

Briercrest Seminary
BT859 Advanced Seminar in Theology: Theology of Karl Barth
Course Syllabus

Course Date: January 4-8, 2011 (Note: This course runs atypically from Tuesday to Saturday)

Course Instructor: David Guretzki, PhD (McGill)

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Course Credit: 3 credit hours

Course Prerequisites: No formal requirements, but BT650 or BT651 strongly recommended.

Calendar Description

This seminar guides students in extensive reading and discussion within a selected topic, field, or personality of historical, systematic, or pastoral theology. The topic of study is selected in accordance with the expertise of the faculty member and/or interests of the students. The course may be taken more than once, provided the topic has changed.



Barth (2009) by Ross Melanson
Briercrest Seminary Alumnus

Detailed Seminar Description

Karl Barth (1886-1968) is widely acknowledged, whether by supporters or detractors, to be one of the most important Protestant theologians of the twentieth century. There has been a surprising resurgence of interest in his thought across Protestant, Roman Catholic, and Orthodox theological boundaries in the last twenty years, with many calling him a “twentieth century church father.” Some of Barth’s most compelling contributions have been on the doctrine of the Trinity, the doctrine of election, the doctrine of revelation, the doctrine of the church, and the doctrine of reconciliation. Consequently, it is important for those interested in current theological and ecclesiological trends to have at least a rudimentary understanding of what Barth did (and, for that matter, did not) teach. This is vitally important in order to avoid repeating older criticisms of Barth (many of which were lodged by evangelicals) but which are now being largely discredited, including the unhelpful labeling of Barth as a so-called “neo-orthodox” theologian.

This seminar will require students to delve into a variety of primary source readings by Barth in order to be exposed first hand to major motifs of his thought. Since a full critical exploration of the full breadth of his thought will be impossible, a select number of themes will be explored with particular attention given in this course to critical appreciation of Barth as a model of one who sought to do theology in service to the Church and her mission. Consequently, some focused attention will be given to explore Barth’s use of Scripture as “theological exegesis,” his unparalleled “Christ-centred” theology (especially arising out of his doctrine of election), his theology and practice preaching, his explication of the “Church as a missionary Church,” and his understanding of the Holy Spirit relative to the nature and task of Christian vocation.

Course Format and Philosophy

It is the instructor's pedagogical and hermeneutical conviction that the best way to learn about a seminal thinker (such as Barth) is to learn to engage directly with his primary source texts rather than simply re-iterating or synthesizing those texts in course lectures. Consequently, this course will proceed as a discussion-oriented seminar in which the bulk of the time will be spent discussing common primary and secondary texts, with freedom given to alter the class discussion as important issues emerge. Lectures, therefore, will be minimal in order to give the maximum amount of time to discussion and discerning of those issues that are most important to class members and their interests. It is IMPERATIVE therefore, that students read the assigned texts in advance of the course, and be prepared to review select portions of the text (as noted in the course outline below)

Course Reading

Introductory Texts

Franke, John R. *Barth for Armchair Theologians*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006. (166 pages)

Guretzki, David. "Reading the *Church Dogmatics* by Karl Barth: A Primer." 2008. An updated version will be published in a book tentatively entitled, *Karl Barth in Conversation*, Wipf & Stock, 2011. An unpublished earlier version for use in this class is available online: <http://www.box.net/shared/e21fpe1x7/1/18439834/194151674> (8 pages)

Primary Source Texts

Barth, Karl. *The Call to Discipleship*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 2003. (Note: This is an excerpt from *Church Dogmatics*, IV.2, 533-553, i.e., §66 The Sanctification of Man, 3. The Call to Discipleship. If you have access to or own the *Church Dogmatics*, you may access this selection there and this text would not be required.) (88 pages)

_____. *Church Dogmatics, A Selection*. (Introduction by H. Gollwitzer). Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1994. (260 pages)

_____. *God Here and Now*. London and New York: Routledge Classics, 2003. (132 pages)

_____. *Witness to the Word: A Commentary on John 1*. Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2003. (176 pages)

_____. *The Word in This World: Two Sermons by Karl Barth*. Edited by Kurt I. Johanson, translated by Christopher Asprey. Vancouver: Regent College Publishing, 2007. (68 pages)

Secondary Articles (on reserve)

Bender, Kimlyn. “Karl Barth's Doctrine of the Church in Contemporary Anglo-American Ecclesiological Conversation," *Zeitschrift für dialektische Theologie*, 20 (2005): 84-116. (32 pages)

Guretzki, David. “The Genesis and Development of the Filioque in Barth’s Earlier Theology,” 55-90. Chap. in *Karl Barth on the Filioque*. Surrey: Ashgate, 2009. (35 pages)

Hunsinger, George. “Karl Barth’s Christology: Its Basic Chalcedonian Character,” 131-47. Chap. in *Disruptive Grace: Studies in the Theology of Karl Barth*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000. (16 pages)

McCormack, Bruce L. “Karl Barth’s Historicized Christology,” 201-33. Chap. in *Orthodox and Modern: Studies in the Theology of Karl Barth*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008. (32 pages)

Perry, Tim. “Is Barth the Bad-Guy after all?” *Didaskalia* 13.2 (Spring 2002): 25-50. (Article on Barth’s doctrine of Scripture). (25 pages)

Webster, John. “Reconciliation,” 113-40. Chap. in *Barth*. London and New York: Continuum, 2000. (27 pages)

Total Pages of Reading: 1055

Course Outline and Related Reading (topics and balance of time subject to change with emerging class interest)

Date	Topic	Related Reading¹ (KB = Karl Barth)
January 4 AM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction; Biographical Review • Evangelical Reception of Barth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Franke, <i>Barth for Armchair Theologians</i> • Guretzki, “Reading the CD...” • Gollwitzer, 1-24
January 4 PM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Karl Barth and the “Strange” Bible • Karl Barth: Scripture and Exegesis <p>Guest Lecture: Karl Barth on Scripture (Dr. Kevin Daugherty – 45 minutes)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KB, “Authority...of Bible,” in <i>God Here and Now</i> • Perry, “Is Barth the Bad-Guy . . .?” • KB, <i>Witness to the Word</i>
January 5 AM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revelation and Trinity: Jesus, the Bible, and Preaching 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gollwitzer, 29-49a • KB, “Christian Proclamation” and

¹ In many respects, this is the most important column to pay attention to in the course. All related course readings MUST be brought to the appropriate class.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Karl Barth: Preacher Seminars #1	God's Word" in <i>God Here and Now</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KB, <i>The Word in this World</i>
January 5 PM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theology and the Gospel • Barth and <i>Missio Dei</i> Seminars #2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gollwitzer, 49b-86 • KB, Chapter 3 in <i>God Here and Now</i>
January 6 AM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jesus Christ the Centre • Barth's Christological Doctrine of Election 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gollwitzer, 87-133 • Hunsinger, "Karl Barth's Christology" • McCormack, "KB's Historicized Christology"
January 6 PM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation, Humanity, and Nothingness Guest Lecture: Karl Barth on the Virgin Birth (Dr. Dustin Resch – 45 minutes) Seminars #3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gollwitzer, 134-229
January 7 AM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barth's Filioquist Dialectical Pneumatology • "The Church is as such a Missionary Church": Barth's Ecclesiology 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guretzki, "Genesis and Development of the Filioque" • KB, "The Church" in <i>God Here and Now</i> • Bender, "KB's doctrine of the Church"
January 7 PM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God in "Far, Far-away Land": The Doctrine of Reconciliation • Reconciliation and Discipleship Seminars #4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Webster, "Reconciliation" • KB, <i>The Call to Discipleship</i>
January 8 AM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Christian Vocation and Ethics Seminar #5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KB, "Christian Ethics" and "Humanism" in <i>God Here and Now</i>

Course Requirements

Pre-course Assignments

1. Reading (10%)

As a reading intensive course, it is expected that students will complete all of the assigned reading by the first day of the course. Please print out and complete the reading report (as included below in **Appendix I**) for the first day of class. Each 100 pages (or part thereof) incomplete by January 4 will receive a reduction of 1 mark out of 10. (i.e., 1%).

2. Interactive Quotation Journal (10%)

A significant part of learning to read a theologian such as Karl Barth (or any significant thinker) is to read interactively. In order to stimulate such interactivity, each student will submit 20 direct quotations from at least three different primary source texts. A secondary purpose will be to gather quotations that might be useful for preaching and teaching.

Quotations will:

- a. Include full bibliographic information for each quotation using Briercreech Seminary format footnote style.
- b. Be no more than 100 words each. (You may include ellipses (...) if necessary to truncate a quotation).
- c. Include an additional 100 words (maximum) in which you explain the significance of the quotation *in your own words*.
- d. Be neatly organized for readability.
- e. Ideally (though not necessarily) be related to the topic of your final paper.

Due: January 8, 2011 (last day of class)

3. Seminar Presentation (30%)

Each student will present a 10 minute seminar in which the student summarizes and gives a preliminary critical evaluation arising out of one of the five “Primary Source Texts” or one of the six “Secondary Articles” listed above. (If using one of the primary source texts, it may be necessary to select a shorter section of about 25-40 pages within).

SIGN UPS: Select which text upon which you will do a seminar presentation and email the instructor with your FIRST and SECOND choices by **December 20, 2010**.

Presentation Guidelines

- a. Oral presentations must be not more than 10 minutes in length. A warning will be given at 9 minutes to wrap up the presentation, so it may be good to practice before coming to class.
- b. Presentations can be either read or delivered extemporaneously, but a written text of the seminar must be handed in upon delivery.

- c. Seminar presenters may have a handout if they wish (but not necessary). If a handout is included, it must be submitted the day before the presentation for photocopying.
- d. Presentations should be constituted by the following balance: Approximately 25% of the presentation will be summary of the reading or article; approximately 50% will be evaluation; and approximately 25% will lead the class into discussion and debate.

Evaluation of Presentation

Every oral presentation will be jointly evaluated by the instructor and by one classmate. The mark will be weighted by $\frac{3}{4}$ of the mark being given by the instructor, and $\frac{1}{4}$ by the classmate. Clarity, creativity, succinctness, and critical acuity will be the factors by which the presentation will be evaluated. Please note that though a written presentation needs to be submitted as proof of preparation, the mark will be based entirely upon the oral presentation.

During Course Assignments

It is expected that all students will participate fully in the class through listening and discussion. Student seminary presentations will be dispersed throughout the week.

Post Course Assignment

Barth's Theology and the Church - Research Paper (50%)

Each student will research and write a maximum 15 page (4500 word) paper on an aspect of Barth's theology relative to the Church and its mission. All papers must include:

- a. Careful exposition of Barth's theology on a particular topic ($\frac{1}{3}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ of the paper) and referencing of primary sources;
- b. A judicious evaluation of strengths and weaknesses on the topic (about $\frac{1}{4}$ of the paper), including reference to secondary critique;
- c. A creative exploration of how his theology might be applied to the Church and her mission (no more than $\frac{1}{4}$ of the paper);
- d. Proper footnote documentation according to Briercrest Seminary Format Guide.

Note: Students may make a special request to the instructor to do research on a topic not directly related to the Church and its mission (e.g., if the student may want to do a thesis on the topic), but these topics must be approved in advance.

Briercrest Seminary Assignment Guidelines 2010-2011

- All assignments should be completed according to the Briercrest Seminary Format Guide. The Guide is available online at:
<http://www.briercrest.ca/seminary/current/resources/formatguide/Seminary-Format-Guide-2010-2011.pdf>.
- Part of grading may be based on format. Papers must be of the required length (no longer or shorter) using 12-point type.
- All post-course assignments must be submitted to the Academic Services office, postmarked no later than 2 months after the last day of class (or the next business day if this date falls on a weekend or a statutory holiday).
- Paper copies must be in the Academic Services office or postmarked by the due date. Mailed assignments must be clearly identified with “Assignments Enclosed” on the envelope.
- Electronic assignment submissions will be accepted as MS Word attachments but must comply with regular Briercrest Seminary formatting requirements – please e-mail to the instructor (dguretzki@briercrest.ca) and cc them to the Academic Services office (seminary@briercrest.ca). Assignments must be received before midnight on the due date.
- There will be no extensions for pre-course work.
- **Extensions (NEW POLICY FOR 2010-11):** Extensions are normally not granted beyond the syllabus due date. However, in rare extenuating circumstances beyond a student’s control (e.g., death in the family, extended illness or tragedy), the student may request a two-week extension through the Academic Services office. Please note that school, family, or ministry commitments or busyness does not qualify as an extenuating circumstance for an extension. Should the student fail to complete the assignments by the due date (or the extension date, when applicable), a grade will be assigned according to the work the student has submitted.

Bibliography: Specialized select bibliographies will be given to students throughout the week related to the topics of discussion.

Appendix I

Reading Report

Please check off only the selection which you have completed *in their entirety before* arriving for class on January 4, 2011.

Required Reading (Should be read in this order)

- Franke, *Barth for Armchair Theologians* (166 pages)
- Guretzki, "Reading the *Church Dogmatics* by Karl Barth" (8 pages)
- Gollwitzer (Barth), *Church Dogmatics, A Selection.* (260 pages)
- Barth, *God Here and Now* (132 pages)
- Perry, "Is Barth the Bad-Guy after all?" (25 pages)
- Barth, *Witness to the Word* (176 pages)
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- Hunsinger, "Karl Barth's Christology" (16 pages)
- McCormack, "KB's Historicized Christology" (32 pages)
- Guretzki, "Genesis and Development of the Filioque" (35 pages)
- Bender, "KB's doctrine of the Church" (32 pages)
- Webster, "Reconciliation" (27 pages)
- Barth, *The Call to Discipleship* (88 pages)

Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____