



B465 Paul's Letters from Prison

3 credits. Prerequisites: B112 Interpreting the Bible or B115 Intro to New Testament

Saskatoon Campus Livestream Video on Demand

September 7 – 11, 2026
Module A
Mon-Fri, 9:00 am – 4:00 pm SK
(11:00 am – 6:00 pm ET)

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“... that what has happened to me has actually served to advance the gospel.” (Phil 1:12)

Please note: This course includes reading and assignment before the module.

Course Goals

Course Description

This course provides an integrated study of Paul's Prison Epistles – Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon – with attention to both academic interpretation and practical ministry application. Students will engage in contextual, grammatical, and theological analysis of these letters, while exploring their implications for Christian faith, leadership, and ministry.

Relationship to Horizon and MCS's Missions

Through the study of Paul's Prison Epistles, this course helps students grow in their knowledge of Scripture, their ability to interpret biblical texts, and their understanding of Christian theology. By exploring themes such as Christ's lordship, unity in the body of Christ, discipleship, perseverance, and reconciliation, students are encouraged to deepen their spiritual formation and develop as Christian leaders. The course equips them to serve faithfully and effectively in Spirit-empowered ministry within the Church and broader community.

Core Competencies and Learning Outcomes



To demonstrate competency in *Biblical and Theological Literacy*, students will

1. Interpret the Prison Epistles in their literary and historical contexts and distinct theological perspectives with the assistance of relevant secondary literature.
 - *Assessment:* Textbook Quizzes; Final Paper / Project
2. Identify and explain key theological emphases and their significance within the Prison Epistles.
 - *Assessment:* Reflective Reading Assignment; Final Paper / Project



To demonstrate competency in both *Biblical and Theological Literacy* and *Ministry Development* students will:

3. Apply the message of the Prison Epistles to contemporary contexts.
 - *Assessment:* Reflective Reading Assignment; Reconciliation Case Study Assignment; Final Paper / Project



To demonstrate competency in *Spiritual Maturity*, students will:

4. Cultivate spiritual ears to hear the Lord speaking his living word to them in and through the Prison Epistles.
 - *Assessment:* Reflective Reading Assignment

Course Work

Required Readings

Bible

Wright, Tom. *Paul for Everyone: The Prison Letters: Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians and Philemon*, SPCK Publishing, 2004. ISBN: 9780664227883 (U.S. ed.); 9780281053032 (U.K. edition); 978-0281072002 (reprint, 2014). [DTL](#)

****While students have the benefit of accessing many of their textbooks online through the [Digital Theological Library](#), they will not have access to the Digital Theological Library upon graduation. Therefore, we encourage students to purchase select textbooks to build their personal library.**

Course Assignments and Activities

PRE-MODULE ASSIGNMENTS

1. Reflective Reading: Paul's Prison Epistles – 16%

In preparation for this course, you will read and reflect on Paul's Prison epistles. The goal of this assignment is to slow down the reading process and give space to really engage the text, both personally and thoughtfully. You will be encouraged to notice what stands out in the letters, think about their meaning, and reflect on how they speak to faith, the Church, and everyday life and ministry.

1. *Read all four Prison Epistles* - Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians and Philemon.
2. Write a *short Reflection Journal* for each letter individually. Each reflection should be approximately one page per letter. At the start of your journal, please include a brief note confirming that you have read all four Prison Epistles. For each epistle, respond to the following questions:
 - a. What concerns or themes does Paul seem most focused on in this letter?
 - b. What surprises you about the letter in terms of its content, tone, or main message?
 - c. Where do you see relevance for the contemporary Church today?

d. What aspects of this letter speak personally to your own spiritual life or formation?

- Related learning outcome(s): #2, 3, 4.
- **Assignment length:** acceptable range: 1200-1500 words (4-5 pages).
- **Due date:** September 4.

POST-MODULE ASSIGNMENTS

2. *Textbook Quizzes (on Populi) – 24%*

Each week, you will complete open-book quizzes in Populi based on the assigned textbook readings. These quizzes assess your ability to find and use information from the textbook rather than memorize facts, supporting your understanding of the literary and historical contexts and theological perspectives of the Prison epistles. There is no time limit.

- Related learning outcome(s): #1.
- **Due dates:** listed below.

Sept 14	Introduction, Ephesians	Quiz 1
Sept 18	Philippians	Quiz 2
Sept 22	Colossians	Quiz 3
Sept 25	Philemon	Quiz 4

3. *Reconciliation Case Study Assignment – 20%*

Choose one of the following case studies and write a 2–3-page response addressing the question “What would Paul advise?” In your response, apply Paul’s teachings on reconciliation, forgiveness, unity, and Christian relationships found in the four Prison epistles (Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians and Philemon) to a contemporary conflict situation. Support your conclusions with specific biblical references and interpretation of the relevant passages. You may also use your textbook and additional academic resources to strengthen your interpretation.

Case Study 1: Conflict in a Small Group

A church small group is studying Scripture together, but disagreements arise over interpretation of a controversial passage. The discussion becomes heated, and members begin avoiding meetings or forming subgroups within the group. **What would Paul advise the small group leader and members to do in order to restore unity and continue faithful study of Scripture?** Questions to Consider:

- How does Paul define unity within the body of Christ?
- What attitudes does Paul warn against in Christian community?
- How should truth and love be held together in disagreement?
- What role does humility play in resolving theological conflict?

Case Study 2: The Group Project Conflict

You are part of a group project for a university course. One group member contributed very little to the project but received the same grade as everyone else. Several students become frustrated and begin criticizing the person in a group chat. The accused student feels isolated and believes

others are being unfair. **What would Paul advise the students involved in order to restore unity and continue faithful study of Scripture?** Questions to Consider:

- How should Christians respond to a group member who has failed to meet expectations while preserving that person's dignity?
- What does Paul teach about forgiveness, patience, and bearing with one another in situations of conflict?
- How should believers respond to gossip, public criticism, or exclusion within a Christian community?
- What responsibilities do both the underperforming student and the rest of the group have in pursuing reconciliation and restoring healthy relationships?

Case Study 3: Family Conflict

A university student feels hurt because their parents do not support an important life decision. Conversations at home frequently end in arguments, and communication has become strained. **How would Paul encourage reconciliation, respect, and understanding within this family relationship?** Questions to Consider:

- What does Paul teach about honoring relationships and maintaining peace?
- How can love and truth be balanced in difficult family conversations?
- What role does forgiveness play in ongoing tension?
- How might patience and humility change the situation?

Case Study 4: Cultural Misunderstanding

Students from different cultural backgrounds work together in a campus organization. Misunderstandings arise because of different communication styles and expectations. Some members feel disrespected, while others feel unfairly judged. **How would Paul's teachings guide the group toward unity, mutual respect, and reconciliation?** Questions to Consider:

- How does Paul describe unity in diversity within the church?
- What does it mean to "bear with one another in love"?
- How can cultural differences become strengths rather than divisions?
- What practices help maintain peace and understanding in a diverse community?

Requirements

- Length: **2-3 pages**, double-spaced.
- Choose **one case study only**.
- Use at least **4 references** from Paul's Prison Epistles as the foundation of your response, with additional biblical references included as needed.
- Clearly explain Paul's teaching and apply it to the situation.
- Provide practical steps for reconciliation and unity.
- If you use ideas or wording from a source, **cite it appropriately** (including the Bible, and/or any book/article used).
- Related learning outcome(s): #3.
- **Assignment length:** acceptable range: 600-900 words (2-3 pages).
- **Due date:** October 2.

4. *Final Paper / Project – 40%*

Choose one of the following options:

1. *Textual Study Paper*: Requirements

- Choose ONE passage:
 - Ephesians 2:1-10
 - Philippians 2:5-11
 - Colossians 1:15-20
 - Philemon 8-21
 - *or* you may choose your own passage upon professor approval
- Length: 7-8 pages, double-spaced
- Include clear structure:
 - Introduction (include thesis)
 - Historical and literary context
 - Detailed interpretation of the passage
 - Theological themes
 - Contemporary application
- Use at least 7 academic sources, not including the Bible and textbook. These should include biblical commentaries, and academic journal articles.
- Include at least 2-3 references from the Prison Epistles outside your chosen passage.

2. *Theological Research Paper*: Write a research paper exploring one major theological theme in the Prison Epistles. Requirements:

- Choose ONE topic:
 - a. Union with Christ
 - b. Christology
 - c. Spiritual warfare
 - d. Church unity
 - e. Slavery and Philemon
 - f. Joy in suffering
 - g. *or* you may choose your own topic upon professor approval
- Length: 7-8 pages, double-spaced
- Clearly define the theological topic
- Engage multiple passages from the Prison Epistles
- Include interaction with scholarly sources
- Provide theological analysis and modern application
- Include at least 7 academic sources, not including the Bible and textbook. These should include biblical commentaries, Bible dictionaries, academic journal articles, and books on the topic.

3. *Ministry Project*: Create a practical ministry resource based on the Prison Epistles.

Choose ONE format:

- Sermon series (2-3 sermons)
- Bible study curriculum (2-3 sessions)
- Discipleship guide (3-4 lessons)
- Small group study guide (3-4 lessons)
- Youth or campus ministry curriculum (2-3 sessions)

- Devotional booklet (5-7 devotions)
- Video or podcast series (0,5 hour with scripts/outlines)
- *or* you may choose your own project upon professor approval

Requirements

- Must be clearly rooted in themes from the Prison Epistles
- Include biblical references and teaching outlines or scripts
- Provide clear structure and learning objectives
- Include brief theological explanation for each unit/session/episode
- Include at least 7 academic sources, not including the Bible and textbook. These should include biblical commentaries, Bible dictionaries, academic journal articles, and books on the topic.

This final assignment will be evaluated based on clarity of interpretation of Scripture, theological depth and accuracy, use of sources and research, application or ministry relevance, and structure.

- Related learning outcome(s): #1, 2, 3.
- **Assignment length:** paper – acceptable range: 2100-2400 words (7-8 pages), excluding footnotes and bibliography;
project – refer to the requirements for your selected format;
acceptable range: 2500-3600 words
- **Due date:** October 16.

Video-on-Demand (VOD) Student Requirements

As indicated on the course schedule, this class is offered by VOD. Students taking the course through VOD are required to indicate this during their course registration. While VOD recordings are available for any student who may be absent from class, non-VOD students are expected to attend class live following the class attendance policy.

- For this course, VOD students have *the same* assignment due dates as in-class students.
- According to the schedule below, VOD students are required to watch and engage with all lecture content and in-class activities. VOD students will submit a 2–3-minute video report that 1) affirms you have watched the required recording, 2) summarizes one thing you learned that will help you reach the course learning outcomes, and 3) explains at least one question you had after watching the class recording.
 - Day 1 Lectures and Report due **September 12.**
 - Day 2 Lectures and Report due **September 19.**
 - Day 3 Lectures and Report due **September 26.**
 - Day 4 Lectures and Report due **October 3.**
 - Day 5 Lectures and Report due **October 10.**
- Students registered to attend by VOD will fulfill the course attendance requirements through their video report submissions. They must submit their VOD reports on time to be registered as present for class.

Estimate of Time Investment (individual time investments may vary)

Classroom time	30 hrs		
1. <i>Reflective Reading: Paul's Prison Epistles</i>	6 hrs	Sept 4	16%
2. <i>Textbook Quizzes</i>	20 hrs	Sept 14, 18, 22, 25	24%
3. <i>Reconciliation Case Study Assignment</i>	7 hrs	Oct 2	20%
4. <i>Final Paper / Project</i>	28 hrs	Oct 16	40%
Total =	91 hrs		

All assignments are due at 8pm **SK time**, unless otherwise indicated.

Assessment Rubrics

Assignment rubrics can be found on Populi. Click on the name of the assignment to access each rubric.

Course Outline

1. Introduction to the Prison Epistles
2. Colossians
3. Ephesians
4. Philemon
5. Philippians

*Chapel will be Wednesday, September 9 at 10:15am – 11:30am SK (12:15pm – 1:30pm ET)

- Revision week is **October 19-23**. Students are encouraged to submit revised assignments soon after they receive their marked assignments.
- No assignments will be accepted after the course end date: **October 23**.

Academic Policies**General Assignment Guidelines**

Please see the [Horizon](#) & [MCS](#) Format Guide for assignment submission, grammar, and formatting guidelines. The length of papers should fall within +/- 10% of the stated length. Papers that fall outside the length guidelines may not be graded. Assignments should be submitted via Populi under *Submissions* (not *Comments*). The resource at this [link](#) explains how to submit assignments on Populi.

Extensions

To submit extension requests, students must submit the *Request Extension Form* on the [MCS](#) or [Horizon](#) website and *before the due date*. Professors reserve the right to deny extensions. Generally, the sooner that a student asks for an extension, the more willing faculty tend to be in granting extensions. Furthermore, no extensions will be granted beyond the final day of a term or semester unless approval is granted by the Associate Academic Dean (MCS) or Assistant Academic Dean (Horizon).

Late Assignments

Students are expected to submit work by the assigned or extended due dates, as part of their development of the Leadership and Administration competency. A late penalty will be assessed for all overdue assignments: 1-3 calendar days late, penalty of 10%; 4-6 calendar days late, penalty of 20%; after 6 calendar days late, an assignment receives a grade of 0 and no opportunity for revision. Any late penalty incurred on a first submission will be applied regardless of if the student chooses to continue learning through the revision process.

Assignment Completion

Professors usually will not accept assignments that have not been completed according to the instructions given in the syllabus. If a professor informs a student that a submitted assignment is incomplete, the student will be given the opportunity to complete and resubmit the assignment quickly. If this is not possible, the assignment will be regarded as submitted late.

Competency Assignment Revisions

After each assignment has been marked, students have the opportunity to continue learning in response to feedback they receive on assignments. Students can submit one revision for each assignment, although a professor may accept more revisions if the professor determines the student is addressing all of the professor's instructions and making significant progress toward demonstrating competency. Revised assignments may be submitted up to the course end date, although students are encouraged to submit them soon after they receive their marked assignments. Assignments submitted later than one week before the course end date are ineligible for revisions.

Horizon and MCS's College Assessment of Student Work

The goal of courses is to help students develop their competency, rather than solely earn letter grades. Assignments are the means by which instructors evaluate development of competency by assessing learning outcomes as outlined in the syllabus and each assignment. Once a student's assignment has met all assignment completion requirements, the professor will assign a grade for that assignment. The opportunity for revisions exists according to the "Assignment Revisions" policy.

Horizon and MCS Competency Scale		Descriptor	Letter Grade	Grade Point	U of S Equivalency
E	Exceeding expectations	Student demonstrated exceptional achievement of the learning outcomes.	A+	4.0	90-100
		Student demonstrated excellent achievement of the learning outcomes.	A	4.0	85-89
			A-	3.7	80-84
M	Meeting expectations	Student demonstrated good achievement of the learning outcomes.	B+	3.3	77-79
			B	3.0	73-76
			B-	2.7	70-72
BTM	Beginning to meet expectations	Student demonstrated satisfactory progress in achieving the learning outcomes.	C+	2.3	67-69
			C	2.0	63-66
			C-	1.7	60-62
			D+	1.3	57-59
			D	1.0	53-56

		Student demonstrated minimal progress in achieving the learning outcomes.	D-	0.7	50-52
NYM	Not yet meeting expectations	Student made insufficient progress toward meeting learning outcomes.	F	0.0	0-49

Academic Integrity

Students learn best when practicing academic integrity. A lack of integrity is displayed in acts such as deception, abuse of confidentiality, cheating, inappropriate collaboration, or plagiarism. Plagiarism occurs when a student presents the words or ideas of another person or an artificial intelligence (AI) tool in such a way as to give others the impression that it is their own words or ideas. In academic writing, there should be no doubt which words or ideas are the student's and which are drawn from other sources or AI. Students are expected to submit their own original work and give due recognition to sources from which all substantial phrases, sentences, or even ideas are drawn. Note also that you may not submit work done in one course to satisfy the requirements of another course (unless both instructors agree beforehand to accept such work). See [here](#) for examples of plagiarism and further guidelines in the Student Handbook.

Horizon and MCS have a subscription to software that ensures the originality of academic writing, verifies the proper citation of all sources, and detects AI-generated content. When you submit an assignment, you will automatically receive a summary on Populi that includes your submitted files along with an originality score (a high originality score is positive).

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Usage

In keeping with the Academic Integrity policy above, students must disclose on the title page of all assignments whether or not they have used AI and how they have used it. If the assignment has no title page, the student must disclose this to the instructor by some other means, such as in a comment on Populi. Students are expected to follow the policy for acceptable use of AI that is published in the [Horizon](#) and [MCS](#) Student Handbooks.

Accessible Learning Services Information

Horizon and MCS are committed to provide safe and inclusive learning environments which equalize the opportunity for students with disabilities to meet the requirements of the institutions, programs, and courses. The application for Academic Accommodations begins with a student disclosing a medical diagnosis or professionally documented learning disability during the application process. Enrolled students may contact Accessibility services personnel (at MCS, the Director of Academic Success, Wendy Holmes at wendy.holmes@mcs.edu; at Horizon, the Academic Accommodations Coordinator, Richelle Bekkattla at rbekkattla@horizon.edu). All Academic Accommodations will adhere to the Guiding Principles listed in the Student Handbooks. Students with documented accommodations on file pertaining to accessing course readings in alternate formats are encouraged to contact the librarian for assistance with as much advanced notice as possible.

Class Attendance

Students should attend all classes in order to facilitate competency development. Students are expected to be present through the delivery method that they registered for. Students registered to attend on-campus or via livestream must be present for the full duration of a class period to be marked as present for the class. Students registered to attend by VOD must submit their VOD reports on time to be marked as present for class. In the case of illness or other unforeseen circumstances, students may miss up to twenty percent of the total class time (e.g., one day of a module course, two 3-hour classes, etc.) without academic penalty. Students who are absent for more than this will automatically fail the course. Students wishing to be exempted from this policy due to extenuating circumstances may make an academic appeal, where they will need to document and verify those circumstances. Students who miss a class are responsible to get missed notes or handouts from another student, rather than from the professor.

Livestreaming Etiquette

Students taking the course through livestreaming are required to indicate this during their course registration. While livestreaming access is available for on-campus students who are unable to attend class due to illness, on-campus students are expected to attend class in person following the class attendance policy.

If attending class online via livestream, in order to be marked present for class, you must keep your camera on and stay present and attentive throughout the class session, extending the gift of engagement. Access your class with a computer (preferably) or tablet, not a cell phone. Arrive to class on time, and dress as you would if you were attending class on campus. Join the class from a quiet space with minimal background noise and mute your microphone until you wish to speak to the class.

Use of Technology

Horizon and MCS encourage the use of electronic devices in the classroom to enhance learning. Careful consideration must be given to privacy issues, copyrighted materials, and the general care and concern for others. Please respect the following classroom policies:

- Please use online access for course learning only. This is a matter of respect for the instructor's teaching, your own learning, and fellow students who may be distracted by other uses.
- Students should secure permission from the instructor to record any teaching material. This includes PowerPoint slides, white board illustrations, notes, and any form of audio or video.
- Student feedback is a valuable input for course improvements. Please resolve any classroom grievance about the instructor or course with the instructor personally, through the grievance procedures, or the Populi-based course evaluations. It is inappropriate to air classroom grievances on a social media platform.
- When instructors use recording mechanisms in the classroom, recorded materials will be used for the sole purpose of instruction (potentially including future online video courses) and cannot be released to any social media outlet without the written consent of the students whose images have been recorded.
- In general, it is not acceptable to share photographs or videos of students in the classroom setting without permission from those whose images appear in such media.

Library Support and Research Assistance

Library staff are available to meet with students (online or in person) who need assistance with

- citing sources and identifying credible resources;
- developing research and information literacy skills;
- searching DTL and other library resources.

Bibliography

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