

Paul of Tarsus: Slave of Jesus Christ or Apostle of Liberation?

University of Arizona
Humanities Seminar Program
Wednesdays, 1–3pm, May 5–26

Instructor

Dr. Courtney Friesen

Email: friesen@email.arizona.edu

Office: Learning Services Building 220

I. Course Description

The Christian religion is inextricably bound up with contemporary culture not only in America but also around the globe. Yet, even after centuries of scholarly inquiry, numerous questions regarding its historical origins remain contested and unanswered. The Christian movement developed into a religion *about* Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God. From a historical perspective, however, Jesus himself did not invent this religion. Rather, the most influential figure in establishing the Christian church as an institution is the Apostle Paul. This course will undertake an historical reconstruction of Paul's mission and his distinctive achievements, the manner in which he founded new religious communities and articulated a distinctive intellectual and spiritual vision.

II. Textbooks

Bart Ehrman, *The New Testament: A Historical Introduction to the Early Christian Writings*. Oxford. 7th ed. 2000. Or, 6th ed. 2016.¹

The Harper Collins Study Bible Student Edition. Revised and Updated. HarperCollins, 2006. Or, something similar.

III. Schedule

Week 1 (May 5): Paul, the Man behind the Letters

Reading: 1 Thessalonians, Galatians
Ehrman, *The New Testament*, chs. 18, 19 in 7th ed. = chs. 20, 21 in 6th ed.

Week 2 (May 12): Paul between Paganism and Judaism

Reading: Romans
Ehrman, *The New Testament*, chs. 20, 21 in 7th ed. = chs. 22, 23 in 6th ed.

¹ Equivalent reading selections are given for both the 6th and 7th editions of Ehrman.

Week 3 (May 19): Beyond Paul: Letters, Legends, Legacies

Reading: Colossians, Ephesians, James ch. 2
Ehrman, *The New Testament*, chs. 22, 23 in 7th ed. = chs. 24, 25 in 6th ed.

Week 4 (May 26): With Liberty and Justice for *All*? Women, Slaves, and Others in Paul's Churches

Reading: 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy
Ehrman, *The New Testament*, ch. 24 in 7th ed. = ch. 26 in 6th ed.