

# Course Prospectus

## For THL 136 Acts and the Writings of Paul

---

### Contents

OVERVIEW .....	2
Course description.....	2
Prerequisites and corequisites.....	2
Course credit.....	2
INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES.....	2
YOUR INSTRUCTORS .....	3
COURSE PROTOCOLS .....	3
Technology access .....	3
Students with disabilities .....	3
Attendance in this online course .....	4
Withdrawing from or dropping this course .....	4
Terms and phrases .....	4
Study tips .....	5
TEXTBOOKS .....	5
COURSE REQUIREMENTS.....	6
Due dates and extensions.....	6
Icebreaker assignment .....	6
Reading assignments.....	7
Discussion forums.....	7
Writing assignments.....	7
Quizzes and examinations.....	7
Course evaluation .....	7
GRADING .....	7
ACADEMIC IRREGULARITY .....	8
COURSE OUTLINE.....	8

## Overview

---

Welcome to the "Acts and the Writings of Paul". This biblical foundations core course in early church history focuses on 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. Photo to right is of Raphael's *Acts of the Apostles* tapestry.



## Course description

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

Although there are no Prerequisites or Corequisites for this course, THL135 is strongly recommended.

## Course credit

Three (3) semester hours.

## Instructional Objectives

---

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

1. Identify the cultural milieu and the geographical context in which first-century Christianity evolved;
2. Identify and demonstrate the leading issues confronted by the early church, and their resolution, regarding Jewish and Gentile converts to Christianity;
3. Demonstrate the chronology of the early church in the C.E. 31-70 period, and identify and state the significant chronological markers of the apostolic period;
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. Demonstrate facility in finding, using and properly citing written resources in biblical study, and applying them in a well-reasoned manner;

## Course Prospectus THL 136 - Acts and the Writings of Paul

7. Demonstrate with particularity Paul's background and preparation for his unique responsibility as the apostle to the Gentiles; and
8. State the definition of basic terms.

### Your Instructors

---

The principal lecturer for this team-taught course is senior evangelist Dr. Roderick C. Meredith. Dr. Meredith has taught this course to thousands of students over the span of four decades. His recorded lectures, designed specifically for this online course, help students master the details of early church history with a focus on the growth and development of the early church and the travels and ministry of the Apostle Paul. He is assisted by Mr. Kenneth L. Frank who serves as the instructor of record. Michelle R. Broussard (LU's Assistant Registrar) serves as the instructional associate. To contact Mr. Frank or Mrs. Broussard on course details and issues, please use the email feature in the E-Learning system (Populi).



Dr. Roderick C. Meredith



Kenneth L. Frank



Michelle R. Broussard

**Lectures:** In addition to the main lectures by Dr. Meredith, there is a lecture or two presented by some guest speakers. Links to lectures are on the lesson webpages.

### Course Protocols

---

#### Technology access

This course requires that students have web access and an established email 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.

#### Students with disabilities

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 have a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. Students having a disability requiring an accommodation should inform the instructor by email (on the course "Info" page click on the instructor's name and then select "Send Email").

## **Attendance in this online course**

One of the most vital aspects of the college and university experience is attendance and punctuality in the learning environment. Regularity of attendance is necessary for students to derive maximum benefit from a course and to maintain a satisfactory academic record, whether in an online course or in an on-campus course. We have noticed that students who fall behind in their coursework typically drop out. Therefore, we highly encourage you to complete your assignments on time, as we want you to succeed. Remember Ecclesiastes 9:10: "Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, where you go."

Please be aware that all students who fall behind in an online course and do not complete twenty-five percent (25%) or more of the total assignments and other required activities for a course, on or before "Last day to withdraw from a course" without a grade penalty as set forth in the University Academic Calendar, will receive a grade of "W" for it. After that date, the grade will be a "WF" and counted in a student's GPA. Moreover, an instructor may drop a student from a course whenever the instructor concludes that a student's class attendance or punctuality endangers the student's success or places other students at risk.

## **Withdrawing from or dropping this course**

It is the responsibility of a student to drop a course if he or she cannot meet the requirements of the course. Any student who stops attending a course without officially withdrawing from it risks receiving a punitive grade for that course. A student who finds it necessary to drop a course after the Late Registration (Drop/Add) Period must notify the Registrar's Office in writing. Please note the following:

- If a student drops a course on or before the "Last day to withdraw from a course without a grade penalty" as published in the University Academic Calendar, even if his or her work is not of a passing grade, then a "W" is recorded.
- If a course is dropped after that date, but before the last 21 calendar days of the semester, then the instructor determines the grade. The faculty member will at this time record a grade of "W" if passing (not computed in GPA) or "WF" if failing (computed in GPA).
- Students who drop a course, yet remain in one or more other courses during the last 18 calendar days of the semester, will receive a grade of "WF."
- Students who completely withdraw from the University at any time during the semester may be given a grade of "W" on all courses.

If students do not initiate the withdrawal process, the instructor is required to initiate the administrative process and to record a grade of "W" or "WF" for the course depending on the date the faculty member drops the student from the course. Students who register for a course as an audit, but then withdraw will be assigned a grade of "W" for the course.

## **Terms and phrases**

Each lesson includes a set of terms and phrases for you to learn. This exercise is to help you develop and expand your biblical and theological vocabulary as you proceed through the lessons and to help you focus on the context of the content you are reading. Examinations will specifically test your mastery of the basic terminology of this course. Many students find looking over vocabulary words just as they go to bed at night and as they arise in the morning helps commit them to memory. Be sure to review your definitions before an examination.

## Course Prospectus THL 136 - Acts and the Writings of Paul

For some terms and phrases, we have given a scriptural link. We selected the NKJ, the New King James Version, as our default for scriptural text. When alternate scriptures appear, we provide the appropriate link as NASB, KJV, RSV, NIV, and the like.

### Study tips

Distance learning emphasizes self-motivation. The instructor functions as a facilitator with the student as the driving force in mastering course content. Students are encouraged not to put off completing their 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 lesson. Develop your biblical and theological vocabulary as you proceed lesson by lesson.
- As you view lectures, complete your notes.
- Complete your writing assignment and discussion forum.
- 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. To submit a question, just click on the instructor's name on the course Info page and send your question by email through the Populi system.

### Textbooks

---

The textbooks for this course are:

Elwell, Walter A., and Robert W. Yarbrough. *Encountering the New Testament: A Historical and Theological Survey*. 3rd ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2013. (same as used in THL135)

Elwell, Walter A. and Robert W. Yarbrough. *Readings from the First-Century World: Primary Sources for New Testament Study*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 1998. (same as used in THL135)

While, Jefferson. *Evidence & Paul's Journeys: An Historical Investigation into the Travels of the Apostle Paul*. Hilliard, OH: Pasagard Press, 2001.

and a New King James edition of the Holy Bible.

Recommended supplementary references are:

Gaebelein, Frank, ed. *The Expositor's Bible Commentary 5-Volume New Testament Set: Vols. 8, 9, 10, 10 and 12*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1982.

Goodwin, Frank J. *A Harmony of the Life of St. Paul According to the Acts of the Apostles and the Pauline Epistles*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1951.

Ramsay, William M. *St. Paul the Traveler and Roman Citizen*. Ed. Mark Wilson. Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2001.

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

## Course Prospectus THL 136 - Acts and the Writings of Paul

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 which 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. A word of caution: it is a commercial publication and represents the views and ideas of its authors, editors, and publishers. Living University does not endorse the text, nor vouch for its accuracy; we simply employ it in helping you master the content of the course. 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" (2 Tim. 2:15 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 to 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 underlining 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.

## Course Requirements

---

### Due dates and extensions

Submit assignments on or before the due date. Students must complete the course by the last official day of instruction as set forth in the academic calendar.

### Icebreaker assignment

To officially begin this course you must complete an Icebreaker assignment by which you introduce yourself to your classmates through posting a short autobiography on the course discussion forum. A student can earn **points** by posting the Icebreaker assignment on time. These points could make the difference between an A or a B, or passing or not passing this course.

- The Icebreaker assignment must be submitted not later than the eighth day of the semester.
- Post your biography as a reply to the "Icebreaker" topic on the lesson "Welcome and Overview" discussion forum.
- Please read and comment on at least two other bios by the due date in order to get credit.
- Full credit for this assignment will only be given if all three of the above requirements are met.

Do NOT create a NEW discussion. Simply tell the class about yourself and your goals. This is not the place for a profession of faith, or the details of your conversion experience, or problems you have had with previous fellowships, as that information is more of a private nature. Here you inform your

## *Course Prospectus THL 136 - Acts and the Writings of Paul*

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.

### **Reading assignments**

Refer to each individual lesson webpage for reading assignments and the program schedule.

### **Discussion forums**

Each lesson will have an associated discussion question posted by the instructor. Students will be required to post online comments to the discussion thread and interact with fellow classmates.

### **Writing assignments**

Any writing assignments in this course should follow the MLA style (8<sup>th</sup> edition). Instructions for this style will be provided. Please cite your sources and use quotation marks where needed. The Files feature on an Assignment Submission page lets you submit your work so your instructor can have it handy for download, review, and grading. To turn in writing assignments, click on the Assignments tab and then click on the assignment you want to turn in. On the Assignment Submission page, use the File feature located below the text box to upload your WORD document. **DO NOT PLACE YOUR ASSIGNMENT IN THE TEXTBOX**, as this box is meant for student/instructor communication purposes only.

### **Quizzes and examinations**

There are five closed-book, closed-notes exams. Students are allowed one hour to complete each test. Exams are multiple choice and true or false questions. You will be asked to answer questions covering required readings, lectures, and vocabulary words.

### **Course evaluation**

Student input is welcome for improving this course. Making suggestions by email 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, students have the opportunity of assessing the course. We want to make e-learning courses as effective as we can. By completing the assessment you can earn **points** toward your final grade. We may also ask some other questions concerning a student's experience in distance learning to help us improve our program. We appreciate students letting us know how we can improve our products and services for them and other distance learners.

### **Grading**

---

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

Icebreaker (40 points)

Short Writing Assignments (three, each worth 70 points, for a total of 210 points)

Discussion Forms (six, each worth 40 points, for a total of 240 points)

Exams (five, for a total of 480 points) – closed-book, closed-notes

Course Evaluation (30 points)

**TOTAL 1,000 points**

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

## *Course Prospectus THL 136 - Acts and the Writings of Paul*

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. Also, don't go on a guilt trip if you get a C; that is an honorable grade. If you receive a D or below, then you might want to retake this 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**

---

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 the writer's 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 may refuse to grade such papers, completely 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 Outline**

---

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

#### **Lesson 1 The Beginning of the Church of God**

- Topic 1: The Great Commission
- Topic 2: Equipping the Disciples for Their Task
- Topic 3: The Work Proceeds From Jerusalem
- Topic 4: Paul the Apostle

**Assignments: Discussion Forum 1, Exam 1**

#### **Lesson 2 The Gospel, Barnabas and Paul**

- Topic 1: Salvation is for Jews and Gentiles
- Topic 2: Simon the Sorcerer and Philip and the Ethiopian Eunuch
- Topic 3: Saul (later Paul) – His Conversion & Early Years
- Topic 4: The Antiochene Ministry of Barnabas and Saul (CE 38-46)

**Assignments: Writing Assignment, Discussion Forum 2, Exam 2**

### **Lesson 3 First Apostolic Tour - Acts 15 Conference**

- Topic 1: First Apostolic Tour (CE 45-49)
- Topic 2: Paul's Sojourn at Antioch of Syria (CE 49-50)
- Topic 3: Galatians: Background and Major Themes
- Topic 4: The Apostolic Conference: Issues and their Resolution (CE 49/50)

**Assignments: Discussion Forum 3, Exam 3**

### **Lesson 4 The Second and Third Apostolic Tours**

- Topic 1: Paul's Second Apostolic Tour (CE 50-52)
- Topic 2: Ancient Corinth
- Topic 3: Paul's Third Apostolic Tour (CE 53-56)
- Topic 4: Paul's Corinthian and Roman Epistles

**Assignments: Writing Assignment, Discussion Forum 4, Exam 4**

### **Lesson 5 Arrest and Confinement at Caesarea (CE ca. 57-59)**

- Topic 1: Arrest at Jerusalem
- Topic 2: Imprisonment at Caesarea

**Assignments: Discussion Forum 5**

### **Lesson 6 Detention in Rome and Paul's Final Ministry (CE 60-68)**

- Topic 1: Paul's Appearance before Herod Agrippa II and His Journey to Rome
- Topic 2: Civil Detention in Rome (CE 60-62)
- Topic 3: Likely Trip to Spain and the West (CE 61-66)
- Topic 4: Paul's Final Imprisonment in Rome and Execution

**Assignments: Writing Assignment, Discussion Forum 6, Exam 5 & 6, Course Evaluation**