

TH/SP5/714: Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Spirituality of Confessing Christ and Resisting Tyranny
Vancouver School of Theology
July 11-15, 2022 9am – 12pm (available in person or via Zoom)

Rev. Dr. Rob Fennell

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Course description

This course is an opportunity to learn from the story and theological writings of Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the Confessing Church of the mid-20th century in Germany. In the context of the struggle for faithfulness in the midst of the Nazi era, we will learn how Bonhoeffer's theological commitments flowed into his spirituality and political resistance.

Competencies

1. Students will deepen their spiritual and theological aptitudes through engagement with a significant Christian theologian of the last century
2. Students will reflect on Christology as a resource for political resistance
3. Students will develop skill and awareness in discerning “the signs of the times” in light of a recent chapter in the history of God's people

Course Outline

Day 1

Introduction, orientation, and biography
Contexts: The German Church Struggle and Today

Day 2

Christ the Centre

Day 3

Following: Conspiracy and Confession

Day 4

Spirituality, Solidarity, and the “Hidden Discipline”

Day 5

Experiments in Community

Reading materials (to be read in advance)

Bonhoeffer, *Discipleship* (Fortress, 2003) – Vol. 4 of DB Works
ISBN: 0-8006-8324-2

Bonhoeffer, *Letters and Paper from Prison* (Fortress) – Vol. 8 of DB Works
ISBN: 978-0-8006-9703-7

Further short articles and documents to be supplied by the instructor

Recommended (not required)

Bonhoeffer, *Life Together* (Fortress, 2004) – Vol. 5 of DB Works
ISBN: 978-0-8006-8325-2

J.W. de Gruchy, ed., *Dietrich Bonhoeffer: Witness to Jesus Christ* (Fortress, 1991)
ISBN: 0-8006-3404-7

J.W. de Gruchy, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to D.B.* (Cambridge, 1999)
ISBN: 978-0-5215-8781-5

Eberhard Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer: A Biography* (Fortress, 2000)
ISBN: 0-800-628-446

Audio: BBC Sounds, “Dietrich Bonhoeffer.”
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/b0bkipjns>

Final Essay (more details provided in class)

Certificate students: 4-6 pages (Due by Aug. 31)

Basic Degree Students (Diploma; MA; M.Div): 6-8 pages (Due by Aug.31)

Advanced Degree Students (Th.M; GDTS): 12-15 pages (Due by Sept.30)

About the instructor

Rev. Dr. Rob Fennell teaches Historical and Systematic Theology at Atlantic School of Theology in Halifax, Nova Scotia, where he is also Academic Dean. An ordained minister of The United Church of Canada, he is passionate about encouraging local churches and their ministry leaders as they learn, grow, and flourish.