

**BIBL 277: Paul and His Letters**  
**Messiah College**  
**Fall 2008**

**Time:** M W F 1:00–1:50 P.M.  
**Place:** Boyer 331  
**Professor:** Michael R. Cosby, Ph.D. (Office: Boyer 312; Phone ext. 2990. Office Hours: Mon. 3:00–4:00; Tues. 10:45–11:30; Wed. 3:00–4:00; Thurs. 10:45–11:30; 2:00–3:00; other times by appointment)  
**Text:** Michael R. Cosby, “Apostle on the Edge: An Inductive Guide to Paul.”

### **Course Description**

BIBL 277 is a biographical study of Paul based on his letters and the book of Acts. The course is designed to help students understand Paul’s teaching and perceive how they apply today.

### **Course Objectives**

The objectives of this class include the following:

1. Learn about Paul’s life and what motivated his tremendous zeal for God;
2. Interact with Paul’s letters in ways that help us to understand what he meant to communicate to his first-century readers;
3. Comprehend some of the contributions Paul made to New Testament theology;
4. Discuss the significance of Paul’s teaching for our own lives today.

### **Learning Activities and Grading System**

There will be **three exams**, each worth 100 points. These will help you to assimilate the course material and draw important connections between the content of Paul’s letters and the world in which he lived.

Class sessions are often controlled dialogues rather than straight lectures. They thrive on student participation. You are expected, therefore, to read the assignments carefully before coming to class, so that you arrive prepared to discuss them. Careful interaction with the questions in the workbook, “Apostle on the Edge,” will guide your study of Acts and Paul’s letters and develop your ability to analyze, interpret, and apply responsibly. Your preparation is not busywork but a means of facilitating a fascinating exploration of Paul’s life and theology. Curiosity and consistency bring huge rewards. Plan to develop both. At the end of the semester, when you come to take the final exam, you will hand in your copy of “Apostle on the Edge,” which will be graded on the basis of the thoughtfulness and completeness of your work in the book. This semester-long project is worth 100 points.

**Research/Special project.** Choose *one* of the following options: **(1)** an exegesis paper on a passage that deals with a particular issue (e.g., 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming of Christ, divorce, women in the church, homosexuality, tithing, gender roles in Christian families. Sign up soon. No more than 10 student papers per topic); **(2)** an analysis of two movies about Paul, in which you evaluate the accuracy of the directors’ portraits of Paul and explore how responsibly the films deal with Acts and the Pauline letters; **(3)** an analysis of a novel about Paul in which you determine what this portrait of Paul is primarily based upon and how responsibly the author deals with biblical

material; (4) two original works of art: one a portrait of Paul as he is presented in Acts and another showing how he appears in his letters. For this option, you will need to arrange for one of the art professors to provide a grade for your artistic achievement. For me you will need to provide a written summary of each work of art to explain its symbolism. Whichever of the six projects you choose will be worth 100 possible points. Papers should be between six and nine pages long, double spaced, with one-inch margins, using Times New Roman with 12-point size font. See <http://www.messiah.edu/~mcosby/BIBL277Projects.htm> for instructions.

Much of the course learning will occur as part of a group process, so *attendance is mandatory and promptness is expected*. Plan to attend regularly and on time. Excessive absence or lateness will lower your grade or result in failure of the course. You will be allowed a maximum of three unexcused absences during the term. Any further absences will result in a deduction from your overall score for the term of five points per class missed. No extra-credit work will be offered, so make sure to budget time wisely for tests and assignments.

All work must be completed on time unless permission is obtained *in advance* from the professor. Exams = 300; Project = 100; “Apostle on the Edge” workbook = 100. Total = 500. **Grading Scale:** A (93–100%); A– (90–92.9%); B+ (87–89.9%); B (83–86.9%); B– (80–82.9%), etc.

**Assignments: {Always bring your Bible and “Apostle on the Edge” to class}**

- Sept. 3 Introduction to Pauline Studies. **Cosby, Introduction (pp. 1–4).**
- 5 Overview of Paul’s life. **Cosby, Chapter 2 (pp. 5–15).**
- 8 Development of the Pharisees. **Cosby, Chapter 3 (pp. 18–33).**
- 10 Messianic Expectations and Paul’s Conversion. **Cosby, Chapter 4 (pp. 35–46).**  
**Philippians 3:2–11; Galatians 1:11–2:10; 2 Corinthians 11:16–33; Acts 7:54–8:3; 9:1–31.** In each of the biblical passages listed, what does Paul reveal about his past, and what seems to motivate him to give the information?
- 12 Greco-Roman World of the First Century. **Cosby, Chapter 5 (pp. 48–69).**
- 15 The Early Church. **Acts 1–8; Cosby, Chapter 6 (pp. 72–78).**
- 17 Paul’s First Missionary Journey. **Acts 9–14; Cosby, pp. 78–80.**
- 19 Paul’s Second Missionary Journey. **Acts 15:1–18:22; Cosby, pp. 80–85.**
- 22 Paul’s Third Missionary Journey. **Acts 18:23–22:29; Cosby, pp. 85–86.**
- 24 Paul’s Arrest and Imprisonments. **Acts 22:30–28:30; Cosby, pp. 86–90.**
- 26 Letters in Antiquity. **Cosby, pp. 93–101; Philemon.**
- 29 **Exam #1.**
- Oct. 1 Pneumatic Enthusiasm and the Parousia. **1 Thessalonians; Cosby, pp. 104–116.**  
**Exegesis paper option on the Second Coming of Christ (1 Thess. 4:13–5:11 and 1 Cor. 15:50–57).**
- 3 The Christian and Work. **2 Thessalonians; Cosby, pp. 117–120.**
- 6 Apostolic Authority and the Gospel. **Galatians 1–3; Cosby, pp. 122–129.**
- 8 Freedom in Christ. **Galatians 4–6; Cosby, pp. 129–135.**
- 10 No Class (Fall Recess, October 9–12)**
- 13 The Gospel Among the Gentiles. **Acts 18:1–18; 1 Corinthians 1–4; 16; Cosby, pp. 138–145.**

- 15 Morality and “Freedom” in Christ. **1 Corinthians 5–7; 15; Cosby, pp. 145–155, 164. Special project on divorce due.**
- 17 Appropriate Behavior during Worship. **1 Corinthians 8–10; Cosby, pp. 155–158.**
- 20 Veiling Women. **1 Cor. 11:2–34. Cosby, pp. 159–161. Special project on Women in the Church at Corinth.**
- 22 Spiritual Gifts in the Church. **1 Corinthians 12–14; Cosby, pp. 161–163, 165–167.**
- 24 The New Covenant. **2 Corinthians 1–4; Cosby, pp. 169–173.**
- 27 Collection for the Saints. **2 Corinthians 5–9; Cosby, pp. 173–176.**
- 29 Special Project option on Tithing and New Testament Faith. **Cosby, pp. 176–177.**
- 31 Paul and the Super Apostles. **2 Corinthians 10–13; Cosby, pp. 177–180.**
- Nov 3 Thank-you Note for Financial Aid. **Philippians; Cosby, pp. 182–188.**
- 5 Exam #2.**
- 7 Cultural Division in the Church at Rome. **Romans 14–15; Cosby, pp. 191–195.**
- 10 Bisexuality in Rome and Homosexuality Today. **Romans 1; Cosby, pp. 195–199. Special Project option on Christians and Homosexuality (Rom. 1:18–32).**
- 12 Guilt and Grace. **Romans 2–4; Cosby, pp. 199–203.**
- 14 Salvation by Faith Alone. **Romans 5–8; Cosby, pp. 203–211.**
- 17 Israel in the Plan of God. **Romans 9–11; Cosby, pp. 211–217. Special project options of movie or novel analysis due.**
- 19 Harmony in the Church. **Romans 12–16; Cosby, pp. 217–222.**
- 21 Heresy Threatens Colossae. **Colossians; Cosby, pp. 225–237.**
- 24 Canonization of Scripture: **Cosby, pp. 267–290. No Class meeting. Prof. Cosby at Society of Biblical Literature conference in Boston.**
- 26–28 No Class: Thanksgiving Recess**
- Dec 1 Heavenly Places in Christ. **Ephesians 1–3; Cosby, pp. 240–244.**
- 3 Life in the New Community. **Ephesians 4–6; Cosby, pp. 244–247. Exegesis paper option on Eph. 5:21–6:12: Male & Female Roles in the Christian Family.**
- 5 Monsters in the Closet: The Problem of Pseudonymity. **Cosby, pp. 250–265.**
- 8 Manual of Church Discipline. **1 Timothy; Cosby, pp. 292–296. Special project option of original artwork due.**
- 10 Last Will and Testament. **Titus; 2 Timothy; Cosby, pp. 296–301.**
- 12 Your view of Paul. **Cosby 303–308.**
- 16 Final Exam 10:30–12:30 P.M.**

The provisions of this syllabus may be added to, deleted from, or changed, if, in the opinion of the professor, it becomes necessary in order to achieve the objectives of the course. The students will be notified in advance of any such changes. If you have documented learning needs that require special accommodations, please let Prof. Cosby know so that appropriate plans may be made.