

## RELC 5980: THE THEOLOGY OF KARL BARTH

Fall 2020 | Monday 3.30-6.00pm | Gibson 241 and online

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Office hours: Wednesday 10 to 12 noon (via Zoom) and by appointment

Link for seminar meetings:

<https://virginia.zoom.us/j/96778647517?pwd=QlI0ZE8rbDNQVTBseE8xUHJYdHIEQT09>

Password: KBZeit

### Course Overview

This course engages the thought of Karl Barth, arguably the most important Protestant theologian of the twentieth century. While we will deal with some of Barth's early work – specifically, *The Word of God and Theology* and the second edition of *Epistle to the Romans* – our primary focus will be the *Church Dogmatics*. Topics considered include the role of the Bible in theological reflection, theological epistemology, the doctrine of God, election, Christian ethics and political life, the human being, sin and evil, Christology and atonement, and the Christian community.

### Requirements

- (a) Attendance and participation in all sessions, in-person or via Zoom
- (b) Timely completion of all reading requirements;
- (c) Timely completion of all writing assignments: (i) weekly responses to the readings (you may pass on **two** weeks, no more), posted to the Collab site by **noon on Monday**; (ii) one final paper, preferably focused on the *Church Dogmatics* (15-20 pages), due **December 7 at 5pm**.

### Reading Materials

The U.Va bookstore has copies of *The Epistle to the Romans* (OUP) and the new translation of *The Word of God and Theology* (trans. Amy Marga; T&T Clark). (The old translation is charming but inaccurate; please use the newer version.)

Given the price of part-volumes of the *Dogmatics*, I've not asked the bookstore to purchase copies. Students can acquire the relevant part volumes by their own means or, alternatively, use the Digital Karl Barth Library, an online resource that has the *Dogmatics* and *The Christian Life* in English and German: <http://solomon.dkbl.alexanderstreet.com/>.

The DKBL is easy to access on Grounds. Off-Grounds requires U.Va Anywhere or a VPN. Currently, it seems easier to use the *older* interface.

### **Class preparation**

This course involves a fair amount of reading: the best way to understand Barth is to immerse yourself in his writings. Ensure that you have time to read the material and identify what you take to be key claims and passages, and come to class ready to engage in scholarly discussion.

A preparatory tool is built into the syllabus: posting weekly responses to the reading on the Collab worksite (with two “passes”). These responses should be brief – 200-500 words is fine – and you may respond to others’ posts if you wish. The responses will not be a significant factor in evaluation. Their purpose is simply to stimulate reflection before class begins, to encourage the formulation of pertinent questions, and to help students to develop interpretative judgments.

### **Class/community standards**

I am dedicated to providing a safe and equitable environment for learning in this class. Power-based violence, which can take diverse forms – sexual assault, discrimination based on race, sex, gender, sexual orientation, age, ability, ethnicity, and/or socio-economic background – is wrong and will not be tolerated.

A valuable challenge to power-based violence is respectful, imaginative, and critical discussion. Seminars, in particular, are an opportunity to model civil conversation. They are an occasion for us to affirm the value of a safe community which prizes diversity.

If and when students tell me about bias, hazing, sexual violence and/or gender discrimination, I will report it to the University. Students should do the same. The reporting portal and a wide range of resources are available at <http://www.virginia.edu/justreportit/> and <https://uvaemergency.virginia.edu/students>.

### **Barth in the age of Coronavirus**

I know that this semester is going to be difficult. The last seven or so months have been filled with trials and uncertainties, and these might multiply throughout the semester. A combination of in-person and online teaching/learning make a difficult situation even more so.

Whatever the semester brings, I would emphasize the following:

- You can and should get in touch with me to ask for help with the course, outside of regular seminar hours. I’m good with email/Zoom, and I’ll hold office hours regularly.
- Just as you ought to take care of your and others’ physical health, you should take care of your own mental and emotional health. If you are struggling, talk to friends, family, and/or people that you trust. Consider making an appointment with CAPS (<https://studenthealth.virginia.edu/caps>) or a licensed therapist/counsellor.
- There are bound to be complications, confusions, and irritations during the semester. I will try and meet them with good humor and flexibility. I encourage you to do the same.

**Final Papers**

You should formulate your paper topic in consultation with me. My recommendation is that you write an interpretative paper on the *Dogmatics* – that is, a paper which addresses a particular issue or question and sticks close to the text. If you want to write a more adventurous piece (e.g., a paper that sets Barth in conversation with another author, or which considers Barth's relevance for a contemporary debate), I'll be supportive. But if you take this option, you're still obliged to show an in-depth understanding of Barth's thought.

**Office hours**

I'll hold office hours via Zoom on Wednesday from 10 until noon. You can use this [link](#). Meeting ID: 997 8326 7065; passcode: PDJOO. Do not share this information with anyone who is not in the class. If this timeslot is impossible, email me and we'll set up another time to talk.

Although I don't plan on offering in-person office hours, I understand that an in-person meeting might be sought in some situations. If that's the case, email me and we'll discuss how to proceed.

## Reading Schedule

- 8/31: “Jesus Christ and the Movement for Social Justice,” in *Karl Barth and Radical Politics*, ed. and tr. George Hunsinger, 19-45 (Collab)
- “The Righteousness of God,” in *The Word of God and Theology*, 1-13
- “The New World of the Bible,” in *The Word of God and Theology*, 15-29
- 9/7: “The Christian in Society,” “Biblical Questions, Insights and Vistas,” and “The Word of God as the Task of Theology,” in *The Word of God and Theology*, 31-69, 71-100, and 171-198
- 9/14: *The Epistle to the Romans*, 1-270. The prefaces are worth reading if you have time.
- 9/21: *Church Dogmatics* I/2, §19: “The Word of God for the Church” (pp. 457-537)
- 9/28: *Church Dogmatics* II/1, §§25 and 26: “The Fulfilment of the Knowledge of God” and “The Knowability of God” (3-178). If pressed for time, skim §25.
- 10/5: *Church Dogmatics* II/1, §§28 and 29: “The Being of God as the One Who Loves in Freedom” and “The Perfections of God” (257-350)
- 10/12: *Church Dogmatics* II/2, §33: “The Election of Jesus Christ” (94-194). §32 is optional but recommended.
- 10/19: *Church Dogmatics* III/2, §§44.1, 44.3, and 45: “Man as the Creature of God” and “Man in his Determination as the Covenant Partner of God” (55-71 and 132-324)
- 10/26: *Church Dogmatics* III/3, §49, “God the Father as Lord of his Creature” (58-288)
- 11/2: *Church Dogmatics* III/3, §50: “God and Nothingness” (289-368)
- 11/9: *Church Dogmatics* IV/1, §59: “The Obedience of the Son of God” (157-357)  
Focus on §59.1 and §59.2; skim §59.3.
- 11/16: *Church Dogmatics* IV/1, §§62 and 63: “The Holy Spirit and the Gathering of the Christian Community” and “The Holy Spirit and Christian Faith” (643-779)
- 11/23: *The Christian Life*, 1-46 and 111-271

### Useful secondary literature<sup>1</sup>

- \* von Balthasar, Hans Urs. *The Theology of Karl Barth: Exposition and Interpretation*. Trans. Edward T. Oakes. San Francisco: Ignatius, 1992.
- Beintker, Michael. *Die Dialektik in der »dialektischen Theologie« Karl Barths: Studien zur Entwicklung der barthschen Theologie und zur Vorgeschichte der Kirchlichen Dogmatik*. Munich: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1987.
- Bodley-Dangelo, *Sexual Difference, Gender, and Agency in Karl Barth's Church Dogmatics*. London: T&T Clark, 2020.
- Busch, Eberhard. *Karl Barth*. Trans. John Bowden. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1976.
- Dempsey, Michael T. (ed.), *Trinity and Election in Contemporary Theology*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011.
- Flett, John G. *The Witness of God: The Trinity, Missio Dei, Karl Barth, and the Nature of Christian Community*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010.
- Goebel, Hans Theodor. *Vom freien Wählen Gottes und des Menschen. Interpretationsübungen zur "Analogie" nach Karl Barths Lehre von der Erwählung und Bedenken ihrer Folgen für die Kirchliche Dogmatik*. Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1990.
- Gockel, Matthias. *Barth and Schleiermacher on the Doctrine of Election: A Systematic-Theological Comparison*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006.
- Gorringer, Tim. *Karl Barth: Against Hegemony*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1999.
- \* Hancock, Angela Dienhart. *Karl Barth's Emergency Homiletic, 1932-1933: A Summons to Prophetic Witness at the Dawn of the Third Reich*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2013.
- \* Hunsinger, George. *How to Read Karl Barth: The Shape of his Theology*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1991.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Disruptive Grace: Studies in the Theology of Karl Barth*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000.
- Jehle, Frank. *Ever Against the Stream: The Politics of Karl Barth, 1906-1968*. Trans. Richard and Martha Burnett. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002.
- Johnson, Keith L. *Karl Barth and the Analogia Entis*. London: T&T Clark, 2010.
- Jones, Paul Dafydd. *The Humanity of Christ: Christology in Karl Barth's Church Dogmatics*. London: T&T Clark, 2008.
- Jones, Paul Dafydd, and Nimmo, Paul T. (eds). *The Oxford Handbook of Karl Barth*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019.

<sup>1</sup> Asterisked texts are particularly recommended.

- \* Jüngel, Eberhard. *God's Being is in Becoming. The Trinitarian Being of God in the Theology of Karl Barth. A Paraphrase*. Trans. John Webster. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2001.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Karl Barth, a Theological Legacy*. Trans. Garrett E. Paul. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1986.
- \* \_\_\_\_\_. "... keine menschenlosigkeit Gottes ... zur Theologie Karl Barths zwischen Theismus und Atheismus." In E. Jüngel, *Barth-Studien*, 332-347. Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlaghaus Mohn, 1982.
- van der Kooi, Cornelius. *As in a Mirror: John Calvin and Karl Barth on Knowing God. A Diptych*. Trans. Donald Mader. Leiden: Brill, 2005.
- Lohmann, Johann Friedrich. *Karl Barth und der Neukantianismus: Die Rezeption des Neukantianismus im "Römerbrief" und ihre Bedeutung für die weitere Ausarbeitung der Theologie Karl Barths*. Berlin & New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1995.
- \* McCormack, Bruce. *Karl Barth's Critically Realistic Dialectical Theology: Its Genesis and Development 1909-1936*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1995.
- \* \_\_\_\_\_. *Orthodox and Modern: Studies in the Theology of Karl Barth*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008.
- McKenny, Gerald. *The Analogy of Grace: Karl Barth's Moral Theology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010.
- Neder, Adam. *Participation in Christ: An Entry into Karl Barth's Church Dogmatics*. Louisville, Ky.: WJKP, 2009.
- Oakes, Kenneth. *Karl Barth on Theology and Philosophy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012.
- Nimmo, Paul. *Being in Action: The Theological Shape of Barth's Ethical Vision*. London: T&T Clark, 2007.
- \* Webster, John (ed.). *The Cambridge Companion to Karl Barth*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.
- \* \_\_\_\_\_. *Barth's Ethics of Reconciliation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.
- Wood, Donald. *Barth's Theology of Interpretation*. Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2007.