



**ERSKINE**  
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

*For Christ and His Church*

**DN975 – The Legacy of Dietrich Bonhoeffer  
Summer Term 2011**

Richard E. Burnett, Ph.D.

May 31, June 21, July 26, August 16

9:00am-5:00pm

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**Office Hours for Summer 2011:** Thursdays and Fridays, 5:00-6:00pm. I will make every reasonable effort to be in my office during these hours. However, due to meetings and unforeseen circumstances that may arise, my schedule may change. If you need to see me, I recommend that you call to schedule an appointment.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906-1945) belonged to the Confessing Church and the German resistance movement during the Nazi time. He still fascinates Christians today with the conjunction of his Christian life and theology, his unfinished agenda, his confessing the Christian faith in the face of radical change and cultural disestablishment, and his concern for bedrock themes of the Gospel. Exploring these things and more, the course is suitable for both first-time and advanced study of Bonhoeffer's legacy.

**COURSE PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this course is to critically analyze the theological contribution of Dietrich Bonhoeffer and will focus specifically on Bonhoeffer's: 1) biography and context; 2) concept of discipleship and vocation; 3) understanding of pastoral care and the nature of suffering, and 4) understanding of the task of preaching and the relationship of church and state, peace and war.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES:**

The mission of Erskine Theological Seminary is to educate persons for service in the Christian Church. As a part of that mission, one goal is that students value the theological resources of the Church, including the creeds, great writings, issues faced, and decisions made by previous generations throughout Church history. This course focuses on the theological resources that began to emerge from Dietrich Bonhoeffer's life and ministry.

It is the teacher's intention that by the end of the term, students will:

1. **Understand** the basic thrust of Bonhoeffer's theological contribution.
2. **Grasp** the historical, cultural, political, ecclesial and intellectual context of Bonhoeffer's life and contribution.
3. **Critically evaluate** Bonhoeffer's contribution to modern theology in light of the demands of pastoral ministry in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.
4. **Assess** Bonhoeffer's understanding of the norms and functions of ministry and **relate** it to one's own.

### **COURSE METHOD:**

The purpose and objectives of this course will be achieved through three learning components. The first is the **Content Component**, the student's own mastery of information related to Bonhoeffer's thought. This will be accomplished through primary-source readings, class lectures and discussion. Students will demonstrate their mastery of this material by completing the course requirements as stated below.

The second component is **Classroom Participation**. A vital exchange of ideas is essential to the process of exploration, and all students are expected to be prepared for class discussions by completing the assigned reading prior to class.

The third is the **Research Component**. Each student will complete two formal research projects as specified below. These projects will give the student the opportunity to critically examine the meaning of a particular theological term or concept in light of Dietrich Bonhoeffer's theological contribution and the history of its interpretation in the Church, and in light of its relevance for pastoral ministry.

### **REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS:**

Students are expected to secure their own copies of all required textbooks. As a convenience, the seminary has a bookstore portal on the website at <http://www.erskineseminary.org/bookstore.html>. There you will find links to familiar vendors (CBD, Amazon, B&N, and Books-A-Million) and can check availability of texts, compare prices, and place orders. The ETS SBA will receive a modest percentage of the profits from students' and professors' purchases through this portal. The Erskine Campus Bookstore will carry a limited number of copies of every required text and orders for books can be placed through the Campus Bookstore.

Each student is required to purchase the following books for the course:

Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. *The Cost of Discipleship*. New York: Touchstone Books, 1957.  
ISBN 0-6848-1500-1

Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. *Spiritual Care*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1985. ISBN 0-8006-1874-2

Kelly, Geoffrey B. and Nelson, F. Burton, *The Cost of Moral Leadership: The Spirituality of Dietrich Bonhoeffer*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003. ISBN 0-8028-0511-6

Metaxas, Eric. *Bonhoeffer: Pastor, Martyr, Prophet, Spy*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2010. ISBN 978-1-5955-5138-2

**RECOMMENDED PRIMARY WORKS:**

Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. *Christ The Center*. New York: Harper & Row, 1960.

Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. *Christ the Center*. New York: Harper & Row, 1960. Library of Congress 66-15049

Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. *Creation and Fall/Temptation*. New York: Macmillan, 1978. ISBN 0-02-083890-5

Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. *Ethics*. London: SCM Press, 1955. ISBN 068481501X

Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. *Letters and Papers from Prison*. New York: MacMillan, 1953. ISBN 0025131001

Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. *Life Together*. New York: Harper & Row, 1954. ISBN 0060608528

Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. *Meditating on The Word*. Cambridge, MA: Cowley, 1986. ISBN: 0936384433

Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. *No Rusty Swords: Letters, Lectures And Notes 1928-1936*. New York: Harper & Row, 1965. Library of Congress 65-15398

Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. *The Way To Freedom*. New York: Harper & Row, 1966. Library of Congress 67-11501

**RECOMMENDED SECONDARY LITERATURE:**

Bethge, Eberhard. *Dietrich Bonhoeffer: A Biography*. Revised Edition. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000. ISBN 0-8006-2844-6

DeGruchy, John, editor. *Dietrich Bonhoeffer: Witness to Jesus Christ*. London: Collins, 1987. ISBN 0-8006-3404-7

Fant, Clyde E. *Bonhoeffer: Wordly Preaching*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1975. ISBN 0-8407-5087-0

Godsey, John D. *The Theology of Dietrich Bonhoeffer*. London: SCM Press, 1960.

Green, Lowell C. *Lutherans Against Hitler: The Untold Story*. St. Louis: Concordia, 2007. ISBN 0758608772

Huntemann, Georg. *The Other Bonhoeffer: An Evangelical Reassessment of Dietrich Bonhoeffer*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1993. ISBN 0-8010-4382-4

Rasmussen, Larry. *Dietrich Bonhoeffer: Reality and Resistance*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005. ISBN 0664230113

### **COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

Each student will write three 8-10 page typed, 12-point type, double spaced papers, following the standards in Turabian 6<sup>th</sup> edition, on a specific theme related to Bonhoeffer's theology and understanding of ministry as discussed below.

### **OVERALL GRADING SCALE:**

See Seminary Catalogue.

### **COURSE EXPECTATIONS:**

Evaluation of your work in this course will be based on *completion* of all assigned readings, written) and participation in class sessions. The distribution of weight for grades is:

|  |            |
|--|------------|
| Requirement One (Response Paper – Due Aug. 16) | 25%        |
| Requirement Two (Paper #1 – Due June 21)       | 25%        |
| Requirement Three (Paper #2 – Due July 26)     | 25%        |
| Requirement Four (Paper #3 – Due Sept. 15)     | <u>25%</u> |
|  | 100%       |

The criteria for evaluation are grasp of material covered, sensitivity to the theological issues involved, originality and creativity in doing the assignments, correct use of written English, and overall contribution to the class.

The course depends heavily on class participation, so students are expected to be present for each class meeting in its entirety.

Written work is due at class time on the date scheduled in the syllabus unless re-negotiated in class. Written work turned in late is subject to grade reduction. Written work turned in excessively late is subject to refusal.

Policy Regarding Absences - Students are required to attend all class sessions. If students have to be absent for any reason, they are still responsible for all work missed and all work due. A student who misses more than one class session for any reason will automatically fail the course.

### **SEMINARY POLICIES**

[http://seminary.erskine.edu/content\\_policies/SeminaryPoliciesforETSSStudents.pdf](http://seminary.erskine.edu/content_policies/SeminaryPoliciesforETSSStudents.pdf)

### **COURSE SCHEDULE:**

## **Session 1: Tuesday, May 31**

### *Bonhoeffer's Biography and Context*

1. Read and be prepared to discuss in detail Eric Metaxas, *Bonhoeffer: Pastor, Martyr, Prophet, Spy* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2010).
2. Read and be prepared to discuss "The Life and Martyrdom of Dietrich Bonhoeffer" in Geoffrey B. Kelly and F. Burton Nelson, *The Cost of Moral Leadership: The Spirituality of Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, pp.1-35.
3. Read the following reviews and in light of them, your own reading of Bonhoeffer and Metaxas' biography, write a five page, double-spaced paper using a 12pt type, responding to the following questions: A) "Was Dietrich Bonhoeffer an "evangelical" theologian and if so, why or why not?" B) If so or if not, so what? That is, what difference does it make today in America if Bonhoeffer was or was not an "evangelical"? **Response paper due date: August 16.**

Victoria Barnett, review of Metaxas, Bonhoeffer, in *Association of Contemporary Church Historians Newsletter* 16, 3 (September 2010), at <http://journal.ambrose.edu/ojs/index.php/acchquarterly/article/view/46/92>,

Clifford Green, "Hijacking Bonhoeffer," *Christian Century* (Oct. 5, 2010), at [www.christiancentury.org/reviews/2010-09/hijacking-bonhoeffer](http://www.christiancentury.org/reviews/2010-09/hijacking-bonhoeffer),

Andy Rowell, "Bonhoeffer: The Evangelical Hero," *Books & Culture: A Christian Review* (June, 2010), at <http://www.booksandculture.com/articles/webexclusives/2010/june/bonhoeffer.html>

Richard Weikart, "Metaxas's Counterfeit Bonhoeffer: An Evangelical Critique," reviewer's website (January 2011) at <http://www.csustan.edu/history/faculty/weikart/Metaxas.htm>

## Session 2: Tuesday, June 21

### *Bonhoeffer's Concept of Discipleship*

1. Read and be prepared to discuss in detail Bonhoeffer's *The Cost of Discipleship*.
2. Read and be prepared to discuss in detail Geoffrey B. Kelly's and F. Burton Nelson's essay, "Discipleship and the Cross" in *The Cost of Moral Leadership: The Spirituality of Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, pp.129-144.
3. Write a paper (**Paper # 1**) of not more than 8-10 pages answering at least 6 of the 10 questions posed by Kelly and Nelson in *The Cost of Moral Leadership: The Spirituality of Dietrich Bonhoeffer*. pp.256-257. **Date due: June 21.**

## Session 3: Tuesday, July 26

### *Bonhoeffer on Pastoral Care and Suffering*

1. Read and be prepared to discuss in detail Bonhoeffer's *Spiritual Care*.
2. Read and be prepared to discuss in detail Geoffrey B. Kelly's and F. Burton Nelson's essay, "Bonhoeffer's Spirituality and God's Vulnerability: Compassion for Those in Suffering and Sorrow" pp.173-186.
3. Write a paper (**Paper #2**) of not more than 8-10 pages on Bonhoeffer's concept of pastoral care. **A guide sheet will be provided for writing this paper.** **Date due: July 26.**

## Session 4: Tuesday, August 16

### *Bonhoeffer on Church and State, Peace and War, and the Task of Preaching*

1. Read and be prepared to discuss in detail Bonhoeffer's "Lectures on Preaching" in Clyde E. Fant, *Bonhoeffer: Wordly Preaching* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1975), pp.115-180 (Handout).

2. Read and be prepared to discuss in detail Geoffrey B. Kelly's and F. Burton Nelson's essay "Preaching the Spiritual Life: Bonhoeffer's Sermons and Insights on Moral Leadership" in *The Cost of Moral Leadership: The Spirituality of Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, pp.187-225.
3. Read and be prepared to discuss selected passages (pp.297-317) in Bonhoeffer's *Ethics* on "State and Church" (Handout) and "The Spirituality That Dares Peace: The Great Venture in Moral Leadership" in *The Cost of Moral Leadership: The Spirituality of Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, pp.100-128.
4. Write a paper (**Paper #3**) of not more than 8-10 pages on Bonhoeffer's concept of church and state, peace and war or on his understanding of the task of preaching. **A guide sheet will be provided for writing this paper.** **Date due: Sept. 15.**