In this course, we will consider Karl Barth's attempt to integrate divine election into the doctrine of God and the implications of this move for his understanding of the "command of God" as the solution to the ethical problem. We will conclude by considering aspects of Barth's special ethics as they appear within the context of his doctrine of creation and by looking at his treatment of Christian love.

Requirements

Students are expected to prepare carefully for each meeting, contribute constructively to our discussions, and lead our inquiries on one occasion. In this instance, leadership entails the preparation of an eight to ten page paper (to be read in seminar) that highlights the significant issues arising in the readings assigned for that day (both required and recommended) and that concludes with questions for discussion.

A final paper of 25-30 pages is due Wednesday May 16, 2012. Any topic is fair game so long as it bears on the concerns of the course, involves a close reading of the relevant primary texts, includes serious engagement with the most important secondary literature, and makes a case, defends a point of view.

The papers must be submitted in WORD, typed, double-spaced, with standard margins. Notes and a bibliography are required. Any standard format of citation is acceptable so long as it is used consistently.

Required books


P. Nimmo, Being in Action: *The Theological Shape of Barth’s Ethical Vision* (T&T Clark, 2007)

**Trouble and Woe**

If you have special academic needs that require attention, or if you have academic difficulties that you cannot address on your own, please come see one of us. Students with disabilities (in particular) should contact us in the first week of class so that their needs can be specified and their rights facilitated under the Americans with Disabilities Act. So too, if you are having moral and spiritual difficulties associated with this course, again, please come see us. And finally, if you find that (for whatever reason) you cannot speak to either of us about some pressing matter, then please seek out someone else who might intervene on your behalf: a friend, another professor, a pastor, the Dean of Students, the Chaplain, etc.

**Grading and Evaluation**

The final course grade will assess overall participation, written and oral, with your strongest contributions receiving relatively more weight than your weaker contributions. Your grade will follow from three areas of significant contribution: the seminar paper (20%), the final paper (65%), and class participation, which includes, but is far from reducible to, your contributions as an a discussion leader (15%).

**The Schedule**

**January 31  The Relation of Barth’s Revised Doctrine of Election to Classical Reformed Versions**

CD, II/2, pp. 2-93

B. McCormack, “God’s Gracious Election in the Theology of Karl Barth: Musings on a Possible Way to Move Beyond the Calvinist/Arminian Divide”

**February 7  The Being of God in the Act of Electing**

CD II/2, pp. 94-145

Nicholas M. Healy, “Karl Barth, German-Language Theology, and the Catholic Tradition” in Dempsey, pp. 229-43.

Matthew Levering, “Christ, the Trinity, and Predestination: McCormack and Aquinas” in Dempsey, pp. 244-73.

Bruce L. McCormack, “Processions and Missions: A Point of Convergence Between Thomas Aquinas and Karl Barth” (e-reserves).

**Recommended:** George Hunsinger, “Election and the Trinity: Twenty-Five Theses on the Theology of Karl Barth” in Dempsey, pp. 91-114.

**February 14**  The Telos of God’s Election of God: the Humiliation of God and the Exaltation of the Human

CD II/2, pp. 145-94


**Recommended:** The rest of Lauber’s book.

**February 21**  Barth’s Doctrine of Election in Jewish Perspective

CD II/2, pp.195-305.


**February 28**  The Limits of Historicizing

CD II/2, pp. 410-449


**March 6**  Reading Week

**March 13**  The Ethical Problem

CD II/2, pp. 509-551


**March 20**  Election, Relationship, and Requirement

CD II/2, pp. 552-630
Vicki Hearne, “How to Say ‘Fetch!’” in Adam’s Task, pp. 42-76

G. McKenny, The Analogy of Grace: Karl Barth’s Moral Theology, pp. 166-200

Recommended: J. Bowlin, “Barth and Aquinas on Election, Relationship, and Requirement.”

**March 27**  
**Responsibility, Moral Absolutes, and the Good**

CD II/2, pp. 631-732

P. Nimmo, Being in Action, pp. 1-40

**April 3**  
**Judgment, Forgiveness, and Repentance**

CD II/2, pp. 733-781

P. Nimmo, Being in Action, pp. 87-135

**April 10**  
**Spheres of command and agency**

CD III/4, pp. 3-46


P. Nimmo, Being in Action, pp. 41-61

Recommended: Aquinas, Summa Theologiae, I-II.90.1-4; 91.1-2; 93.1-2, 6; 94.1-6 (http://www.op.org/summa/)

**April 17**  
**The Spirit of Love**

CD IV/2, pp. 727-840

G. McKenny, The Analogy of Grace: Karl Barth’s Moral Theology, pp. 201-224

P. Nimmo, Being in Action, pp. 136-185

Recommended: Robert Pippin, Modernism as a Philosophical Problem, 2nd ed., pp.45-77