

History/Religious Studies 470: Religious Thought in Modern Europe

Fall 2009, MWF 11-11:50, 1111 Mosse Humanities

Instructor: Dr. Koshar (rjkoshar@wisc.edu); Office: 4101 Humanities, W 1-3

Teaching Assistant: Skye Doney; Sections: R 8:55 (301) 9:55 (302) 2:25 (303) 3:30 (304)

Course Rationale

This course surveys “religious thought” in nineteenth and twentieth century Europe. By religious thought, we understand the interactions among theology, philosophy, literature, history, and political thought. In considering this hybrid concept, the theme of “political theology,” the perceived nexus between power and divine revelation, comes in for particular attention. We concentrate only tangentially on the history of specific confessions, liturgy, or denominational conflicts. Moreover, we focus mainly on Christian thinking, although there will be references to other faith traditions that have influenced Christianity in the last two centuries. The aim is to discuss Christian religious thought (and political theology) in the context of secular society, wherein belief in God is seen to be voluntary rather than something unquestioned. Another aim is to put religion back into the main narrative of late modern European culture and politics, a narrative that for at least the past thirty years has overlooked or under-emphasized the continued influence and transformation of Christian thinking. Geographically, the main focus is Germany, England, and France, with occasional forays into Russian and U.S. history.

Course Requirements

Students are expected to attend all lectures and discussion sections. Attendance at discussion sessions will be graded. Assignments consist of one four-page paper (due Sept. 30) and one six-page paper (Oct. 30). There is also a take-home final exam (Dec. 14; maximum ten pages). Papers and exams will be responses to pre-circulated questions. There may be additional short writing assignments as part of the discussion grade. Grading is determined as follows:

Discussion=20%

Four-page paper=20%

Six-page paper=25%

Take-home final=35%

Required Reading (in order assigned)

(U)=books available for purchase at Underground Textbook Exchange, 664 State St.

(R)=required reading available in a course reader at Humanities Copy Center, 1st floor, Mosse Humanities. Books and the course reader will also be on three-hour reserve at Helen C. White.

(E)= instructor will send text to students as e-mail attachments.

(R) James C. Livingston, *Modern Christian Thought: The Enlightenment and the Nineteenth Century*, 93-105

(R) Friedrich Schleiermacher, *On Religion*, 18-54

(R) Karl Barth, “Introductory Essay,” in Ludwig Feuerbach, *The Essence of Christianity*, x-xxxii

(R) Ludwig Feuerbach, *The Essence of Christianity*, 1-32

(U) Søren Kierkegaard, *Fear and Trembling*. Penguin.

- (E) Gustave Flaubert, "A Simple Soul."
 (U) Peter Fritzsche, ed., *Nietzsche and the Death of God: Selected Writings*. Bedford/St. Martin's.
 (E) Adolf von Harnack, *What is Christianity?*, excerpt.
 (R) Karl Barth, *Epistle to the Romans*, 27-54.
 (R) J. M. Robinson, ed., *The Beginnings of Dialectical Theology*, 58-130
 (R) Michael L. Morgan, "The Problem of Objectivity before and after Auschwitz," in *Interim Judaism: Jewish Thought in a Century of Crisis*, 1-45.
 (R) Asher D. Biemann, ed., *The Martin Buber Reader: Essential Writings*, 43-5, 51-9, 107-14, 181-6, 258-60, 268-80.
 (U) Hermann Hesse, *Demian*. HarperPerennial.
 (U) Georges Bernanos, *Diary of a Country Priest*. Carroll and Graf.
 (R) David N. Myers, "Ant-Historicism and the Theological-Political Predicament in Weimar Germany: The Case of Leo Strauss," in *Resisting History: Historicism and its Discontents in German-Jewish Thought*, 106-29.
 (R) Carl Schmitt, *Roman Catholicism and Political Form*, 1-43.
 (R) Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Letters and Papers from Prison*, 271-366, 369-70, 380-83
 (E) "Theological Declaration of Barmen," 1934.
 (U) Karl Barth, *Humanity of God*. Westminster John Knox.
 (R) Johann Baptist Metz, *Faith in History and Society*, 3-83
 (U) Dorothee Soelle, *Against the Wind: Memoir of a Radical Christian*. Fortress.

Supplementary Reading (On Reserve, Helen C. White)

- Karl Barth, *Protestant Theology in the Nineteenth Century*.
 Michael Kirwan, *Political Theology: An Introduction*.
 James C. Livingston, et al, *Modern Christian Thought*.
 John Macquarrie, *Twentieth Century Religious Thought*.
 Peter Rietbergen, *Europe: A Cultural History*
 Peter Scott and William T. Cavanaugh, eds., *The Blackwell Companion to Political Theology* (in reference section, Memorial Library)
 Roland Stromberg, *European Intellectual History Since 1789*, 6th ed.
<http://www.lcms.org/ca/www/cyclopedia/02/>. Encyclopedia of Christian thought from the Lutheran Church, Missouri Synod.
<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/index.html>. Roman Catholic equivalent of the above.

Course Schedule and Assignments

Week 1: Introduction (Sept. 2-4)

I. The Nineteenth Century

Week 2: Enlightenment, Romanticism, Christianity (Sept. 9-11)

Reading: Livingston; Schleiermacher, 18-54

Week 3: Construction and Deconstruction: From Hegel through Feuerbach to Darwin (Sept. 14-18)

Reading: Barth, x-xxxii; Feuerbach, 1-32

Week 4: Kierkegaard's and Dostoevski's Subversive Orthodoxy (Sept. 21-25)
Reading: Kierkegaard, *Fear and Trembling*, entire

Week 5: Whence Religious Authority? Catholic Neo-Thomism, Liberal Protestantism, and Modernity (Sept. 30.-Oct. 2)

Four-page paper due (Sept. 30)

Reading: Flaubert; Harnack, excerpts

Week 6: Untimely Thoughts: Nietzsche's "Death of God" (Oct. 5-9)

Reading: Fritzsche, entire

II. The Twentieth Century

Week 7: World War I and the Barthian Revolt in Modern Theology (Oct. 12-16)

Reading: Barth; Robinson

Week 8: Christianity, Judaism, Personalism (Oct. 19-23)

Reading: Morgan; Biemann/Buber

Week 9: Theologies of the Profane (Oct. 26-30)

Reading: Hesse, *Demian*, entire

Six-page paper due (Oct. 30)

Week 10: The Interwar Catholic Revival: Theology and Literature (Nov. 2-6)

Reading: Bernanos, *Diary of a Country Priest*, entire

Week 11: Leo Strauss, Carl Schmitt, and German Political Theology (Nov. 9-13)

Reading: Myers; Schmitt

Week 12: The German Church Struggle (Nov. 16-20)

Reading: Barmen Declaration; Bonhoeffer, *Letters and Papers from Prison*, excerpts

Week 13: Barth and the Prospects of Postwar Theology (Nov. 23-25)

Reading: Barth, *Humanity of God*, entire

Nov. 26-29: Thanksgiving Recess

Week 14: A New Theology of the Subject (I)? (Nov. 30-Dec. 4)

Reading: Metz, 3-83; start Soelle

Week 15: A New Theology of the Subject (II)? (Dec. 7-11)

Reading: Soelle, *Against the Wind*, entire

Take-home final due (Dec. 14, 11:00-11:50)