BCRE36  Paul and the Development of Early Christianity

Semester: A  
ECTS:  5  
Duration: 11 weeks  
Contact hours: 22  
Quota: Maximum of 10  
Prerequisite subjects: None

Module Description:

This course is concerned to introduce a figure who has had a profound impact on the formation of both early Christianity and ancient Judaism: Paul from Tarsus. Issues are raised about intellectual developments in Paul’s writings and the methodologies used to assess them. Key themes and current debates that have come to define Pauline Studies in the last decade, especially the so-called “New Perspective on Paul” (i.e., Paul’s relationship to Palestinian Judaism) are the focal point of this module. Paul’s letters to the Galatians and Romans, epistles that stand at the centre of ongoing debates, are given sustained attention in dialogue with the broader literary and social environment that shaped Paul’s theology.

Learning Outcomes:

On successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. identify significant scholars who have had an impact on developing approaches to the study of Pauline epistles.
2. demonstrate and awareness of the complexities of locating Paul’s social context(s).
3. discuss the various religio-traditions in Diaspora and Palestinian Jewish contexts that may have exerted influence on Paul.
4. offer a synopsis of what is known about Paul as a historical figure.
5. assess influences of Pauline Christianity on later Christian tradition.
6. evaluate the most debated passages from Paul’s letters.

Indicative Reading:


Sanders, E. P., Paul, the Law, and the Jewish People (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1983)

Assessment: One 3,000 word essay

Name of Lecturer:
Professor Ben Wold