

African American Religious Thought

RELG 3345
CRN 30313
SPRING 2018

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Office Hours:

TR 8:30-9:15am and by appointment



REQUIRED TEXTS

Down by the Riverside: Readings in African-American Religion, Larry G. Murphy, ed.

African American Religious History: A Documentary Witness, 2nd ed. Milton C. Sernett, ed.

Strength to Love, Martin Luther King, Jr.

Our Lives Matter: A Womanist Queer Theology, Pamela R. Lightsey

Other readings will be provided through Blackboard.

HOW TO DO WELL IN THIS COURSE:

- **ATTEND CLASS**
- **DO THE READINGS BEFORE CLASS**
- **TAKE NOTES ON THE READINGS & CLASS DISCUSSIONS**

SYLLABUS

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This is an optional program core course for religious studies majors and minors, an elective for philosophy majors and minors or students majoring or minoring in African/African American Studies, and an upper-division elective for other interested students.

This course is also designated [D] which means it satisfies your Diversity component of the Upper Division Core. Diversity courses promote the ability to analyze familiar cultural assumptions in the context of the world's diverse values, traditions, and belief systems.

Following a brief exploration of the African origins of African American religion, the course will explore the religious practices of black slaves during the 18th and 19th Centuries in the U.S, and then focus primarily on religious thought and practice from the early 20th Century to the present.

Through readings, video, and discussion, we will map the history and contours of African American religion(s) and the emergence and growth of Black and Womanist Theologies during this period. Particular attention will be given to the ways in which the experience of oppression and the interaction of race, class, gender, and sexuality in American culture have impacted African American religious practices and thought.

COURSE GOALS

As with any religious studies course, you should leave this course having

- Improved your skills in critical reading, writing, thinking, and speaking
- Increased your understanding of the personal, social and cultural dimensions of religion
- Developed your ability to critically analyze religion as a cultural phenomenon



ASSIGNMENTS (300 Points)

Key Concepts (75 points)

You should submit 15 "Key Concept" summaries throughout the semester. (These will be collected each day, and I encourage you to do them for each class. Only 15 will be graded, however.) For each summary, identify 3-5 "key concepts" or terms discussed in that day's assigned readings, and explain in a paragraph a) what the concept is and b) why it is important to our study of African American religion. Be sure to include at least two key concepts per article. Finally, note that you may use these summaries (including any extra summaries completed) when writing the mid-term and final exams.

Mid-term Exams (50 points each)

You will need to complete two in-class exams during the semester. Exams will be a combination of short answer and short essay.

Final Exam (50 points)

An in-class, comprehensive final exam will be given that includes short answers and a comprehensive essay.

Semester Project/Paper (50 points)

A paper based on course readings and either an in-depth interview or a visit to a religious service is due the last day of class. You will need to give a short class presentation based on the information you gather. More information will be provided.

Attendance/Participation (25 points)

Participation: 1-10 points

0-1 absence = 15 points

2-3 absences = 10 points

4 absences = 5 points

5 absences = withdrawn from course or 0 points (if after the drop deadline)



Want to improve your reading strategies or note-taking skills? See the StudentLingo workshop videos on the UCA Student Success website. uca.edu/studentsuccess

CLASS SCHEDULE

Week 1 Jan 11	Introduction and Discussion Read: Video by Eddie Glaude, Jr.
Week 2 Jan 16 Jan 18	What is "African American Religion"? Read: AARH 325-336; DBTR 9-19 Read: DBTR 20-31
Week 3 Jan 23 Jan 25	African Origins of African American Religion Read: DBTR 32-48 Read: AARH 13-24
Week 4 Jan 30 Feb 1	Slave Religion Read: DBTR 49-58; AARH 63-68, 76-80 Read: AARH 102-135
Week 5 Feb 6 Feb 8	Emergence of the Black Churches Read: AARH 193-200; DBTR 59-67 Read: DBTR 123-138
Week 6 Feb 13 Feb 15	The Black Churches in the North and West Read: DBTR 155-173 Read: DBTR 189-202
Week 7 Feb 20 Feb 22	<i>Mid-term #1</i> The Black Churches and Civil Rights Read: DBTR 289-302
Week 8 Feb 27 Mar 1	MLK, Jr Read: STL 5-25, 138-155 Read: AARH 519-535 <i>Project topic due</i>
Week 9 Mar 6 Mar 8	Black Muslims and Black Power Read: DBTR 69-80; 203-207; 317-328 Read: AARH 453-463; 555-566
Week 10 Mar 13 Mar 15	Black Liberation Theology Read: Cone #1 (Blackboard) Read: Cone #2 (Blackboard)
SPRING BREAK (Mar 20, 22)	
Week 11 Mar 27 Mar 29	Women in the Black Church Read: DBTR 97-104; AARH 164-184 Read: DBTR 303-315; AARH 536-547
Week 12 Apr 3 Apr 5	Womanist Theology <i>Mid-term #2</i> Read: DBTR 434-446

Week 13	LGBT Theology and the Black Experience
Apr 10	Read: OLM ix-35
Apr 12	Read: OLM 36-66, 89-99
Week 14	Future of African American Religion?
Apr 17	Read: DBTR 447-468; AARH 580-588
Apr 19	Presentations
Week 15	
Apr 24	Presentations
Apr 26	Presentations (ALL PAPERS DUE)



Final Exam

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

- Disability Accommodations Policy:** The University of Central Arkansas adheres to the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act. If you need an accommodation under this Act due to a disability, please contact the UCA Office of Disability Services (Student Health Building, Room 212; 450-3613).
- Academic Integrity Policy:** The University of Central Arkansas affirms its commitment to academic integrity and expects all members of the university community to accept shared responsibility for maintaining academic integrity. Students in this course are subject to the provisions of the university's Academic Integrity Policy, approved by the Board of Trustees as Board Policy No. 709 on February 10, 2010, and published in the *Student Handbook*. Penalties for academic misconduct in this course may include a failing grade on an assignment, a failing grade in the course, or any other course-related sanction the instructor determines to be appropriate. Continued enrollment in this course affirms a student's acceptance of this university policy. **Plagiarism**, claiming the work of another writer, professional or student, as your own, is not tolerated in this class or at UCA. See the Student Handbook for information on the University's policy, and ask me if you are experiencing any kind of difficulty in completing an assignment.
- Building Emergency Policy:** An Emergency Procedures Summary (EPS) for the building in which this class is held will be discussed during the first week of this course. EPS documents for most buildings on campus are available at <http://uca.edu/mysafety/bep/>. Every student should be familiar with emergency procedures for any campus building in which he/she spends time for classes or other purposes.
- Title IX Disclosure Policy:** If a student discloses an act of sexual harassment, discrimination, assault, or other sexual misconduct to a faculty member (as it relates to "student-on-student" or "employee-on-student"), the faculty member cannot maintain complete confidentiality and is required to report the act and may be required to reveal the names of the parties involved. Any allegations made by a student may or may not trigger an investigation. Each situation differs and the obligation to conduct an investigation will depend on those specific set of circumstances. The determination to conduct an investigation will be made by the Title IX Coordinator. For further information, please visit: <https://uca.edu/titleix>. *Disclosure of sexual misconduct by a third party who is not a student and/or employee is also required if the misconduct occurs when the third party is a participant in a university-sponsored program, event, or activity.
- Course Evaluation Policy:** Student evaluations of a course and its professor are a crucial element in helping faculty achieve excellence in the classroom and the institution in demonstrating that students are gaining knowledge. Students may evaluate courses they are taking starting on the Monday of the twelfth week of instruction through the end of finals week by logging in to myUCA and clicking on the Evals button on the top right.