

“The mission of Tyndale Seminary is to provide Christ-centred graduate theological education for leaders in the church and society whose lives are marked by intellectual maturity, spiritual vigour and moral integrity, and whose witness will faithfully engage culture with the Gospel.”

Semester, Year	Fall 2026
Course Title	THEOLOGY OF KARL BARTH
Course Code	THEO 0640 1S (This course is cross-listed with SAS BSTH 3693)
Date	September 16 – December 16, 2026 Wednesdays, 6:45 PM – 9:35 PM
Delivery Format	SYNCHRONOUS ONLINE
Class information	The classes will be livestreamed on Wednesdays from 6:45 to 9:35 PM.
Instructor	VICTOR SHEPHERD, B.A., B.D., M.A., Th.D., S.T.D. Telephone/voice mail: (416) 226-6620 Ext. 6726 Email: vshepherd@tyndale.ca
Office Hours	Wednesdays 5:15 PM – 6:00 PM or at a separate time by appointment.
Course Materials	Access course material at classes.tyndale.ca or other services at Tyndale One . Course emails will be sent to your @MyTyndale.ca email account only.

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

Examines the work of the most significant theologian since the Reformation. Attention is directed to expositions of major doctrines; e.g., Word of God, Trinity, Perfections of God, Election, Creation and Covenant, Evil Justification and Sanctification. Barth’s theology is compared to that of his predecessors and his contemporaries.

Prerequisites: THEO 0531 Systematic Theology

II. LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the end of the course, students will be able to:

1. discuss the “Copernican Revolution” in Barth’s theology with respect to his understanding of revelation: God alone is both the subject and object of revelation even as he remains Lord of it;
2. explain Barth’s theological background: the anthropocentric liberalism articulated most eloquently by Friedrich Schleiermacher;
3. recognize how Barth stands in the tradition of the Reformation yet also moves beyond it at key points (e.g., the doctrine of election);

4. appraise specific items in Barth that have rendered him notorious; e.g., revelation as the “abolition of religion”;
5. explain how Barth combines simultaneously faithfulness to the logic of Scripture and self-exposure to contemporaneity;
6. evaluate how Barth has informed recent theologians of the Reformed tradition in both the English-speaking and German-speaking theatres; e.g., Thomas Torrance and Eberhard Juengel;
7. assess Barth’s fruitfulness for subsequent theological work;
8. utilize Barth’s theology for preaching, pastoral conversation, and formal counselling;
9. recognize Barth’s articulation of the Reign of God in their engagement with the multiform tensions (racial, economic, sexual, ethnic, historical) that the church must address.

III. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A. REQUIRED READING

Allen, R. Michael. *Karl Barth’s Church Dogmatics: An Introduction and Reader*. London: T&T Clark, 2012. ISBN: 97805670 (paperback)

This book is the major resource for the course, and will be read and expounded in each class.

B. SUPPLEMENTARY / RECOMMENDED READING AND TOOLS

Busch, Eberhard. *The Great Passion: An Introduction to Karl Barth’s Theology*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010. ISBN: 9780802866547 (paperback)

This book is a fine exposition of the major themes in Barth’s thought.

Bromiley, Geoffrey. [*Introduction to the Theology of Karl Barth*](#). Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979. ISBN: 080281804 (paperback)

This book provides a trustworthy, chapter-by-chapter exposition of Barth’s Church Dogmatics.

Tyndale recommends www.stepbible.org – a free and reputable online resource developed by Tyndale House (Cambridge, England) – for word searches of original-language texts, as well as for topical searches, interlinear texts, dictionaries, etc. Refer to the library for other [online resources for Biblical Studies](#).

C. ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

There are two assignments, each worth 50%.

1. The ten (10) best of eleven (11) 400-450 word papers reflecting the student's theological engagement with the reading of the day, beginning with the reading for September 18.

Note 1: The paper may articulate the student's critical appreciation of a theological point in Barth or in Barth's reading of the history of doctrine, or disagreement with same.

It may also articulate a comparison between Barth and another single major thinker with whom the student is familiar; e.g., Augustine, Anselm, Aquinas, Luther, Zwingli, Bucer, Calvin, Bullinger, Melancthon, Menno Simons, Schleiermacher, Tillich, Moltmann, etc.

Note 2: Since one purpose of the paper is to ensure that the student has read the material assigned for class, **this paper must be submitted at the commencement of the class; it may not be submitted any time thereafter.**

Note 3: Students should come to class prepared to discuss with the class the substance of their written paper.

The purpose of the brief papers is to ensure that students complete the weekly assigned reading prior to coming to class. In addition, the papers enable students to make any necessary adjustments early in the course.

2. A final "take-home" essay that expounds at greater length (2500-3000 words)

(a) any topic discussed in class,

or

(b) any topic in Barth's theology NOT discussed in class; e.g., Barth's understanding of the Holy Spirit, or his exposition of baptism. [Please see the instructor concerning the latter.]

For this assignment (regardless of whether (a) or (b) is selected), a bibliography should be attached, indicating that the student has consulted at least five substantive resources on the topic under discussion. In other words, this assignment requires a research paper, not merely a recapitulation of the class handout.

Late submission of the essay will incur a penalty of one letter-grade per day (e.g., B+ to B).

This paper must be submitted by **9:35 p.m. on Wednesday, 11th December**. This paper should be submitted as a Word document (NOT a pdf file) to vshepherd@tyndale.ca.

The major paper allows the student to probe a significant topic in Barth alone or related to Barth at greater depth.

D. SUMMARY OF ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Evaluation is based upon the completion of the following assignments:

Assignment	Due	%
Reading Reflection Papers	Weekly	50 %
Essay	Dec 16	50 %
Total Grade		100 %

GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR THE SUBMISSION OF WRITTEN WORK

For proper citation style, consult the [tip sheet, "Documenting Chicago Style"](#) (Tyndale e-resource) or the full edition of the [Chicago Manual of Style Online](#), especially ch. 14. For citing scripture texts, refer to sections 10.44 to 10.48 and 14.238 to 14.241 from the Chicago Manual of Style or reference the [tip sheet, "Citing Sources in Theology"](#).

IV. COURSE SCHEDULE, CONTENT AND REQUIRED READINGS

Sep 16: Introduction

Outline of Barth's Life and Work

Sep 23: "The Word of God in its Threefold Form"

Allen, chapt. 2

Sep 30: "The Trinity"

chapt. 3

Oct 7: "The Word Heard and Testified"

chapt. 4

Oct 14: "The Perfect God"

chapt. 5

Oct 21: "The Election of Jesus Christ"

chapt. 6

Oct 28: Reading Day: No Class for both UC and Seminary students

Nov 4: "Theological Ethics"

chapt. 7

Nov 11: "Creation and Covenant"

chapt. 8

Nov 18: “Nothingness: Sin as the Impossible Possibility”

chapt. 10

Nov 25: “Reconciliation in Christ”

chapt. 11

Dec 2: “Justification and Sanctification”

chapt. 12

Dec 9: “Vocation and Witness”

chapt. 14

Dec 16: Final Assignment to be submitted as a Word document to vshepherd@tyndale.ca by 9:35 p.m.

V. SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

A thorough, up-to-date bibliography is available at *Tyndale Online*: <https://reading-rooms.tyndale.ca/karl-barth/>

A briefer bibliography pertaining to overviews of Barth’s s theology is attached below.

Bibliography of Karl Barth

The secondary literature on Barth is vast. The following titles are intended to help students who are beginning their study of Barth’s theology.

BIOGRAPHIES

Busch, Eberhard. *Karl Barth: His Life from Letters and Autobiographical Texts*. Translated by John Bowden. Reprint Ed. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2005.

This huge work is considered the definitive biography of Barth. It is highly recommended and can be used as a reference tool for all areas of Barth’s thought and the development thereof.

Parker, T.H.L. *Karl Barth*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970.

This is a much smaller, more manageable work for neophytes. It acquaints the reader with an overview of Barth’s life and work. Its brevity does not sacrifice accuracy. (Parker is also a superb Calvin scholar.)

DISCUSSIONS OF BARTH’S THEOLOGY

Berkouwer, G. C. *The Triumph of Grace in the Theology of Karl Barth*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1956.

[The book delivers what it promises: a critical exposition of Barth in the light of Barth’s conviction concerning the triumph of God’s grace.]

Bromiley, Geoffrey W. *Introduction to the Theology of Karl Barth*. London: T&T Clark, 2000.

[****Bromiley’s work is everywhere lucid and accurate. His book is the best guide to reading Barth in the order of the succeeding volumes of the *Church Dogmatics*. This book is highly recommended for those who are approaching *CD* for the first time.]

Busch, Eberhard. *Barth*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2008. [This small book is a useful overview of

- Barth's thought, but of course cannot substitute for the much more detailed exposition of *The Great Passion*.]
- Busch, Eberhard. *The Great Passion: An Introduction to Karl Barth's Theology*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004. [****This book is much more than an introduction; it is nothing less than a penetrating exploration and exposition of all the major *loci* in Barth's thought.]
- Dorrien, Gary. *The Barthian Revolt in Modern Theology: Theology without Weapons*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1999. [This book unfolds the manner in which Barth put 20th Century theology on a new course.]
- Hart, Trevor A. *Regarding Karl Barth: Toward a Reading of His Theology*. Milton Keynes, UK: Paternoster Press, 1999. [The fact that this book is published by IVP indicates the appreciation of IVP, together with that of its evangelical supporters, of Barth's thought.]
- Hartwell, H. *The Theology of Karl Barth*. London: Gerald Duckworth, 1964. [Hartwell's book is one of the older discussions of Barth's theology. It treats Barth topically rather than in the order of CD. It can always be relied on to provide a clear, succinct statement of major aspects of Barth's thought.]
- Hunsinger, George. *Disruptive Grace: Studies in the Theology of Karl Barth*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001. [This book comments on Barth's relationship to political, doctrinal and ecumenical theology.]
- Hunsinger, George. *How to Read Karl Barth: The Shape of His Theology*. Oxford University Press, 1978/2003. [This work acquaints readers with the logic of Barth's thought in the course of expounding Barth's approach to major doctrines.]
- Kroetke, Wolf. *Karl Barth and Dietrich Bonhoeffer: Theologians for a Post-Christian World*. Baker, 2019. [The first half of the book (on Barth) contains essays by a penetrating Barth scholar who lived and worked in East Germany – and who paid the price his discipleship exacted.]
- McCormack, Bruce L. *Karl Barth's Critically Realistic Dialectical Theology: Its Genesis and Development 1909-1936*. Reprint ed. Gloucestershire: Clarendon Press, 1997. [This book explores both the immediate antecedents to Barth's theology and unfolding of Barth's "Copernican Revolution" in theology.]
- Torrance, Thomas F. *Karl Barth: Biblical and Evangelical Theologian*. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1991. [Torrance discusses several features of Barth's thought from the perspective of Barth's faithfulness to the logic of the gospel.]
- Torrance, Thomas F. *Karl Barth: An Introduction to His Early Thought: 1910-1931*. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1990. [This is a fine exploration of the theo-logic of Barth's move to a genuinely "scientific" (*wissenschaftlich*) theology. (See McCormack above for disagreement as to 'development' in Barth's theology.)]
- von Balthasar, Hans Urs. *The Theology of Karl Barth*. 3rd ed. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1992. [Von Balthasar is a major Roman Catholic reader of Karl Barth. Bruce McCormack's book, however, is a sustained argument against von Balthasar.]
- Webster, John. *Barth*. 2nd ed. London: Continuum, 2004. [****Webster is undoubtedly one of the finest Barth scholars in the English-speaking world. His work provides a very readable introduction to Barth's thought.]
- Webster, John. ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Karl Barth*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000. [A compilation of essays on assorted topics by assorted scholars, this book examines in greater depth areas of Barth where his theology has proved unusually fruitful.]

VI. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR ALL COURSES

A. EQUITY OF ACCESS

Students with permanent or temporary disabilities who need academic accommodations must [contact](#) the [Accessibility Services](#) at the [Centre for Academic Excellence](#) to [register](#) and discuss their specific needs. *New students* must self-identify and register with the Accessibility Office at the beginning of the semester or as early as possible to access appropriate services. *Current students* must renew their plans as early as possible to have active accommodations in place.

B. REQUIREMENTS FOR LIVESTREAM INTERACTION (*SYNCHRONOUS ONLINE COURSE ONLY*)

- Livestream attendance for the entire duration of the class at announced times
- Headphones (preferred), built-in microphone, and web-camera
- Well-lit and quiet room
- Stable high-speed internet connection, preferably using an Ethernet cable over Wi-Fi
- Full name displayed on Zoom and Microsoft Teams for attendance purposes*
- A commitment to having the camera on to foster community building*

**exceptions with permission from professor*

C. GUIDELINES FOR INTERACTIONS

Tyndale University prides itself in being a trans-denominational community. We anticipate our students to have varied viewpoints which will enrich the discussions in our learning community. Therefore, we ask our students to be charitable and respectful in their interactions with each other, and to remain focused on the topic of discussion, out of respect to others who have committed to being a part of this learning community. Please refer to “Guidelines for Interactions” on your course resource page at classes.tyndale.ca.

D. GUIDELINES FOR THE SUBMISSION OF WRITTEN WORK

Grading Rubric

Please consult the rubric provided for each assignment on your course resource page at classes.tyndale.ca.

Academic Integrity

Integrity in academic work is required of all our students. Academic dishonesty is any breach of this integrity and includes such practices as cheating (the use of unauthorized material on tests and examinations), submitting the same work for different classes without permission of the instructors; using false information (including false references to secondary sources) in an assignment; improper or unacknowledged collaboration with other students, and plagiarism (including improper use of artificial intelligence programs). Tyndale University takes seriously its responsibility to uphold academic integrity, and to penalize academic dishonesty. Please refer to the [Academic Integrity website](#) for further details.

For proper citation style, consult [Citation Guides](#) for different styles. Students are encouraged to consult [Writing Services](#).

Students should also consult the current [Academic Calendar](#) for academic policies on Academic Honesty, Gender Inclusive Language in Written Assignments, Late Papers and Extensions, Return of Assignments, and Grading System.

Turnitin Text-Matching Software

Tyndale has a subscription to Turnitin, a text-matching software that ensures the originality of academic writing and verifies the proper citation of all sources. The instructor for this course will use Turnitin for assignments submitted through your course resource page at classes.tyndale.ca. Upon submission, you will receive a summary that includes your submitted files along with a similarity report generated by Turnitin. Please be aware that Turnitin can also detect AI-generated content from tools like Grammarly, so students should be mindful of when using such software. It's advisable to confirm with your instructor before using any AI tools into your assignments. Below are some useful resources:

- [Student](#) Guides for Turnitin via classes.tyndale.ca course resource page
- Interpreting Similarity ([Guide](#), [Video](#), [Spectrum](#))

Research Ethics

All course-based assignments involving human participants requires ethical review and may require approval by the [Tyndale Research Ethics Board \(REB\)](#). Check with the Seminary Dean's Office (seminaryoffice@tyndale.ca) before proceeding.

Late Papers and Extensions Policy

All papers and course assignments must be submitted by the due dates indicated in the course syllabus. Unless the instructor already has a policy on grading late papers in the course syllabus, grades for papers submitted late without an approved extension will be lowered at the rate of two-thirds of a grade per week or part thereof (e.g., from "A+" to "A-," from "B" to "C+"). Please note that some programs, such as cohort-based or intensive courses, may follow a different policy due to the nature of the program.

Faculty may not grant an extension beyond the last day of exams for the semester. Requests for extensions beyond this date must be addressed in writing to the Registrar by filling out the [Extension Request Form](#). The application will be considered only in cases such as a death in the family, medical emergency, hospitalization of oneself or immediate family member or prolonged illness requiring treatment by a physician. Factors such as assignments for other courses, holidays, and technology-related difficulties are insufficient grounds for requesting an extension.

A temporary grade of incomplete (“I”) may be granted by the Registrar. Once an extension is granted, it is the student’s responsibility to contact the instructor and make satisfactory arrangements to complete the outstanding work. A grade of “F” will be recorded for students who do not complete the outstanding work by the deadline.

E. COURSE EVALUATION

Tyndale Seminary values quality in the courses it offers its students. End-of-course evaluations provide valuable student feedback and are one of the ways that Tyndale Seminary works towards maintaining and improving the quality of courses and the student’s learning experience. Student involvement in this process is critical to enhance the general quality of teaching and learning.

Before the end of the course, students will receive a MyTyndale email with a link to the online course evaluation. The link can also be found in the left column on the course page. The evaluation period is 2 weeks; after the evaluation period has ended, it cannot be reopened.

Course Evaluation results will not be disclosed to the instructor before final grades in the course have been submitted and processed. Student names will be kept confidential, and the instructor will only see the aggregated results of the class.

F. LIBRARY RESOURCES

[Tyndale Library](#) supports courses with [e-journals, e-books](#), and the [mail delivery of books](#) and circulating materials. See the [Library FAQ page](#).

G. GRADING SYSTEM & SCALE

For each course’s grading rubric, please refer to your course syllabus or classes.tyndale.ca. For general grading guidelines, refer to Seminary [Grading System & Scale](#).