

History 600 (10): Advanced Seminar in History: Christianity and Modern European Culture

Fall 2008, W 1:20-3:20, 5255 Humanities Instructor: Dr. Koshar (rjkoshar@wisc.edu), Office hours: 4101 Humanities, TR, 4-5 and by appt.

Course Rationale: It is common among historians to argue that in an age of heightened secularization in nineteenth- and twentieth-century Europe, religion became more and more a matter of private belief. Does this argument fit the historical reality? Or did many Europeans—from theologians to ordinary people—still see religious faith as the indispensable foundation for a collective understanding of the cultural and political tensions of modernity? If they did, then how was this foundation developed and sustained in response to industrialization, commercialization, the rise of state power, the evolution of socialist and fascist movements, war and genocide, the development of cultural modernity, and the general falling away from organized Christendom? If on the other hand the majority argument holds true, then what happened? In discussing these questions, we concentrate on Christianity broadly conceived, placing particular emphasis on the relations among theology, religious practice, culture, and politics in Germany and France. Among the topics covered are: liberal theology and its critics; miracles and Catholic culture in France; dialectical theology and political conflict in post-World War I Germany; lay theology and the novel in interwar France; and the anti-Nazi church struggle in Germany. No prior knowledge of theology or religious thought is assumed, but background in modern European history is recommended. Requirements include weekly readings and discussion (including one or more assignments as class discussant), an oral presentation of research project, and a research paper (15-20 pgs.) on a topic chosen in consultation with the instructor. For this seminar I take a more “holistic” approach to grading, but for those more mathematically inclined, one can say that discussion/critique and research components each count for about 50% of the final grade.

Required Reading: Readings marked with an asterisk indicate selections in the course reader, which will be available later on in the semester. The reading marked with # (Paul’s Epistle to the Romans) is on-line. All other readings are available for purchase at the Underground Textbook Exchange. The books and course pack are also on three-hour reserve at Helen C. White.

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

*Friedrich Schleiermacher, *On Religion* (Cambridge University Press), 18-54

Søren Kierkegaard, *Training in Christianity* (Vintage)

Ruth Harris, *Lourdes: Body and Spirit in the Secular Age* (Penguin)

*John Webster, “Introducing Barth,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Karl Barth*, ed. J. Webster (Cambridge University Press), 1-16.

#St. Paul, Epistle to the Romans, <http://www.biblegateway.com/> (NIV)

*Karl Barth, *The Epistle to the Romans* (Oxford), 492-526

*J. M. Robinson, ed., *The Beginnings of Dialectical Theology* (John Knox), 58-130

*Stephen Schloesser, *Jazz Age Catholicism: Mystic Modernism in Postwar Paris, 1919-1933* (Toronto), 245-81

*J.C. Whitehouse, *Vertical Man* (St. Austin Press), 127-83.

George Bernanos, *Diary of a Country Priest* (Carroll & Graf)

*John Moses, "Bonhoeffer's Germany: The Political Context"; Martin Rumscheidt, "The Formation of Bonhoeffer's Theology," in *The Cambridge Companion to Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, ed. John W. de Gruchy (Cambridge University Press), 3-21, 50-70.
Dietrich Bonhoeffer *Letters and Papers from Prison* (Touchstone)
Karl Barth, *The Humanity of God* (Westminster John Knox)

Course Schedule

Sept. 3 Course Introduction

Liberal Theology and its Critics

Sept. 10 Foundations of Modern Liberal Theology
Reading: Livingston, 93-105; Schleiermacher, 18-54

Sept. 17 Dissident Christianity confronts Liberal Theology
Reading: Kierkegaard

Miracles and Catholic Culture in France

Sept. 24 The Lourdes of the Apparitions
Reading on C19 miracles; Harris, Part I

Oct. 1 The Lourdes of Pilgrimage
Harris, Part II

Dialectical Theology in Post-World War I Germany

Oct. 8 Karl Barth's Theology
Reading: Webster, 1-16; #Paul's Epistle to Romans; *Barth, *Romans*, 492-526

Oct. 15 World War I and the Origins of Dialectical Theology
Reading: *Robinson, 58-130

Interwar Catholicism and Literature in France

Oct. 22 Catholicism and Culture Between the Wars
Reading: Schloesser, 245-81; Whitehouse, 127-83

Oct. 29 Bernanos and Sainthood
Reading: Bernanos

The Anti-Nazi Church Struggle

Nov. 5 Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Theology
Reading: Moses, 3-21; Rumscheidt, 50-70.

Nov. 12 Religionless Christianity?
Reading: Bonhoeffer

Dialectical and Liberal Theology after World War II

Nov. 19 God's Humanity
Reading: Barth, *Humanity of God*

Presentations

Nov. 26 Student Presentations

Dec. 3 Student Presentations

Dec. 10 Student Presentations

Dec. 17 Final Paper Due