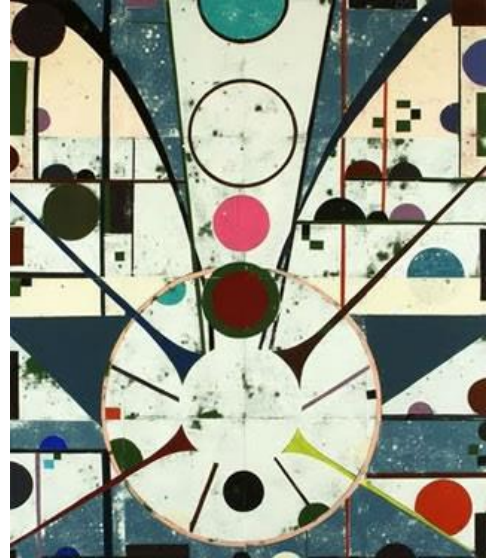


**TESP 185: KARL RAHNER: THE FOUNDATIONS OF CHRISTIAN FAITH**

Autumn Quarter 2016

T-Th 3:50–5:30 PM



Paul Crowley, SJ  
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408-554-4542  
hours: by appointment

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

A careful and critical reading of one of the seminal theological works of modern times, *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, approaches to non-Christian religions, and to the spirituality and ethics of Christian existence.

GENERAL GOALS OF THE COURSE IN RELATION TO CORE AND RS DEPARTMENT

- 3.1 Identify diverse perspectives on and evaluate ethical implications of past or present issues of enduring relevance. (Critical Thinking; Ethical Reasoning; Perspective)
- 3.2 Evaluate and apply insights from the study of religion to open-ended issues facing societies, past or present.

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Students will be able to express the meaning and purpose of systematic theology in relation to Christian faith (3.1)
- Students will be able to articulate the nature and method of Rahner's theology as an example of systematic theology (3.1)
- Students will be able to use correctly the technical terminology of Rahner's theology and relate it critically to classical doctrines of Christian faith (3.1)
- Students will be able to at least three major implications of Rahner's theology for the contemporary ethical outlooks (3.1, 3.2)
- Students will be able to give critical reflection to the relevance of Christian systematic theology to the pluralism of religions in society today (3.2)

## REQUIREMENTS

1. **Participation** (40% of final grade):
  - Regular attendance (no more than two absences)
  - 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)
    - the lived implications (and/or ethical application) of his theology
  - Enrolling in the course Camino page. You will receive email notification of all postings there on your SCU email account.
2. **Four 2-page theological reflection papers** (500–600 words) (40% off 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.
3. **A fifteen-page seminar paper** (60% of the grade). Topics, with at least five bibliography items, will be due October 6.

## SEMINAR TEXTS

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

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

Keren Kilby. *Karl Rahner: A Brief Introduction*. New York, NY: Crossroad, 1997/2007. [K]

## SEMINAR POLICIES

1. Please turn off cell phones during seminar meetings.
2. Please be on time and email me ahead of time if you will be late or cannot attend.

## GRADING

A = Superior work  
B = Very Good work  
C = Acceptable work  
D = Seriously Deficient work

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### MEETING AND TOPIC SCHEDULE

(N.B.: *This schedule may be emended as circumstances warrant.*)

- |    |               |   |
|----|---------------|---|
| 1  | Sept 20<br>T  | Rahner and the project of the Foundations<br><i>This will be a working session on the "Preface," F 11–15</i>  |
| 2  | Sept 22<br>Th | Introducing Rahner's Theological Project<br>K, "Introduction," xv–xviii, and 93–97; Dych, O'D 1–26  |
| 3  | Sept 27<br>T  | Rahner's Introduction to the Project<br>"Introduction," F 1–2, 5–8, 10–14   |
| 4  | Sept 29<br>Th | How Do We Know Anything? (Much less God)<br><i>Here we focus on how human beings know anything, and what is meant by "transcendental experience."</i><br>F 17–23; Carr, O'D 17–30               |
| 5  | Oct 4<br>T    | Who Are We Who Know in This Way?<br><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><br>F 24–35                  |
| 6  | Oct 6<br>Th   | No Meeting (Schedule individual appointments for Thursday morning and afternoon, up to 4 p.m. to confer about your papers)  |
| 7  | Oct 11<br>T   | The Ontological Makeup of the Human Being<br><i>We explore what it means to say that the human being is endowed with "freedom" and what is our fundamental orientation.</i><br>F 35–43; K 1-148 |
| 8  | Oct 13<br>Th  | God as Absolute Mystery<br><i>We ask what we are doing when we use the word "God"</i><br>F 44–51; Buckley, O'D 31–49.   |
| 9  | Oct 18<br>T   | How Do We, Free Beings, Relate to God?<br><i>Looking at freedom as risk, we ask what is meant by "guilt" in a theological sense</i><br>F 90–105; McDermott, O'D 50–63                           |
| 10 | Oct 20<br>Th  | Are We Fundamentally Flawed?<br><i>Here we examine this topic further, focusing on "original sin."</i><br>F 106–18  |

- 11 Oct 25  
T What Constitutes the Whole Picture of Who We Are?  
*Here we ask what it means for the human person to be met by God as what is commonly called “grace.”*  
F 116–23; Galvin, O’D 64–75
- 12 Oct 27  
Th Is Grace Extrinsic or Intrinsic?  
*The answers to this question help determine a fundamental understanding of the relationship between human beings and the God-Mystery, and also reveal presuppositions about G-d*  
F 126–33
- 13 Nov 1  
T God Revisited: Trinity  
*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*  
F 133–37
- 14 Nov 3  
Th The Limits of Reason and Knowledge of God  
*Here we explore what it means to come to a knowledge of God through what God has disclosed of Godself in nature and the history of transcendental experience. We call this “revelation.”*  
F 138–39, 170–75; Vatican II, *Dei Verbum* (online)
- 15 Nov 8  
T Jesus Christ  
*If knowledge of God is dependent upon God’s self-disclosure, here we explore what is disclosed in the person of Jesus Christ.*  
K 15–29; Schineller, O’D 92–106 and Hentz, O’D 116–19.
- 16 Nov 10  
Th Jesus Christ (cont’d.)  
F 176–77, 212–28
- 17 Nov 15  
T Seminar Pause: Reports on Research Papers
- 18 Nov 18  
Th No meeting (Professor at American Academy of Religion)
- 19 Nov 29  
Implications for the Christian in Relation to Other Religions  
*Is Rahner’s theology so “Christian” that it excludes exploration into other religious ways of understanding? Or does the transcendental method open us up to that possibility?*  
F 305–2; K 30–37; and Francis X. Clooney, SJ, “Rahner beyond Rahner: A Comparative Theologian’s Reflections on *Theological Investigations 18*” (online)

*On World AIDS Day, we consider some of the specific “spiritual” implications of Rahner’s theology, with a focus on Christian “pessimism” and authentic hope*  
F 402–415; Carmody, O’D 138–52

## **Addendum**

### **Academic Integrity Pledge**

*The Academic Integrity pledge is an expression of the University’s commitment to fostering an understanding of—and commitment to—a culture of integrity at Santa Clara University. The Academic Integrity pledge, which applies to all students, states:*

*I am committed to being a person of integrity. I pledge, as a member of the Santa Clara University community, to abide by and uphold the standards of academic integrity contained in the Student Conduct Code*

*Students are expected to uphold the principles of this pledge for all work in this course.*

### **Disabilities Resources**

*If you have a disability for which accommodations may be required in this class, please contact Disabilities Resources, Benson 216, <http://www.scu.edu/disabilities> as soon as possible to discuss your needs and register for accommodations with the University. If you have already arranged accommodations through Disabilities Resources, please discuss them with me during my office hours. Students who have medical needs related to pregnancy may also be eligible for accommodations. While I am happy to assist you, I am unable to provide accommodations until I have received verification from Disabilities Resources. The Disabilities Resources office will work with students and faculty to arrange proctored exams for students whose accommodations include double time for exams and/or assisted technology. (Students with approved accommodations of time-and-a-half should talk with me as soon as possible). Disabilities Resources must be contacted in advance to schedule proctored examinations or to arrange other accommodations. The Disabilities Resources office would be grateful for advance notice of at least two weeks. For more information you may contact Disabilities Resources at 408-554-4109.*

### **Discrimination and Sexual Misconduct (Title IX)**

*Santa Clara University upholds a zero-tolerance policy for discrimination, harassment and sexual misconduct. If you (or someone you know) have experienced discrimination or harassment, including sexual assault, domestic/dating violence, or stalking, I encourage you to tell someone promptly. For more information, please consult the University’s Gender-Based Discrimination and Sexual Misconduct Policy at <http://bit.ly/2ce1hBb> or contact the University’s EEO and Title IX Coordinator, Belinda Guthrie, at 408-554-3043, [bguthrie@scu.edu](mailto:bguthrie@scu.edu). Reports may be submitted online through <https://www.scu.edu/osll/report/> or anonymously through Ethicspoint <https://www.scu.edu/hr/quick-links/ethicspoint/>*