

Paul & His Letters



Poor Paul. Known mainly as the inventor of justification or the archetypal misogynist, there's much more to him and his letters than such threadbare epithets. Paul was a mystic, telling of journeys into Paradise and visions of a Messiah hidden in heaven. He was a ritualist, asserting the efficacy of rites such as Baptism and Eucharist in terms more vivid than most modern formulations allow. Paul was Jew, and it never dawned on him to start a new 'religion'. He was hot-headed (or passionate, depending on your view), never quite the picture Christian

meekness. And Paul thought of himself as *mirror*, contending for a communion with Christ so profound that his every story of pain and aspiration should be told as a reflection of Christ's own passion and glory.

All these things and more Paul poured forth in his letters in arrestingly varied and entangled ways as he improvised bespoke advice for each church he addressed. This course is a critical introduction to this remarkable phenomenon of Christian origins. With special attention to historical and literary contexts, we will study Paul himself, his writings, their themes, and their interrelations. Students will discover a world of ambiguities and debates of profound historical and theological consequence, and they will gain the foundational knowledge and analytical skills necessary to begin navigating that world for themselves.

This course is for 1st and 2nd year students. Visiting students are also welcome.

Semester	Semester 1
Course Code	DIVI08010
Prerequisites	n/a
Credits	20
Assessment	exegetical essay, final essay in lieu of exam
Course Organiser/Teacher	J. Thomas Hewitt
Teaching location	New College, Mound Place, Edinburgh EH1 2LX