

Nov 8, 2019 draft

Romans: Paul and Modern Philosophers (BIBNT 12-807)

Friday 1 p.m.-9 p.m. and Saturday 8 a.m.-1 p.m.
Feb. 7, 8, 14, 15, 21, 22 (Spring, 2020); Room 107

Instructor: K. K. Yeo
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Note: because this is a 3-weekend seminar course, those who register for the course must agree to completing the reading assignments before the first day of class and to present the first draft of their term papers during last day of class (revised paper due last day of the semester). Greek is helpful but not required in this course.

A. Course Description

A selected study of the Pauline Epistles (mainly 1 Thessalonians and Romans primarily in the Greek text for advanced students), understood in Scriptural criticism and cross-cultural hermeneutics in conversations with modern philosophers (e.g., Marx, Freud, Badiou, Agamben, Cobb). Attention will be given not only to the history of scholarly discussion of Romans and 1 Thessalonians [“knowing”], but also to the practice of its hermeneutical meanings for diverse cultures today [“doing”], as one seeks to be a competent and faithful interpreter of the biblical text in a world of differences [“being”].

B. Learning Process and Outcome

Learning Process

The course is conducted primarily in **seminars**, where class members will lead in sharing the assigned readings and class discussion—for each reading, please have a handout of: 1) two-page outline summary, 2) five best quotes, with page number, 3) three questions for discussion. Each student is asked to lead two class sessions. For those who are not leading the class, the reading assignment (turn in to instructor) is: 1) a page of summary for each reading, 2) two best quotes, 3) one question.

The second assignment is to encourage the development of major exegetical/theological and hermeneutical skills with the Romans and 1 Thessalonians material. Each student is required to conduct his/her own research and write one paper of 10 single-spaced pages: an exegetical or theological interpretation of a text/motif between Paul and modern theologian (reception in 6 pages), and a hermeneutical section (3 pages) of engaging the thought of Paul and the modern philosopher with our modern world [see any chapter in *Navigating Romans through Cultures* or *From Rome to Beijing* in the “Recommended” texts below for examples].

Presentation of research paper: A student turns in a copy of the finished paper to the instructor and the respondent at least 48 hours before the presentation in class. Distribution of the whole paper to class members is an option, but a one-page précis of the paper is required to class members as the research paper is presented orally (30 minutes maximum). It is recommended that each presenter marks out in pencil the highlights of the paper he/she wishes to read. Paper presentations will not be graded.

Each student is assigned to respond orally (five minutes or less) to a fellow student’s paper. Respondents also are asked to write their responses (one page) in order to save time and for the benefit of the presenters. Respondents will make two copies of their responses, one for the instructor, and the other for the student to whom he/she is responding. Student responses may consist of appreciative affirmations of the strengths, constructive criticism of the weaknesses, or questions regarding any issues of the paper.

Learning Outcomes:

At the end of this course a learner who completes all assignments well should be able to:

1. have a broad knowledge of current literature on Paul and modern philosophers [if one has done engagingly the reading of assigned textbooks, attended classes, completed all the assignments];
2. have a deeper understanding and appreciation of one Pauline pericope in relation to a modern philosopher, and a critical and creative appropriation of their thoughts in our modern world [evident by a successful writing of a term paper];
3. begin to show a holistic growth (knowledge and love, individual and communal) of personal and social selves in biblical reception and hermeneutic [as demonstrated in the hermeneutical section of the term paper].

C. Textbooks

A. Required: [some assigned readings are available in pdf on Moodle w/o endnotes]

1. Ward Blanton & Hent de Vries, edited. *Paul and the Philosophers* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2013) = **Blanton**. ISBN-13: 978-0823249640 \$29.00 at Amazon.com

2. David Odell-Scott, *Readings Romans with Contemporary Philosophers and Theologies* (New York: T&T Clark International, 2007) = **Odell**. ASIN: ISBN-13: 978-0567027054 \$28.00 at Amazon.com

3. K. K. Yeo, *Chairman Mao Meets the Apostle Paul* (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2002) = **Yeo**. ISBN-13: 978-1587430343 [please get a gift copy from Prof. K. K. or sent to campus mailbox]

4. Welborn, L. L. *Paul's Summons to Messianic Life. Political Theology and the Coming Awakening*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2015. = Welborn. ISBN-13: 978-0231171304 \$19.00 at Amazon.com
5. Alain Badiou, *Saint Paul. The Foundation of Universalism*. Trans. Ray Brassier (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003) = Badiou. ISBN-13: 978-0804744718 \$16.00 at Amazon.com
6. Giorgio Agamben, *The Time that Remains. A Commentary on the Letter to the Romans* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005) = Agamben. ISBN-13: 978-0804743839 \$19.00 at Amazon.com

B. Recommended (not required):

1. Jewett, Robert. *Romans: A Commentary*. Hermeneia: A Critical & Historical Commentary on the Bible. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007.
2. Yeo, K. K., ed. *From Rome to Beijing: Symposia on Robert Jewett's Commentary on Romans*. Lincoln: Kairos Studies, 2013.
3. Yeo, K. K., ed. *Navigating Romans through Cultures: Challenging Readings by Charting a New Course*. Edinburgh: T&T Clark International, 2004.
4. Donfried, Karl P., ed. *The Romans Debate*. Rev. and exp. ed. Peabody: Hendrickson, 1991. [See also: A. Andrew Das, *Solving the Romans Debate*. Fortress, 2006.]
5. Reasoner, Mark. *Romans in Full Circle: A History of Interpretation*. Louisville: Westminster, 2005.
6. Jameson, Fredric. *Marxism and Form. Twentieth-century Dialectical theories of Literature*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971.
7. Eagleton, Terry, Fredric Jameson, and Edward W. Said. *Nationalism, Colonialism, and Literature*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1990.

D. Class Schedule and Assignments

[___] below means a session you can sign up to lead a class discussion.

Jan 1-31: Preparation

Greetings! Welcome to "Paul and Modern Philosophers" course.

A week before class, you can get ready for first class on Feb 7-8 by:

- 1) downloading the syllabus and other resources from Moodle, get familiarize with the course structure and goals, assignments and expectations, as well as bibliography and resources;

2) deciding which paper or section of assigned reading you like to lead the class discussion (and let Prof. K. K. know [kkyeo@garrett.edu]);

3) considering which pericope in Romans or 1 Thessalonians or theological theme of Paul that interest you. This pericope and/or theme could easily become your research paper, and you could start the library research early. The final version of the research paper is due April 3, but the presentation in class is Feb 22.

Feb 7:

• Paul and Modern Philosophers: Sovereignty and Universalism

Text: Romans 1 and 16

Reading:

- 1). Cristina Grenholm and Daniel Patte, "Overture: Receptions, Critical Interpretations, and Scriptural Criticism," in *Reading Israel in Romans: Legitimacy and Plausibility of Divergent Interpretations*, ed. Cristina Grenholm and Daniel Patte (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 2000), pp. 1-54; 2). K. K. Yeo, "Culture and Intersubjectivity as Criteria for Negotiating Meanings in Cross-cultural Interpretations," in *The Meanings We Choose*, ed. Charles H. Cosgrove (Edinburgh: Sheffield/T&T Clark International, 2004), pp. 81-100. [___]
- 3). Blanton: "Paul and Universalism" (pp. 87-104); 4). "The Culture of Crucifixion and the Resurrection of the Dispossessed" (pp. 127-140). [___]
- 5). Odell: "A Process Theologian Looks at Romans" (pp. 27-32); "Exegesis and Process Philosophical Theology" (33-40); 6). Badiou: chapter 10 (pp. 98-106) [___]

Feb 8:

• Materialism and Freedom

Text: Romans 5-8

Reading:

- 1). Blanton: "The Necessity of a Dead Bird" (pp. 175-185); 2). "You are not your own" (224-255); 3). Welborn: chapters 1 and 6 (pp. 1-10, 55-70) [___]
- 4). Badiou: chapters 6-9 (pp. 65-97) [___]

Feb 14:

• Communal Space and Time

Text: Romans 2-3, 9-10

Reading:

- 1). Blanton: "The Saturday of Messianic Time" (297-309); 2). Agamben: "The First Day" (pp. 1-18) and "The Second Day" (pp. 19-43) [_____]
- 3). Welborn: chapters 2 and 5 (pp. 11-22, 45-54); 4). Badiou: chapters 1-5 (pp. 1-64) [_____]

Feb 15:

• Cultural and Transcendental Critique

Text: 1 Thessalonians; Romans 4, 11

Reading:

- 1). Blanton: "Nietzsche and Saint Paul" (pp. 381-394); 2). Agamben: "The Sixth Day" (pp. 113-137) and "Threshold or *Tornada*" (pp. 138-146) [_____]
- 3). Yeo: Introduction (pp. 13-25); chapters 3, 4 and 6 (pp. 85-138, 163-180) [_____]

Feb 21:

• Ethics and the Law

Text: Romans 12-15

Reading:

- 1). Blanton: "'Love your neighbor,' the Son, and the Sons" (pp. 413-436);
- 2). "Paul and the Political Theology of the Neighbor (pp. 449-465) [_____]
- 3). Odell: "Reading Romans 'in the Face of the Other'" (pp. 115-154); 4). "Tools for a Kierkegaardian Reading of Paul" (pp. 247-276). [_____]
- 5). Welborn: chapters 3 and 4 (pp. 23-44); 6) Yeo: chapters 7-8 (pp. 191-227) [_____]

Feb 22: Presentations: _____; _____; _____; _____; _____

E. Grade Summary (based on 400 points and 4-point scale)

Class participation	30
Leading 2 class sessions	140
Term paper	200
Response to paper	30
Total:	400

Grades:	A 400-371	A- 370-331
B+ 330-301	B 300-271	B- 270-231
C+ 230-201	C 200-171	C- 170-131
	D 130-101	F 100-0 (Fail)

Expectations:

- 1. Attendance and class participation are expected. Tardiness will result in a drop of one full letter grade, and absence of more than 2-day class means failing the course.
- 2. All assignments must be submitted in order to get a passing grade.
- 3. Papers will be graded based on the following criteria: (a) consistent and proper style/documentation; (b) clear and succinct writing/expression; (c) ability to do research and use scholarly material; (d) coherent and convincing content as well as argumentation and exegetical steps; (e) relevant and creative hermeneutics.

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Background Related to Romans:

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