

**Karl Barth**  
**HT 775**  
**Spring Semester, 2008**  
Richard E. Burnett, Ph.D.  
February 16, March 15, April 5, May 3  
9:00 am – 5:00 pm  
Bowie Divinity Hall, Room #12  
**Erskine Theological Seminary**  
P.O. Box 668, Due West, SC 29639

Telephone: (864) 379-6551 (Seminary Office 17)      Seminary Fax: (864) 379-3171  
E-mail address: [burnett@erskine.edu](mailto:burnett@erskine.edu)

**Office hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 1:30-3:30 pm.** 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, please contact me by email or telephone to schedule an appointment.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

Barth's break with liberalism in 1915 is widely regarded as one of the most important events that have occurred in theology since the Reformation. This course critically examines background to this break and Barth's subsequent theological revolution. Specific attention is given to Barth's doctrine of revelation, with particular reference to his role in the German Church Struggle in mid-1930s, his doctrine of Holy Scripture, and his understanding of the task of preaching.

**COURSE PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this course is to critically analyze the theological contribution of Karl Barth and will focus specifically on Barth's: 1) break with liberalism in the summer of 1915; 2) doctrine of revelation, with particular reference to his role in the German Church Struggle in mid-1930s; 3) doctrine of Holy Scripture; 4) and his understanding of the task of preaching.

**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 which began to emerge from Karl Barth in his struggle to overcome Protestant liberalism in the 1920s and 1930s.

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

1. **Understand** the basic thrust of Barth's theological revolution.

2. **Grasp** the historical, cultural, political, ecclesial and intellectual context of Barth's break with liberalism.
3. **Critically evaluate** Barth's contribution to modern theology in light of the demands of pastoral ministry in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.
4. **Experience** the joy of theological inquiry.

### **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 Barth's thought. This will be accomplished through primary and secondary 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 well prepared for class discussions by completing the assigned reading prior to class.

The third is the **Reflection Component**. Each student will prepare written questions for *each week from the assigned reading* as specified below. These questions will give the student an opportunity to critically examine the meaning and significance of key theological terms and concepts in Barth's thought.

### **REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS:**

Barth, Karl. *Homiletics*. Trans. Geoffrey Bromiley and Donald Daniels. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1991. ISBN 0664251587

Burnett, Richard E. *Karl Barth's Theological Exegesis*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2004. ISBN 0802809995

Green, Clifford. *Karl Barth: Theologian of Freedom*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991. ISBN 0800634055

### **RECOMMENDED TEXTBOOKS:**

Barth, Karl. *Dogmatics in Outline*. Trans. G.T. Thomson. New York: Harper & Row, 1970. ISBN 006130056X

Barth, Karl. *Evangelical Theology: An Introduction*. Trans. Grover Foley. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1988. ISBN 080281896

Barth, Karl. *The Epistle to the Romans*. Trans. Edwyn C. Hoskyns, Oxford: University

Press, 1933. ISBN 0195002946

Barth, Karl. The Word of God and The Word of Man. Trans. Douglas Horton, Gloucester, Mass: Peter Smith, 1978. ISBN 0844615994

**RECOMMENDED SECONDARY LITERATURE:**

Berkouwer, G.C. The Triumph of Grace in the Theology of Karl Barth (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1956). ISBN 569380

Bolich, Gregory. Karl Barth & Evangelicalism. Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1980. ISBN 0877846154

Bowden, Karl Barth. London: SCM Press, 1971. ISBN 334000742

Busch, Eberhard. Karl Barth: His life from letters and autobiographical texts. Trans. John Bowden. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976. ISBN 0800604857

Busch, Eberhard. Barth. Trans. Richard and Martha Burnett. Abingdon, 2008. ISBN 9780687492466

Busch, Eberhad. The Great Passion: An Introduction to Karl Barth's Theology. Geoffrey Bromiley. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2004. ISBN 0802848931

Green, Clifford. Karl Barth: Theologian of Freedom. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991. ISBN 0800634055

Hunsinger, George. How To Read Karl Barth: The Shape of His Theology. New York: Oxford University Press, 1991. ISBN 0195059743

Jüngel, Eberhard. Karl Barth: A Theological Legacy. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1986. ISBN 0664240313

Macintosh, H.R. Types of Modern Theology (London: Nisbet and Co. Ltd, 1937), pp.263-319.

McCormack, Bruce L. Karl Barth's Critically Realistic Dialectical Theology: Its Genesis and Development 1909-1936. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995. ISBN 0198263376

Thorne, Phillip R. Evangelicalism and Karl Barth. Allison Park, PA: Pickwick, 1995. ISBN 1556350287

Torrance, Thomas F. Karl Barth: Biblical and Evangelical Theologian. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1990. ISBN 056709572

Webster, John. Karl Barth. Outstanding Christian Thinkers. New York: Continuum Press, 2000. ISBN 0826450792

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

**Requirement One (25% of total grade):** Each student will have read and will be prepared to discuss the reading assignments for each session. In order to encourage classroom participation and provide greater focus for discussion, each student will prepare in written form at least three thoughtful, well-crafted questions that have primarily to do *not* with facts, dates, or definitions (which a diligent student might otherwise look up in any good theological dictionary), but with *theological claims, concepts, presuppositions, or doctrines* discussed in the material assigned for each class session. These questions, which the student may be asked to share in class, will be taken up at the end of each class and will be graded on the degree to which the student has made serious effort to engage the subject matter discussed in the assigned reading.

**Requirement Two (25% of total grade):** Each student will provide a 3-page written (12-point type, double spaced) response to the assigned reading for one session (either on February 2, March 1, April 5, May 3). This response should be a *critical engagement* of the theological claims at issue in the assigned reading for that session. This response can also serve as a means to test theses and antitheses for the student's final paper. The student may be asked to share this response in class. It will be taken up at the end of class and, again, will be graded on the degree to which the student has made serious effort to engage the subject matter discussed in the assigned reading.

**Requirement Three (50% of total grade):** Each student will write a 12-point type, 15 page, double spaced paper, following the standards in Turabian 6<sup>th</sup> edition, on a topic discussed by Karl Barth in the assigned readings. The paper topic must be approved by the professor and will consist of a clearly stated thesis, antithesis, and synthesis: 1) a *clear presentation and analysis of a specific theological teaching of Karl Barth*, (thesis); 2) a well-crafted, well-researched, well-documented *objection to or qualification of this teaching* (antithesis); 3) and a *critical theological evaluation* of the teaching itself and the objection to or qualification of it (synthesis). For further assistance in writing this paper, please see essay on "Writing Theological Papers" on Professor Fairbairn's website: [http://www.erskineseminary.org/Academics\\_Files/Faculty/Fairbairn.html](http://www.erskineseminary.org/Academics_Files/Faculty/Fairbairn.html)  
This paper will be due on May 12.

### **OVERALL GRADING SCALE:**

See Seminary Catalogue, p.36.

### **COURSE EXPECTATIONS and SEMINARY POLICIES:**

Evaluation of your work in this course will be based on *completion* of the following:

Requirement One (Written Questions)	25%
Requirement Two (Written Response)	25%
Requirement Three (Final Paper)	<u>50%</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. Seminary policy allows students to miss one class (3 hours) without penalty. Students who miss more than three hours will be subject to grade reduction in the course.

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 three class sessions for any reason will automatically fail the course.

Incompletes - Students should review the Seminary policy on “Incompletes.” A grade of “Incomplete” is not a privilege of the student. It is the prerogative of the professor. It can be given as a final grade only when the student (1) has completed most of his/her course work and (2) has been providentially hindered from doing the rest of the course work.

Drop/Add/Withdrawal - Once you have completed, signed, and submitted your registration to the Registrar for this class, it is a binding contract. Your billing will be based on this registration. If you decide not to take this class, a “drop/add” form must be completed, including securing the appropriate signatures. Failure to properly withdraw from the class will result in receiving a grade of “F” for the course and full tuition charges will apply. No exceptions will be made to this policy.

Contact information has been provided at the beginning of the syllabus. Students who have questions about the material or the assignments are encouraged to contact the course professor.

**RESERVE MATERIALS:** Unless otherwise indicated, all reserve materials for this course can be found by going to the link below and by entering the following user name: HT775. The professor will give the password to any student enrolled in the course at anytime upon request. Please remember that capitalization is important:

<http://www.erskine.edu/library/ireserves/Burnett/HT775>

## **COURSE SCHEDULE:**

### ***I. Karl Barth's Break With Liberalism (Feb. 16)***

Karl Barth, “The Strange New World of The Bible,” *The Word of God and The Word of Man*. Trans. Douglas Horton (Gloucester, Mass: Peter Smith, 1978),

pp.28-50. (On Reserve)

Karl Barth, "The Epistle to the Romans" (2nd ed., 1922) selection in Clifford Green, ed., *Karl Barth: Theologian of Freedom*, pp.114-140.

Karl Barth, "Evangelical Theology in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century," *The Humanity of God*. Trans. John Newton Thomas and Thomas Wieser. (Richmond: John Knox, 1960), pp.11-33. (On Reserve)

Clifford Green, "Karl Barth's Life and Theology," *Karl Barth: Theologian of Freedom*, pp.11-45.

### **Recommended:**

Karl Barth, "Concluding Unscientific Postscript on Schleiermacher," in Clifford Green, ed., *Karl Barth: Theologian of Freedom*, pp.66-90.

Stanley Hauerwas & William Willimon, *Resident Aliens* (Nashville; Abingdon, 1989), pp.15-29. (On Reserve)

Timothy R. Phillips & Dennis L. Okholm, *The Nature of Confession* (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity, 1996), pp.7-15. (On Reserve)

Donald Grey Barnhouse, "An Interview with Karl Barth" in *Revelation* vol.4, No.1 [January 1934] 5, 30-33. (On Reserve)

John R. Franke, "God Hidden & Wholly Revealed: Karl Barth, Postmodernity, and Evangelical Theology" *Books & Culture* 9/5 (Sept./Oct.) 2003, pp.16-17, 40-41. <http://www.christianitytoday.com/bc/2003/005/18.16.html>

## ***II. Karl Barth's Doctrine of Revelation (March 15)***

Karl Barth, "No! Answer to Emil Brunner," selection in Clifford Green, ed., *Karl Barth: Theologian of Freedom*, pp.151-167.

Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics* II/1:128-178 (§2 "The Readiness of Man"). (On Reserve)

Karl Barth, "The Christian Understanding of Revelation" in *Against the Stream*. Trans. Stanley Godman. London. SCM, 1954, pp.203-240. (On Reserve)

"The Barmen Declaration," selection in Clifford Green, ed., *Karl Barth: Theologian of Freedom*, pp.148-150.

The Guiding Principles of the Faith Movement of the 'German Christians,' June 6, 1932" in Appendix II, Arthur Cochrane, *The Church's Confession Under Hitler* (Pittsburgh: The Pickwick Press, 1976), 222. (On Reserve)

**Recommended:**

Arthur Cochrane, *The Church's Confession Under Hitler* (Pittsburgh: The Pickwick Press, 1976).

**III. Karl Barth's Doctrine of Holy Scripture (April 5)**

Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics I/1:88-124* (§4 "The Word of God In Its Threefold Form") (On Reserve)

Karl Barth, Prefaces to the first, second, and third edition of *The Epistle to The Romans*. (On Reserve)

Richard E. Burnett, *Karl Barth's Theological Exegesis* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2004).

Karl Barth, "Biblical Questions, Insights, and Vistas," *The Word of God and The Word of Man*. Trans. Douglas Horton (Gloucester, Mass: Peter Smith, 1978), pp.183-217. (On Reserve)

**Recommended:**

Richard E. Burnett, "Historical Criticism" in *Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of Scripture*, general editor, Kevin J. Vanhoozer, Baker Academic, 2005, 290-293. (On Reserve)

J. Gresham Machen, "Karl Barth And 'The Theology Of Crisis,'" *Westminster Theological Journal*, 53 (1991), 197-207. (On Reserve)

D.G. Hart, "Machen On Barth: Introduction To A Recently Uncovered Paper," *Westminster Theological Journal*, 53 (1991) 189-196. (On Reserve)

Bruce L. McCormack, "The Being of Holy Scripture is in Becoming: Karl Barth in Conversation with American Evangelical Criticism" in *The Princeton Theological Review*, Vol. IX, Number 1, pp.4-15. (On Reserve)

**IV. Karl Barth and The Task of Preaching (May 3)**

Karl Barth, "Saved By Grace," sermon in *Deliverance To The Captives*. Trans. Marguerite Wieser (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1961), pp.35-42 (On Reserve).

Paul Tillich, "You Are Accepted," sermon in *The Shaking Of The Foundations* (London: SCM Press, 1949), pp.153-163 (On Reserve).

Karl Barth, *Homiletics*, pp.13-136.

**Recommended:**

Karl Barth, "The Need and Promise of Christian Preaching," *The Word of God and The Word of Man*. Trans. Douglas Horton (Gloucester, Mass: Peter Smith, 1978), pp.97-135. (On Reserve)

Karl Barth, "The Word of God and The Task of The Ministry," *The Word of God and The Word of Man*. Trans. Douglas Horton (Gloucester, Mass: Peter Smith, 1978), pp.183-217. (On Reserve).