived as it is from the OT, will be read from the perspective of the history of redemption and focus on the biblical-theological dimensions of the Christian faith.

3. To expound and proclaim effectively the biblical message of redemption (3): The biblical message of redemption cannot be effectively expounded without the kind of integrative and history-of-redemption perspectives developed in this course.

4. To develop skills appropriate for church leadership as a pastor, teacher, counselor, evangelist, chaplain, church planter, missionary or other role as a leader (3): The centrality of the biblical theology for ministry, with Paul as our lead example, is underscored and strengthened by this course.

5. To foster love for God and his word and therefore to cultivate the practices of spiritual maturity and Christ-like character, and to understand the Christian’s ethical responsibility in church and society (4, 5): One of the central themes of the course is the way in which faith expresses itself in ethical and moral transformation and responsibility (love). The course thus provides a theological and exhortative framework for meeting this goal.

6. To acquire a biblical perspective and Christian worldview on the forces in our culture and to learn to engage those as they are at work both outside and inside the life of the church (5): this will not be a focus of this course.
7. To develop a global vision for the Christian faith so as to foster an appreciation and commitment to the worldwide proclamation of the gospel (6): The culmination of the course is a study of the biblical purpose and mandate for witness, which thus occupies the highpoint of the course.

8. To cultivate an appreciation for and a commitment to the personal and community sharing of the gospel (6): The life and purpose of the people of God as a people (community of faith/witness in the midst of the world) is one of the central themes of the course.