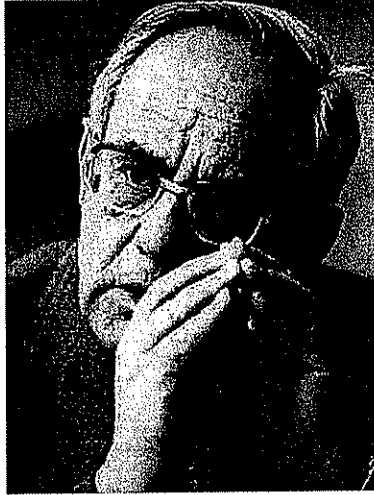


TESP 185: KARL RAHNER: THE FOUNDATIONS OF CHRISTIAN FAITH
Spring 2009
MW 7:00-8:45 p.m.



Fr. Paul Crowley, S.J.
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408-554-4542
Hours: Tues 9:30-11 a.m., and by appointment.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

A careful and critical reading of one of the seminal theological works of the 20th century, *The Foundations of Christian Faith*, by Karl Rahner, SJ. We will explore some of the major themes of the book, including the theology of the human person, nature and grace, God and Christ, theology of church, and spirituality of Christian existence. We will examine some of the challenges to Rahner's work, particularly to his transcendental project, and some of the issues posed by religious pluralism.

GENERAL GOALS OF THE COURSE IN RELATION TO CORE AND RS DEPARTMENT
(please see Angel course website)

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Students will be able to articulate the structure and method of Rahner's transcendental theology
- Students will be able to use correctly the technical terminology of Rahner's theology and relate it critically to classical doctrines of Christian faith
- Students will be able to identify three major implications of Rahner's theology for the contemporary practice of Catholic faith
- Students will be able to identify three major philosophical or theological challenges to Rahner's transcendental project

REQUIREMENTS

1. Participation (40% of the final grade):
 - Regular attendance (no more than two absences without grade drop)
 - Preparation of 1-2 page outline of the Rahner reading for each class (no late outlines can be accepted); you will use these partly to facilitate your class discussion of the text
 - Discussion of the text and readiness to ask and entertain questions about:
 - the meaning of Rahner's central assertions
 - how the argument coheres (the steps of his arguments)
 - what he calls upon for evidence (if any) in support of his arguments
 - the lived implications (and/or pastoral application) of his theology
 - Enrolling in the course Angel page. You will receive email notification of all postings there on your SCU email account.
2. Five 2-page theological reflection papers (500-600 words) (40% of the final grade): Here you will be doing theology yourself, not only reading it or reading about it. These papers must be typed and single spaced, using 12 point font, and in easily readable English. Work will be evaluated for both content and grammatical execution. No late papers can be accepted. (Further details to be posted later).
3. A final comprehensive examination. This will be an in-class bluebook essay exam. Sample final exams will be made available in advance of the final on Angel.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Karl Rahner, SJ, *Foundations of Christian Faith: An Introduction to the Idea of Christianity*. Trans. William V. Dych, SJ. New York: Crossroad, 1994.

Leo J. O'Donovan, SJ, ed. *A World of Grace: An Introduction to the Themes and Foundations of Karl Rahner's Theology*. 2nd edition. Washington: Georgetown, 1995.

Thomas F. O'Meara, OP. *God in the World: A Guide to Karl Rahner's Theology*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2007.

COURSE POLICIES

Academic Integrity: For University policies regarding academic integrity, please consult Undergraduate Student Handbook. Plagiarism or academic dishonesty in any form (as described in the Student Conduct Code) will result in a failed grade for the assignment or exam, and possibly for the course. All allegations of academic dishonesty will be

reported to the department chair and Office of Student Life. Please make sure that you properly cite all sources that you utilize in your writing, including works that are directly quoted or paraphrased, as well as works used as a source of information. This includes both print and online sources. While you are encouraged to work with other students in preparing for class discussions, and are welcome to seek the feedback on your paper drafts from the instructor or your peers, your paper submissions must consist of your own writing, and any direct quotations or paraphrasing from other works must be properly cited.

Attendance and Class Participation: Students are expected to make a commitment to the course, to attend all course meetings, and to be fully prepared to participate by responding to questions posed about the text. If you have to miss a course meeting, please email Professor Crowley in advance. Because participation is so important, if you miss more than three class meetings, your grade will drop by at least an entire point (e.g., from B to C).

Disability Accommodation Policy:

To request academic accommodations for a disability, students are asked to contact Disability Resources located in The Drahnann Center in Benson, room 214, (408) 554-4111; TTY (408) 554-5445. Students must provide documentation of a disability to Disability Resources prior to receiving accommodations.

COURSE SCHEDULE

(N.B.: This schedule may be emended as circumstances warrant; check the Angel webpage for updates)

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| 1 | March 30
M | Rahner and the project of the Foundations
<i>This will be a working session on the "Preface" and first 14 pages of the "Introduction" of the Foundations</i> |
| 2 | April 1
W | Rahner, "Introduction," pp. 14-23
O'Meara, pp. 1-33
<i>Here we focus on how human beings know anything, and what is meant by "transcendental experience."</i> |
| 3 | April 6
M | Rahner, pp. 24-35
O'Donovan: Carr, pp. 17-30
<i>Moving further, we consider what it means to call a human being both a "person" and a "subject" who is open to "mystery"</i> |
| 4 | April 8
W | Rahner, pp. 35-43
O'Meara, 35-55
<i>We explore what it means to say that the human being is endowed with "freedom" and is at the same time conditioned by finitude.</i>
<u>Reflection Paper Due</u> |

EASTER TRIDUUM (Thursday-Saturday)/EASTER SUNDAY

- 5 April 13 M Rahner, pp. 44-51
O'Donovan: Buckley, pp. 31-49
Here we reflect on the very word "God" and consider its symbolic importance.
- 6 April 15 W Rahner, pp. 51-66
O'Meara, 56-70
How is it possible for a finite human being to "know" God? Here we focus on the terminus of our transcendence, Holy Mystery.
- 7 April 20 M Rahner, pp. 90-106
O'Donovan: McDermott, pp. 50-63
Looking at freedom as risk, we ask what is meant by "guilt" in a theological sense, and what is meant by "sin"
Reflection Paper Due
- 8 April 22 W Rahner, pp. 106-115
Rahner, pp. 116-118
Here we examine this topic further, focusing on "original sin." We conclude by starting the next section, on God's loving self-communication, or grace.
- 9 April 27 M Rahner, pp. 118-133
O'Donovan: Galvin, pp. 64-75
A further exploration of grace and its acceptance.
- 10 April 29 W Guest Lecturer
Rahner, pp. 133-137
It is at this point, in light of the divine self-communication, that Rahner introduces his theology of the Trinity, the Christian doctrine of God.
- 11 May 4 M Rahner, pp. 138-139, 170-175
Rahner, 176-177
O'Donovan: O'Meara, pp. 76-91
Knowledge of God is dependent upon God's self-disclosure. Here we explore what is meant by revelation, and open up the topic of the history of revelation in Jesus Christ.
- 12 May 6 W Rahner, pp. 178-193
O'Meara, pp. 71-93
The Christ event is placed within the context of an evolutionary cosmology.
Reflection Paper Due

- 13 May 11 M Rahner, pp. 193-203
O'Donovan: Schineller, pp. 92-106
Here we consider the implications of the central Christian doctrine about Christ, the hypostatic union, or the union of the human and divine natures in one person.
- 14 May 13 W Rahner, pp. 206-228
O'Donovan: Hentz, pp. 107-119
In light of Rahner's transcendental method, we ask what this Christology suggests about the meaning of being human.
Reflection Paper Due
- 15 May 18 M Rahner, pp. 305-321
Special Reading (ANGEL): Francis X. Clooney, S.J.
"Rahner beyond Rahner: A Comparative Theologian's Reflections on *Theological Investigations* 18"
Both readings this week focus on some of the limitations of Rahner's project in relation to interreligious dialogue
- 16 May 20 W Special Reading (ANGEL): Paul G. Crowley, S.J.
"Encountering the Religious Other: Challenges to Rahner's Transcendental Project"
- May 25 *Memorial Day holiday*
- 17 May 27 W Rahner, pp. 322-325, 342-346, 378-388
O'Meara, pp. 94-119
An exploration of the ecclesial nature of Christian faith, and of the relation of the institution of the Church to Christian existence.
- 18 June 1 M Rahner, pp. 402-415
O'Donovan: Carmody, pp. 138-152
Here we consider some of the specific "spiritual" implications of Rahner's theology, with a focus on Christian "pessimism" and authentic hope.
Reflection Paper Due
- 19 June 3 W Rahner, pp. 431-447
O'Meara, pp. 120-134
Fittingly, we conclude with a consideration of the "last things," or eschatology. In the light of faith, where does human life lead?