

RELIGST 730 (Winter 2017)
The Gift in Early Judaism and Christianity

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Time: Thursday, 1.30–3.30pm
Place: University Hall B115

Course Description

This course will examine the concept of gift/grace in various New Testament writings and Jewish pseudepigraphical texts. It will stress understanding conceptions of grace/gift in relation to the historical and social contexts within which these authors wrote. It will take as its starting point Marcel Mauss's *The Gift* as well as John Barclay's recent work entitled *Paul and the Gift*.

Required Textbooks

- Barclay, John M. G. *Paul and the Gift*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015.

Recommended Textbooks

- Charlesworth, James H., ed. *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*. 2 vols. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1983–1985. (You might want to consider purchasing the Accordance version, if you use this software. [You might want to consider purchasing this software, if you plan for an academic career in the study of ancient Judaism and/or Christianity])
- Mauss, Marcel. *The Gift: The Form and Reason for Exchange in Archaic Societies*. Translated by W. D. Halls. New York: Norton, 1990.

Statement on Academic Dishonesty (University Statement):

Academic dishonesty consists of misrepresentation by deception or by other fraudulent means and can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: “Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty”), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university.

It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. For information on the various kinds of academic dishonesty please refer to the Academic Integrity Policy, specifically Appendix 3, located at:

<http://www.mcmaster.ca/univec/policy/AcademicIntegrity.pdf>

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty: (1) Plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one's own or for which other credit has been obtained. (2) Improper collaboration in group work. (3) Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

Plagiarism will not be tolerated, and can be easily avoided by simply citing the source of your information whenever there is any doubt. Please be sure to do this – better safe than sorry!

Note on Changes in the Course (University Statement):

The instructor and university reserve the right to modify elements of the course during the term. The university may change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances. If either type of modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given with explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. It is the responsibility of the student to check her/his McMaster email and course websites weekly during the term and to note any changes.

Faculty of Social Sciences E-mail Communication Policy

Effective September 1, 2010, it is the policy of the Faculty of Social Sciences that all e-mail communication sent from students to instructors (including TAs), and from students to staff, must originate from the student's own McMaster University e-mail account. This policy protects confidentiality and confirms the identity of the student. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that communication is sent to the university from a McMaster account. If an instructor becomes aware that a communication has come from an alternate address, the instructor may not reply at his or her discretion.

Course Requirements

The various assignments of this course are designed to equip graduate with the experience and tools they will need to become effective educators and productive scholars.

- *Seminar Participation*: regular, punctual, prepared attendance forms the basis of any successful seminar. Students will come, having read any required primary and secondary literature. Students will also do any supplementary work required to be prepared to speak intelligently about the social, historical, and theological contexts of the primary literature we will be discussing. Participation will be active and respectful. (10%)
- *Student-led Seminar*: each student will be responsible for leading, guiding, and shaping a two-hour discussion of grace/gift in the work they are assigned during the first class of the term. Students may choose to prepare in advance a series of questions to guide colleagues in preparation for a seminar, or to prepare a well-designed handout contains the skeleton of an argument, etc. (25%)
- *Book Review*: Each student will write a five-page review of Barclay's *Paul and the Gift*. The firsts 3 pages should be devoted to describing Barclay's first 188 pages and the remaining space will be devoted to a critical analysis of his arguments therein. Paper due on Friday, February 3, at midnight, via email. (15%)
- *Final Paper*: each student will write a well-researched paper on grace/gift in either the work that they have been assigned or a work that they have chosen together in conversation with the professor. It should be typed in Times New Roman, size 12 font, with well-documented footnotes, and a bibliography. The essay should be between 15 and 20 pages in length (exclusive of bibliography). The paper should follow the second edition of the *SBL Handbook of Style*. (50%)

Tentative Schedule

Week One

January 5: Introductions, Syllabus, Setting the Stage
Read Barclay, 11–65

Week Two

January 12: Defining Gift
Read Barclay, 66–188

Week Three

January 19: Gift in the Hodayot (guest: Dr. Nick Meyer)
Read Barclay, 189–328; Hodayot

Week Four

January 26: Gift in Galatians
Read Barclay, 331–446; Galatians

Week Five

February 2: Gift in Romans
Read Barclay, 449–582; Romans

Week Six

February 9: Student-led Seminar 1: Jubilees

Week Seven

February 16: Student-led Seminar 2: Sirach

Week Eight: Midterm Recess

Week Nine

March 2: Student-led Seminar 3: Joseph and Aseneth

Week Ten

March 9: Student-led Seminar 4: Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs

Week Eleven

March 16: Student-led Seminar 5: Luke/Acts

Week Twelve

March 23: Student-led Seminar 6: Hebrews

Week Thirteen

March 30: Student-led Seminar 7: 1 Peter

Week Fourteen

April 6: Conclusions