

The Hermeneutics of Revelation

Summer School 2022

(August 11th -16th, 2022)

at Schloss Fürstenried, Munich, Germany

Call for Applications

The problem of ascertaining whether a particular experience or text is revelatory—given by the divine—is a crucial issue in both theology and philosophy of religion. Can experiences of God be distinguished from other sorts of “transcendent” or elevating phenomena (e.g., aesthetic ones), and what might be the characteristics of such experiences? Is God revealed or manifested in a particular way that can be identified? Is revelation a specific and unique experience that has a certain shape or identifiable structures? Various hermeneutic and phenomenological approaches raise such questions in new ways that challenge and broaden the propositional accounts of revelation given by much contemporary religious epistemology and theology. Hermeneutics, in particular, examines the structures of understanding and experience as they are expressed in symbols, metaphors, narratives, and various existentially transforming experiences and their narrative transmissions across generations in different contexts. Hermeneutic approaches show that narrow conceptions of truth as mere verification miss many elements of divine revelation and do not suit its particular modes and horizons of manifestation. Thus, bringing hermeneutic and phenomenological insights to bear on discussions in contemporary religious epistemology and theology enriches and widens narrow conceptions of revelation and presents new opportunities for unfolding how God is manifested.

The larger project is designed to foster a collaborative community of scholars across traditional disciplinary boundary lines and invest in the formation of younger scholars to contribute actively and collaboratively to the study of religious experience and phenomena of revelation, thereby widening the horizons of current theological approaches and bringing new perspectives to bear on it.

To contribute to this broader project the University of Munich is hosting a **summer school** (August 11th to 16th, 2022) for junior scholars *dedicated to the role, potential, and implications of various hermeneutic approaches for the question of revelation*. The summer school will culminate in an **international conference** devoted to the same topic (August 18th to 20th, 2022) at **Fürstenried Castle**, Munich, which will feature leading scholars in the field of hermeneutics and religion. *Successful applicants for the summer school will also attend the conference*. (The project will be continued in a similar summer school and conference on the theme of “phenomenology and revelation” at Fordham University, New York, in August 2023.)

The summer school will be taught by:

- **Amber BOWEN (Assistant Professor of Philosophy, Redeemer University, Ancaster CAN)**
- **Christina M. GSCHWANDTNER (Professor of Philosophy, Fordham University, New York USA)**
- **Knut WENZEL (Professor of Systematic Theology, Goethe Universität, Frankfurt a.M. GER)**

The main language of instruction will be English, but conversations in German and French are also possible, depending on the nationalities of participants. The mornings will be devoted to “masterclasses” on some aspect of the topic of hermeneutics and revelation by the above listed instructors. Papers by the junior participants will be discussed in seminar style during the afternoons.



Recent Ph.D.s (2017 or later), current Ph.D. candidates, and Ph.D.-level graduate students in Philosophy, Theology, Religious Studies, and related disciplines are invited to apply. Applications are welcome from scholars of any philosophical or theological persuasion with a research interest in hermeneutics and its relevance for the question of revelation. Application proposals must explicitly address the theme of hermeneutics and revelation in some form. Possible approaches could include:

- How might hermeneutics be applied to various modes of revelation (in Scripture, in the tradition, via religious experience, etc.)?
- How can hermeneutics uncover the modes of understanding at work in revelatory experience?
- What might it mean to bring hermeneutics to bear on non-textual sources of revelation, for example, as they are expressed in mystical or ritual experience?
- What are the hermeneutic horizons relevant to revelatory experience? What would it mean for revelation to manifest hermeneutically?
- Does religious experience require its own criteria of truth? What are appropriate criteria of verification for claims to inspiration or revelation?
- How might a hermeneutic approach provide a richer account of modes of revelation than other philosophical or theological approaches? How can hermeneutics widen the current discussion in epistemological theology?
- What role does narrative or other forms of discourse play in revelatory experience?
- What is the role of symbol, metaphor, allegory, and/or icon in theological discourse and religious experience? How can hermeneutic insights on these topics be more fully brought to bear on their significance in the theological tradition?
- How crucial is mediation for revelation? Can there be immediate, un-interpreted, non-contextual experience of the divine?

Proposals on other topics are also welcome, as long as they address the wider theme of hermeneutics and revelation.

It is expected that successful applicants **will receive full funding**, including travel, lodging, and all meals (for both the summer school and the international conference). *Specific terms will be arranged on an individual basis.*

Applications should include:

1. a letter of intent (max. 500 words)
2. a brief curriculum vitae (no more than 2 pages)
3. proposal for the paper to be presented at the summer school (500-1,000 words)

Applications should be sent via email—including contact information and institutional affiliation, with above listed materials attached—to office.fundamentaltheologie@kaththeol.uni-muenchen.de by **May 15th, 2022**. Applicants will be informed of decisions **by June 1st, 2022**.

