

**Karl Barth and Dietrich Bonhoeffer**  
**Fall, 2024**  
**T/Th 10-11:20**  
**Schlegel 122**

Instructor: Amy Plantinga Pauw  
Office: 215 Gardencourt  
Office Phone: (502) 992-5425  
E-mail: [amypauw@lpts.edu](mailto:amypauw@lpts.edu)

**Course Description:**

This course will examine two giants of 20<sup>th</sup>-century Protestant theology who in different ways resisted Nazism. It will pay special attention to ways in which their theologies continue to inspire other resistance efforts.

**Objectives:**

1. To acquaint students with the thought of two major 20<sup>th</sup>-century theologians
2. To encourage them to assess the relevance of Barth and Bonhoeffer's theology for the contemporary church and world, especially regarding antiracism and Jewish-Christian relations
3. To help them hone their own theological perspectives in dialogue with Barth and Bonhoeffer's writings

This course is related most closely to this Student Learning Outcome:

***SLO3: Students will demonstrate an understanding of multiple theological perspectives, historical and contemporary.***

**Requirements:**

1. Conscientious attendance and participation in discussion. (25%)  
Showing up with your reading done is an important component of your work in this course. Lack of attendance and of thorough and timely class preparation will adversely affect your course grade. Please inform the instructor ahead of time if you have to miss class. Students will sign up to lead a "talk back" session for one class period. In this 30-minute session, students will lead class discussion by presenting either a theological disagreement with the readings for that day, or a way of extending them to address other contexts.
2. Two short papers (4-5 pp., d.s.), one on Barth and one on Bonhoeffer (50%)  
Students will write two papers. Each paper will pursue a dimension of Barth or Bonhoeffer's theological legacy of particular interest to the student. These papers can take various forms: an analysis of a text (this can be a sermon, prayer, or poem), your theological response to one of Barth or Bonhoeffer teachings, a conversation between one of them and another theologian, etc. Please consult with the instructor about your topic. **Barth paper is due on October 4; Bonhoeffer paper is due on December 9.**
3. Journal questions (25%)

Students will record their responses to weekly questions posed in the syllabus for each week in a journal; these responses should be no longer than a paragraph. These should be done in time for each class session, so that we can draw on them in class. Students must answer **eight** questions. **The journal will be turned in on December 13.**

## **LPTS CLASSROOM POLICIES:**

As with all LPTS classes, this course will honor these Seminary policies:

### **Use of Inclusive Language**

In accordance with seminary policy, students are to use inclusive language in class discussions and in written and oral communication by using language representative of the whole human community in respect to gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, age, and physical and intellectual capacities. For more information see: <http://lpts.libguides.com/content.php?pid=469569&sid=4083885>

Direct quotations from theological texts and translations of the Bible do not have to be altered to conform to this policy. In your own writing, however, when referring to God, you are encouraged to use a variety of images and metaphors, reflecting the richness of the Bible's images for God.

### **Academic Honesty**

All work turned in to the instructors is expected to be the work of the student whose name appears on the assignment. Any borrowing of the ideas or the words of others must be acknowledged by quotation marks (where appropriate) and by citation of author and source. Use of another's language or ideas from online resources is included in this policy, and must be attributed to author and source of the work being cited. Failure to do so constitutes plagiarism, and may result in failure of the course. Two occurrences of plagiarism may result in dismissal from the Seminary. Students unfamiliar with issues related to academic honesty can find help from the staff in the Academic Support Center. For more information, see The Code of Student Conduct, 6.11; the Student Handbook, p. 19.

### **Citation Policy**

Citations in your papers should follow the Seminary standard, which is based on these guides:

American Psychological Association. *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*. 6th ed. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2010.

Turabian, Kate L., Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams. *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations: Chicago Style for Students and Researchers*. 8th ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013.

*The Chicago Manual of Style*. 16th ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010.

Copies of these guides are available at the library and in the Academic Support Center.

### **Special Accommodations**

Students requiring accommodations for a documented physical or learning disability should be in contact with the Director of the Academic Support Center (bherrintonhodge@lpts.edu) during the first two days of class (or, even better, before the class begins) and should speak with the instructors as soon as possible to arrange appropriate adjustments. Students with environmental or other sensitivities that may affect their learning are also encouraged to speak with the instructors.

### **Required Texts:**

Keith Johnson, ed., *The Essential Karl Barth* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2019) (**Johnson** in the syllabus)

Clifford Green and Michael DeJonge, eds., *The Bonhoeffer Reader* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2013) (**Green** in the syllabus)

Note: Karl Barth's *Church Dogmatics* is available in its entirety in digital form at: [The Digital Karl Barth Library | Alexander Street, a ProQuest Company \(openathens.net\)](http://www.openathens.net) The best English translations of Dietrich Bonhoeffer's writings are found in the series Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works (17 vols.), published by Fortress Press.

### **CANVAS readings:**

Barth, Karl. *Church Dogmatics* III/4 pp. 165-183 (T&T Clark, 2004).

Bettis, Joseph. "Is Karl Barth a Universalist?" *Scottish Journal of Theology* 20 (1967): 423-36.

Brunner, Emil. *Natural Theology, comprising "Nature and Grace" by Emily Brunner and the Reply "No" by Karl Barth* (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1946), pp. 31-35; 56-60; 67-90.

Kyung, Chung Hyun. "Dear Dietrich Bonhoeffer: A Letter," in De Gruchy, John, ed., *Bonhoeffer for a New Day: Theology in a Time of Transition* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 9-19.

Duff, Nancy J. "Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Theological Ethic" *The Princeton Seminary Bulletin* 15, issue 3 (1994): 263-273.

<https://archive.org/details/princetonseminar1531prin/page/263/mode/2up?view=theater>

Green, Clifford. "Bonhoeffer's Christian Peace Ethic, Conditional Pacificism, and Resistance," in Ziegler, Philip, and Michael Mawson, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Dietrich Bonhoeffer* (Oxford University Press, 2019). E-book

Iorio, D., R. Libowitz, and M. Little, eds., *The Holocaust: Lessons for the Third Generation* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1997), pp. 181-197

Jenkins, Willis. "Conclusion: Christian Social Ethics after Bonhoeffer and King," in Willis Jenkins and Jennifer M. McBride, eds., *Bonhoeffer and King: Their Legacies and Import for Christian Social Thought* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2010), pp. 243-258.

Koopman, Nico. "Bonhoeffer, South Africa, and Global Contexts," in Ziegler, Philip, and Michael Mawson, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Dietrich Bonhoeffer* (Oxford University Press, 2019). E-book

Lam, Jason. "Why Chinese Intellectuals are keen on reading Bonhoeffer?" *The Bonhoeffer Legacy: An International Journal* 5, No. 2 (2017): 37-45.

Lauscher, Martin. "On Reading Karl Barth in South Africa Today: Karl Barth as Public Theologian?" *Theological Studies* 63/4 (2009):1549-1558.

- Mackie, Carolyn, “The Unfortunate Affair between Karl Barth and Charlotte von Kirschbaum” Women in Theology blog 1/10/2022 [The Unfortunate Affair of Karl Barth – WIT \(womenintheology.org\)](https://www.womenintheology.org/2022/01/10/the-unfortunate-affair-of-karl-barth/)
- Marsh, Charles, *Strange Glory: A Life of Dietrich Bonhoeffer* (New York: Knopf, 2014), pp. 319-327; 332-338.
- McBride, Jennifer. “Bonhoeffer and Feminist Theologies,” in Ziegler, Philip, and Michael Mawson, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Dietrich Bonhoeffer* (Oxford University Press, 2019). E-book
- McCormack, Bruce, “The Being of Holy Scripture is in Becoming: Karl Barth in Conversation with American Evangelical Criticism,” in Bacote, Miguez, Ockholm, eds., *Evangelicals and Scripture: Tradition, Authority, and Hermeneutics* (IVP, 2004), pp. 55-75.
- Miller, Patrick. “Bonhoeffer on the Psalms” *The Princeton Seminary Bulletin* 15, issue 3 (1994): 274-282.  
<https://archive.org/details/princetonseminar1531prin/page/274/mode/2up?view=theater>
- Norris, Kristopher. “To See Responsibility from Below: Bonhoeffer, Niebuhr, and Racism” *Theology Today* (July 2023): 144-161.
- Puffer, Matthew. “Dietrich Bonhoeffer in the Theology of Karl Barth.” W. Travis McMaken and David Congdon, eds., *Karl Barth in Conversation* (Pickwick, 2014). E-book
- Rasmussen, Larry. “The Sufferings of God,” *Church and Society* (July/August 1995): 114-123.
- Rosenbaum, Ned. “Bonhoeffer: A Jewish View,” *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* Vol. XVIII, No. 2 (Spring 1981): 301-307.
- Smit, Dirkie. “Reading Scripture Theologically With Barth – In South Africa?” Center for Barth Studies, Princeton Theological Seminary, June 2006.
- Tietz, Christiane. “Karl Barth and Charlotte von Kirschbaum,” *Theology Today* 74:2 (July 2017): 86-111
- Wüstenberg, Ralf. “Religionless Christianity: Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s Tegel Theology,” in De Gruchy, John, ed., *Bonhoeffer for a New Day: Theology in a Time of Transition* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 57-71.
- Williams, Reggie L. “Bonhoeffer and Race,” in Ziegler, Philip, and Michael Mawson, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Dietrich Bonhoeffer* (Oxford University Press, 2019). E-book
- Zerner, Ruth. Church, State, and the ‘Jewish Question,’” in DeGruchy, John, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Dietrich Bonhoeffer* (Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 190-205.

## Calendar of Topics and Assignments:

### September 9 Introduction to Karl Barth

Read: **Johnson**, Chapters 1, 2, 8, 10, 11, 31

Journal Question: How did Karl Barth's conviction that "Jesus Christ is the source and the criterion of all theological knowledge" inform his opposition to Hitler's National Socialism?

### September 16 Natural Theology and Scripture

Read: **Johnson**, Chapters 12, 14, 16

Emil Brunner, *NATURAL THEOLOGY, comprising "Nature and Grace" by Emily Brunner and the Reply "No" by Karl Barth*, pp. 31-35; 56-60; 67-90. Pp. 31-35 and 56-60 were written by Brunner. Pp. 67-90 were written by Barth. (CANVAS)

Bruce McCormack, "THE BEING OF HOLY SCRIPTURE IS IN BECOMING: KARL BARTH IN CONVERSATION WITH AMERICAN EVANGELICAL CRITICISM" (CANVAS)

Journal Question: What is Barth's understanding of the relationship between Christ and Scripture?

TALK BACK 1

### September 23 Who Gets Saved?

Read: **Johnson**, Chapters 17, 18, 19, 20, 28

Joseph Bettis, "IS KARL BARTH A UNIVERSALIST?" (CANVAS)

Journal Question: Is Barth a universalist?

TALK BACK 2

### September 30 Gender

Read: **Johnson**, Chapters 21, 22, 25

Barth, *CHURCH DOGMATICS*, III/4, § 54, pp. 166-183 (CANVAS)

Christiane Tietz, "KARL BARTH AND CHARLOTTE VON KIRSCHBAUM (CANVAS)

Carolyn Mackie, "The Unfortunate Affair of Karl Barth" [The Unfortunate Affair of Karl Barth – WIT \(womenintheology.org\)](#)

Journal Question: How is Barth's theology of the relationship between men and women reflected in his personal life?

TALK BACK 3

### October 7 Barmen and Belhar

Read: **Johnson**, Chapters 23, 26, 29

THE BARMEN DECLARATION (CANVAS)

THE CONFESSION OF BELHAR (CANVAS)

Charles West, "THE THEOLOGY OF BARMEN AND THE JEWS," and James Kelley, "THE 'UNSTATED' THESIS OF BARMEN," in D. Iorio, R. Libowitz, and M. Little, eds., *The Holocaust: Lessons for the Third Generation* chs. 16 and 17, pp. 181-197. (CANVAS)

Dirkie Smit, "READING SCRIPTURE THEOLOGICALLY WITH BARTH—IN SOUTH AFRICA?" (CANVAS)

Martin Laubscher, "ON READING KARL BARTH IN SOUTH AFRICA TODAY: KARL BARTH AS PUBLIC THEOLOGIAN?" (read only sections 1, 2, and 3 (pp. 1549-1558)) (CANVAS)

Journal Question: What are the connections (both historical and theological) between the German Barmen Declaration and the South African Belhar Confession?

TALK BACK 4

## Research & Study October 14-18

### October 21 Introduction to Bonhoeffer

Note: There will be **no class** on Tuesday, October 22. Students are asked to use class time to watch Martin Doblmeier, *Bonhoeffer: Pastor, Pacifist, Nazi Resister*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9vqxIjH6Ok>

Class on Thursday, October 24, will focus on Bonhoeffer's relation to Jews and Judaism

Read: **Green**, Chapters 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 28

Nancy Duff, "CHRISTIANS PREPARING FOR CONVERSATIONS: JEWISH-CHRISTIAN RELATIONS" (CANVAS)

Ruth Zerner, "CHURCH, STATE, AND THE 'JEWISH QUESTION,'" (CANVAS)

Ned Rosenbaum, "BONHOEFFER: A JEWISH VIEW" (CANVAS)

Journal Question: Was Bonhoeffer's view of Jews positive?

### October 28 Life Together and Bonhoeffer's American Experience

Read: **Green**, Chapters 30, 32

Reggie Williams, "BONHOEFFER AND RACE" (CANVAS)

Kristopher Norris, "To See Responsibility from Below: Bonhoeffer, Niebuhr, and Racism"

Journal Question: Why does Bonhoeffer characterize American Christianity as "Protestantism without Reformation," and what effect did Bonhoeffer's experience in Harlem have on his theology?

TALK BACK 5

### November 4 The Cost of Discipleship and Prayerbook of the Bible

Read: **Green**, Chapters 29, 31

Patrick Miller, "DIETRICH BONHOEFFER ON THE PSALMS" (CANVAS)

Clifford Green, "BONHOEFFER'S CHRISTIAN PEACE ETHIC" (CANVAS)

Journal Question: What do "cheap grace" and "costly grace" look like in Bonhoeffer's context?

TALK BACK 6

### November 11 Ethics

Read: **Green**, Chapters 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38

Nancy J. Duff, "DIETRICH BONHOEFFER'S THEOLOGICAL ETHIC"

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Willis Jenkins, "CHRISTIAN SOCIAL ETHICS AFTER BONHOEFFER AND KING" (CANVAS)

Journal Question: In his *Ethics*, how does Bonhoeffer distinguish and relate the penultimate and the ultimate?

TALK BACK 7

### **November 18 Letters and Papers from Prison**

Read: **Green**, Chapters 42, 43, 44

Charles Marsh, *STRANGE GLORY*, 319-327, 332-338 (CANVAS)

Larry Rasmussen, "THE SUFFERINGS OF GOD" (CANVAS)

Ralf Wüstenberg, "RELIGIONLESS CHRISTIANITY: DIETRICH BONHOEFFER'S TEGEL THEOLOGY" (CANVAS)

Journal Question: Why does Bonhoeffer consider seeing "from below" to be valuable?  
TALK BACK 8

**November 25** Note: There will be **no class** this week because of Thanksgiving.

### **December 2 Bonhoeffer in Conversation**

Read: Jennifer McBride, "BONHOEFFER AND FEMINIST THEOLOGIES" (CANVAS)

Chung Hyun Kyung, "DEAR DIETRICH BONHOEFFER: A LETTER" (CANVAS)

Nico Koopman, "BONHOEFFER AND SOUTH AFRICA" (CANVAS)

Matthew Puffer, "DIETRICH BONHOEFFER IN THE THEOLOGY OF KARL BARTH"  
(CANVAS)

Jason Lam, "WHY CHINESE INTELLECTUALS ARE KEEN ON READING BONHOEFFER"  
(CANVAS)

Journal Question: What is the most important thing you will bring away from your reading of Barth and Bonhoeffer?