

# Course Prospectus

## For THL 136 Acts and the Writings of Paul

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### Overview

Welcome to the "Acts and the Writings of Paul". This introductory "general education" course in early church history focuses upon the ministry of the Apostle Paul. The course explores the book of Acts and the Pauline epistles in their historical and contextual setting. Designed primarily for distance education, this course provides a means by which persons located away from the traditional college or university classroom can complete a university-level course in early church history. The course focuses students in assigned readings, conceptualization activities, vocabulary building, and upon leading issues.

#### COURSE CATALOG DESCRIPTION FOR THIS COURSE

Focused in the book of Acts of the Apostles this course deals with Paul's life, times, and writings including the background, purpose, message, and themes of the Pauline epistles; his personal life and character; his companions; and the chronology of the apostle's life. Emphasis is on the theology of his writings and the issues that Paul dealt with in the apostolic church. Upon completion, students should be able to show the message of Acts and each of each of the Pauline Epistles and their implication and application.

#### PREREQUISITES AND COREQUISITES

There are no Prerequisites or Corequisites for this course.

#### COURSE CREDIT

Three (3) semester hours.

### Instructional objectives

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On completion of this course, a student should be able to:

1. State the definition of basic terms and demonstrate basic biblical research skills in the field of New Testament study including the analysis and exegesis of key Bible passages;
2. Identify the cultural milieu and the geographical context in which first-century Christianity evolved;
3. Demonstrate with particularity Paul's background and preparation for his unique responsibility;
4. Identify and state the background, purpose, and basic themes of the book of Acts and each of the Pauline epistles;
5. State and demonstrate Paul's teaching on various doctrines and themes throughout all of his epistles and in particular his views on Christian living;
6. Identify and demonstrate the leading issues confronted by the early church, and their resolution, regarding Jewish and Gentile converts to Christianity; and

7. Demonstrate the chronology of the early church in the C.E. 31-70 period and to identify and state the significant chronological markers of the apostolic period.

## Your instructor

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The instructor of record for this course is Dr. Roderick C. Meredith assisted by Dr. Michael P. Germano as the supporting instructor. To contact them on course details and issues please use the “Contact Instructor” link on your course home page. If you have a personal message for either of them please use their personal email addresses:

Dr. Roderick C. Meredith      [rmeredith@lcg.org](mailto:rmeredith@lcg.org)

Dr. Michael P. Germano      [docmpg@mchsi.com](mailto:docmpg@mchsi.com)

## Students with disabilities

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The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please inform your instructor through the “Contact Instructor” link on your course home page.

## Technology access

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This course requires web access. You also have to have an established e-mail account. The Adobe Acrobat Reader is necessary to view documents that are PDF files. If you do not already have it, you may download the free Adobe Acrobat reader at <http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html> , which you may then install and use to access PDF documents on this site.

## Course evaluation

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We welcome your input for improving this course. Making suggestions to us by e-mail is helpful. Our goal in this course is to facilitate the successful achievement of all instructional objectives by all students. At the end of the course you will have the opportunity of assessing the course. We want to make distance learning courses as effective as we can. We may also ask some other questions concerning your experience in distance learning to help us improve our program. We appreciate your letting us know how we can improve our products and services for you and other distance learners. We welcome your input for improving the course and making suggestions by email is helpful.

## Textbooks

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The textbooks for this course are:

Elwell, Walter A and Robert W. Yarbrough. *Encountering the New Testament: A Historical and Theological Survey*. 2nd Edition. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005.

Turabian, Kate L. *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*. Chicago Guides to Writing, Editing, and Publishing. 6th edition. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1996.

and preferably a New King James edition of the Holy Bible.

Recommended but not required:

Lester, James D., & Lester, James D., Jr. *Writing Research Papers: A Complete Guide* (12th ed.). New York: Longman, 2006.

These may be ordered through the University Bookstore.

Recommended supplementary references are:

Gaebelein, Frank, ed. *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976. Volumes 10, 11, and 12.

Goodwin, Frank J. *A Harmony of the Life of St. Paul*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1951.

Stirling, John. *An Atlas of the Acts*. London: George Philip, 1966.

A word of caution, the textbook used in this course is a commercial publication. It represents the views and ideas of its authors, editors, and publishers. Living University does not endorse the text nor vouches for its accuracy. We simply employ it in helping you master the content of the course.

As a Bible student you will need to consult Bible dictionaries, commentaries, and biblically-related magazine or journal articles for information. When you do this you have to sort out the wheat from the chaff. That is, you must have sufficient grounding in the Bible to sort out the correct from the incorrect, the plausible from the implausible. This is a critical thinking skill and one we want you to further develop in this course and in all LU courses.

The textbook we selected, Elwell and Yarbrough's *Encountering the New Testament: A Historical and Theological Survey* is a conservative approach written in an easy to read and well laid out fashion. There is some material in this book that is helpful and some that is not. In the setting of this course we want you to not only discern the difference but to know why there is a difference. Our quest is to help you to "rightly divide the word of God" (II Tim 2:5 KJV).

Moreover, in daily life and particularly in the life of ministers, you will encounter people who identify with the evangelical thinking of this book's authors. For example, many if not most Protestants and Roman Catholics believe that the Kingdom of God exists today and equate it with the church or salvation. We hold that Jesus and the Apostles taught primarily that the Kingdom of God was not to come into being until the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. Part of a good theological, and biblical,

education is coming to understand what others believe and why they believe it. You need to develop sufficient understanding and skills that you can demonstrate and effectively communicate what the truth of God is in such matters.

Our suggestion is that you take the time to mark the text correcting errors and underlying helpful points so it can be a useful handbook for you. The paper the publisher selected for this text and its fairly wide margins lend themselves to note taking. We suggest you use a fine point Pilot pen.

## Icebreaker assignment

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To officially begin a course you must complete an icebreaker assignment by which you introduce yourself to your classmates through posting a short autobiography on the course Forum. The icebreaker assignment must be submitted by the eighth day of the semester. Post your biography as a reply to the "Bios" topic on the course forum. You can earn 25 bonus points in this course by doing so "on time." Simply tell the class about yourself and your goals. This is not the place for a profession of faith, or the details your conversion experience, or problems you have had with previous fellowships, as that information is more of a private nature. Here you inform your classmates what you would like them to know about you. As we have people from all over the world enrolled in this course each autobiography will help us know, understand and appreciate each other. Please read and comment on each other's bios throughout the first week of class.

## Course requirements and grades

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### DUE DATES AND EXTENSIONS

The last official day of instruction is May 12. The semester ends May 16. Students who have need will be allowed six months to complete this course, but it must be completed by July 31, 2008. An additional three month extension may be granted by the instructor for good cause upon written application.

### READING AND WRITING EXERCISES

Refer to "Course outline and assignments" section for reading assignments and the program schedule.

### FILING WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

For instructions in how to post assignments see Frequently Asked Questions. The link is on your course homepage.

### STUDY TIPS

Distance learning emphasizes self-motivation. Your instructor functions as a facilitator with you as the driving force in mastering course content. Do not put off completing your readings and assignments. While there are many different learning styles the following strategy should serve the needs of most students.

- Look over assigned readings.

- Read the assigned readings making notes before viewing the assigned lecture.
- Define terms in the assignment. The exams will specifically test basic terminology. Develop your biblical and theology vocabulary as you proceed assignment by assignment.
- As you view lectures complete your notes.
- Complete your answers for the writing assignment.
- Each week review your notes, geographical terms and locations, and the words you defined.
- If you have a question, ask. Questions should arise in the teaching-learning process. By bringing questions to our attention you not only acquire assistance but you also maintain the interaction necessary in higher education. Use the Inbox on your course home page to send questions.

### LECTURES

This course includes several lectures by Dr. Meredith and possibly some guests. Links to lectures will be placed in lessons.

### QUIZZES AND EXAMINATIONS

Each of the six lessons has an associated online exam of not more than 35 questions. They are open book exams, but under no circumstances are you to print the quiz. An open book exam is not a workbook exercise. It is a test where you can consult your notes and books. If you study the material you should rarely have to do so. Students are allowed ninety (90) minutes to complete each exam. Exams are objective tests (which may include true/false, matching, multiple choice questions). You will be asked:

1. To identify geographic locations on maps by matching numbers on the maps with a list of locations.
2. To answer objective questions covering lectures, readings, vocabulary words and discussion topics.

### RESEARCH PAPER

This course requires a term paper. It is a major assignment worth about 25% of a student's final grade. The following guidelines apply:

*Objective:* To research the Scriptures and other sources to become aware of the Apostle Paul's background and preparation for his unique responsibilities as the apostle to the gentiles.

*Purpose:* To develop facility in using written resources in biblical study and in applying them in a well reasoned manner.

*Criteria:* To demonstrate an understanding of the cultural conditions and times in which the Apostle Paul received his education and rearing.

*An "A" paper:* An "A" level paper will show a careful selection of various works of fairly recent publication worked into your paper in support of the propositions you are making in your writing. More than 12 references is excessive for this assignment. An "A" paper will have 9 - 12 references evenly balanced between scholarly books, Bible reference works, and journals. An "A"

paper will develop the topic along at least three lines—his years growing up in Tarsus and the Greco-Roman world, his Jewish culture and his education and training in Judaism, and his early years in the church, with discussion of any interrelationships. An "A" paper presents an organized presentation of the Apostle Paul's early life.

**Sources:** There is much information available concerning the Apostle Paul. You may find material in a variety of sources such as general encyclopedias, Bible commentaries, works on the New Testament and Old Testament, secular and church histories. Do not overlook the New Testament itself as it provides considerable biographical information concerning his youth, family, and career preparation. This is an opportunity for you to use the online resources of the University Library.

**Style:** Be sure to present a balanced review of the literature dealing with this topic and properly acknowledge and cite your sources. The research paper will be graded on form and documentation style as well as organization and content. As applicable the editorial style should be as set forth in the following work:

Turabian, Kate L. *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*. Chicago Guides to Writing, Editing, and Publishing. 6th edition. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1996.

You will also find the following a useful reference guide:

Lester, James D., & Lester, James D., Jr. *Writing Research Papers: A Complete Guide* (12th ed.). New York: Longman, 2006.

**Length:** This research paper should be from 8-12 pages. Do not exceed twelve (12) typewritten or word processed pages double spaced (excluding a title page) with 10 point Courier or the equivalent, including your "works cited" page(s).

**Value:** 220 points.

**Due date:** The research paper is due at the end of Lesson 5. Late papers will be marked down one (1) letter grade unless there are extenuating circumstances. **Always keep a copy of your work for this course.**

## Grading

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Your course grade will be determined based on the number of points you have earned over the semester as follows:

Short Writing Assignments (six, each worth 60 points, for a total of 360 points)  
Research Paper (220 points)  
Quiz 1 (70 points) [online, open book]  
Quiz 2 (70 points) [online, open book]  
Quiz 3 (70 points) [online, open book]

Quiz 4 (70 points) [online, open book]  
Quiz 5 (70 points) [online, open book]  
Quiz 6 (70 points) [online, open book]  
TOTAL 1,000 points

By getting your autobiography posted on time you can earn 25 bonus points and by posting your annotated bibliography by the due date you can earn an additional 25 bonus points. These points could make the difference between an A or a B, or passing or not passing.

Grades are assigned in the traditional American style of an A, B, C, D, or F. In distance learning we believe that mastery of the subject matter is achieved when a student can demonstrate that they have achieved 80% of the objectives for a course. That means that we want you to earn at least 800 points in this course. If you do not do so then you have not developed the mastery we would like you to have.

We want this course to be competency-based and so it is possible for the entire class to receive an A or a B. There is no artificial curving of scores in the assignment of grades (if you don't know what that means, don't worry about it). Also, don't go on a guilt trip if you get a C. That is an honorable grade, but if you receive a D or below, then you might want to retake the course. Mastery of the material is what your goal should be.

Grades are assigned by points as follows:

A 900-1000 points  
B 800-899 points  
C 700-799 points  
D 600-699 points  
F Below 600 points

## Academic irregularity

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Students have the responsibility for conducting themselves in such a manner as to avoid any suspicion that they are improperly giving or receiving aid on any assignment or examination. An academic irregularity not only includes cheating but also includes plagiarism (taking another's ideas and/or words and presenting them as if they were your own) and the submitting of the same paper in separate courses without prior consent from the faculty members concerned.

In cases of suspected academic irregularity, faculty members are authorized to refuse to grade such papers, in whole or in part, or examinations, and to record each of them as a failure.

If an academic irregularity is sufficiently serious, the University may take one or more of, but not limited to, the following actions:

1. Drop the student from the course with a grade of F;
2. Place the student on academic probation; and/or
3. Dismiss the student from the University.

## Course calendar

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All reading and viewing assignments are set forth in the lessons on the course website.

### Lesson 1 Introduction: The Founding of the Church of God (January 14-30)

Writing Assignment 1 due January 30

Exam 1 due January 30

### Lesson 2 The Gospel, Barnabus and Paul (February 1-27)

Writing Assignment 2 due February 27

Exam 2 due February 27

### Lesson 3 The First Apostolic Tour Through the Apostolic Conference, C.E. 45-50 (February 28-March 18)

Writing Assignment 3 due March 18

Exam 3 due March 18

### Lesson 4 The Second and Third Apostolic Tours, C.E. 50-58 (March 19-April 3)

Writing Assignment 4 due April 3

Exam 4 due April 3

Spring Recess Apr. 4-12 (Sat.-Sun.) Instruction resumes Apr. 13, Mon., 7 a.m.

### Lesson 5 Arrest, Confinement at Caesarea, and First Roman Captivity, C.E. ca. 57-61 (April 16-30)

Writing Assignment 6 due April 30

Exam 5 due April 30

Your research paper will be considered "late" if not received by April 30.

### Lesson 6 Paul's Final Ministry, C.E. 61-68 (May 1-14)

Writing Assignment 6 due May 14

Exam 7 due May 14

Please complete the Course Evaluation.