AFRICAN AMERICAN RELIGIONS

Course Description
This course introduces you to the variety of African American religions that developed in the Americas during and after the Atlantic slave trade up to today. We will look at the religious experiences of African Americans in what is now the United States and in places around the Caribbean world. The historical contexts surrounding the development of African American religions and the lived experiences of African Americans are the main topics of our course. The class includes discussion of West African religions, the impact of the Atlantic slave trade, the role of politics, the construction of racial identities, and most importantly, the diversity of African American religions.

Within various forms of Christianity, Islam, and even Hip Hop, we will examine the interplay between religion, race, colonialism, and self-determination.
Christianity/Catholic Tradition Core Curriculum Learning Outcomes

1. Students will be able to identify the sources of Christian traditions: scripture, doctrines, historical developments, leading thinkers, or practices.
   
   In African American Religions, we’ll identify leading thinkers, texts, practices, and historical developments in African American religious history.

2. Students will be able to interpret and analyze sources of Christian tradition critically and creatively by employing contemporary scholarly methods that relate sources to historical contexts, to other sources, and to the experiences of faith.

   In African American Religions, we’ll analyze and contextualize primary sources about African American religious history and culture.

3. Students will be able to articulate how the sources of Christian tradition and methods of interpretation and analysis promote cultural transformation and social justice.

   In African American Religions, we’ll assess how religion, political power, colonialism, and race have intersected in American history and evaluate how religious ideas and practices allowed African Americans to critique American racism and argue for social justice.

How to Succeed in this Course

1) Come to class, arrive on time, and stay for the entire meeting. Make-up quizzes will only be offered for documented University approved activities, major illness (doctor’s note), or family emergencies.

2) Regularly check your email. I frequently email about grades, housekeeping issues, and more.

3) Complete assigned readings, in their entirety, on schedule. Engage with your reading. Consider coming to class with 3 Qs about the reading (a rich quote to unpack, a discussion question for the class, and a quandary that the reading left with you.) And bring the readings to class.

4) Contribute to class discussions. You should come to class with questions and comments, prepared to participate in a lively discussion.

5) Complete all assignments, in a timely manner. Due dates are firm but I allow requested extensions if requested 12 hours before due date. Otherwise late papers will be deducted a full letter grade for every day it is late.

6) Ask for help when you need it. I am happy to assist you in your attempts to master course materials and successfully complete course assignments (Really, I am). Come to my office hours and I am always available via email.
Course Policies

RESPECT FOR MATERIAL, OUR SUBJECTS, AND YOUR PEERS
This course is not confessional in nature; that is, we are not here to promote a particular religious viewpoint or to debate religious “truth.” Rather, we will be engaging religious materials in order to understand their meanings for the people who have produced and used them. You may have your own religious commitment; if so, throughout this course you will likely encounter opinions and religious beliefs and activities with which you do not agree. This does not make them unworthy of your study, consideration, and respect. I ask you to imagine yourself in the shoes of someone else whose practices and beliefs may differ from your own and yet carry immense meaning and value for that person. Furthermore, you will be expected to communicate in a civil manner at all times, both in and out of the classroom. This means that interactions are to be carried out in a polite, courteous, and dignified way. Treat your peers and the subject material with respect.

COURSE POLICY ON RACE AND ETHNICITY
This class and classroom is one that respects and welcomes each other. Many of my classes cover topics related to race, colonialism, religion, and racism. These conversations and readings are difficult for some students, and I encourage you to live in that space of productive discomfort and allow yourself to be challenged. Gonzaga’s Mission Statement emphasizes a commitment to intercultural competence, diversity, and social justice. Let’s live that mission in the classroom. Through these sometimes-uncomfortable conversations, we will learn and grow together.

PLAGIARISM POLICY
I do not tolerate plagiarism or cheating. We are an intellectual and academic community, and all of us are responsible to act with integrity. All violations of the Gonzaga Academic Honesty Policy will result in a zero on the assignment. Plagiarism is the act of passing another’s work off as your own. Whether intentional or not, all plagiarized assignments will receive a zero. If you have questions or concerns about plagiarism, consult the guide on blackboard. Click here for more on Academic Citizenship at Gonzaga.

SCREEN POLICY
You are welcome to use your computer or tablet in class to take notes and refer to pdf readings you did not print out. Screens are not to be allowed for other purposes during class. If you have your screen open, you have agreed that I can cold-call on you at any time. The only exceptions to this rule are those with relevant disability accommodations.
DISABILITY ACCESS POLICY
Students with disabilities who need academic accommodations should:
1. Register with and provide documentation to the Disability Access.
2. Bring a letter to me from the Disability Access Office indicating the need for accommodation and what type. This should be done within the first two weeks of class. The sooner I know, the sooner we can work together and help you succeed.
For more information about services available to GU students with disabilities, contact: disability@gonzaga.edu; 313-4134; Foley Library 209.

ATTENDANCE POLICY
According to the Gonzaga University attendance policy, if you miss more than 6 class meetings (so 7 or more), you will receive a “V” for this class, which is the same as a “F.”

A NOTE ON HARASSMENT, DISCRIMINATION AND SEXUAL MISCONDUCT
Consistent with its mission, Gonzaga seeks to assure all community members learn and work in a welcoming and inclusive environment. Title VII, Title IX and Gonzaga’s policy prohibit harassment, discrimination and sexual misconduct. Gonzaga encourages anyone experiencing harassment, discrimination or sexual misconduct to talk to someone from the Campus and Local Resources list found in Gonzaga’s Harassment and Non-Discrimination Policy.
As a faculty member, I want get you connected to the resources here on campus specially trained in and experienced in assisting in such complaints, and therefore I will report all incidents of gender-based harassment, discrimination and sexual misconduct to Title IX. A representative from that office will reach out to you via phone and/or email to explore options for support, safety measures and reporting. I will provide our Title IX Director with all relevant details, including names and identifying information, of the information reported. For more information about policies and resources or reporting options, please visit the following websites: Equity and Inclusion and Title IX. If you would like to directly make a report of harassment, discrimination or sexual misconduct directly, you may contact our Title IX coordinator (Stephanie Whaley; 509-313-6910; Business Services Building 018; whaleys@gonzaga.edu). Or fill out an online Sexual Misconduct Form. For more information about policies and resources or reporting options, please visit our Title IX website or the website for Equity and Inclusion. My office is a safe space but I am legally required to report sexual misconduct.

Assignments and Grading

1) Reading Quizzes. There will be 11 pop quizzes each worth 15 points. These quizzes will cover the day’s reading assignment. At the end of the semester your lowest quiz grade will be dropped and your total quiz score determined from the remaining quizzes. Make up quizzes will only be offered for students with excused (officially documented) absences. Worth 150 points.
2) Primary Source Worksheets: Over the course of the semester, you will be required to fill out 4 primary source worksheets. This worksheets interrogate the source author’s goal and historical context. The worksheet is due the class period the reading was assigned. Each worksheet is worth 50 points. At least two should be completed before the end of February. Only two will be accepted from March 2’s readings to the end of the semester. No exceptions.

3) Take Home Midterm: This essay has you reflecting on the most significant reading so far in the semester and why. Full prompt posted to blackboard. Worth 100 points. (A general rubric for essays in this class is on blackboard in the Prompts/Guides area.)

4) Primary Source Response Paper: You will write a 750 word response paper to an assigned primary source of your choice. This is akin to an expanded primary source worksheet. Like the worksheets, it is due the class period the reading was assigned and must be completed by April 6. No exceptions. Worth 100 points.

5) The Fire Next Time Paper: You will write a 750-1000 word essay on the text. Worth 100 points.

6) Final Essay/Unessay: You will write a 1500 word essay in reflection of the semester or complete an unessay. Worth 225 points.

7) In-Class Participation: The least boring and most effective way to learn is to participate fully in the process. You contribute to the success of this course by: reading the assigned materials, attending every class, taking notes, listening respectfully, staying on task, and actively contributing to class discussions. Worth 125 points. (A rubric for class participation is on blackboard in the Prompts/Guides area.)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reading Quizzes: 150 points</th>
<th>A range: 1000-895 points</th>
<th>D range: 694-595 points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PS Worksheets: 200 points</td>
<td>A/A- cutoff at 925</td>
<td>D+/D cutoff at 655</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm: 100 points</td>
<td>B range: 894-795 points</td>
<td>F: 594 points and below</td>
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<td>PS Response: 100 points</td>
<td>B+/B cutoff at 855</td>
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<td>TFNT Paper: 100 points</td>
<td>B/B- cutoff at 825</td>
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<td>Final Essay/Unessay: 225 points</td>
<td>C range: 794-695 points</td>
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<td>Participation: 125 points</td>
<td>C+/C cutoff at 755</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total: 1000 points</td>
<td>C/C- cutoff at 725</td>
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**Course Schedule**

Important: You need to come to class having already read the assigned reading for that day; in other words, readings are due the date listed.

**Week 1: Course Introduction**

**Wednesday, Jan 17:** Introductions, Class Expectations

**Friday, Jan 19:** Religion, Race, and Colonialism

Reading: “anchoring Religion in the World” on blackboard
Week 2: Historical Grounding
Monday, Jan 22: Religions of West Africa
Reading: 1 “Traditional Ibo Religion and Culture” and 2 “African Religions in Colonial Jamaica” in *Documentary Witness (DW)*
Wednesday, Jan 24: Religions of West Africa
Reading: “African Spirits of the Land and Water” on blackboard
Friday, Jan 26: The Atlantic Slave Trade
Reading: “Death of the African Gods” on blackboard

Week 3: Colonial Comparisons
Monday, Jan 29: Haitian Vodou
Reading: “Of Worlds Seen and Unseen” on blackboard
Wednesday, Jan 31: Haitian Vodou
Reading: “Haitian Zombies” on blackboard
Friday, Feb 2: Colonial Virginia
Reading: 3 “Slave Conversion on the Carolina Frontier” in *DW*

Week 4: Slavery and Protestantism
Monday, Feb 5: Slavery
Reading: 4 “Address to the Negroes in the State of New York” in *DW*; and “Essay on Slavery” on blackboard
Wednesday, Feb 7: Invisible Institution
Reading: 13 “Slave Songs and Spirituals” in *DW*; and “African Americans, Exodus, and the American Israel” on blackboard
Friday, Feb 9: Invisible Institution
Reading: 7 “Plantation Churches: Visible and Invisible” and 8 “Proud of That ‘Ole Time’ Religion” in *DW*

Week 5: Resistance
Monday, Feb 12: Nat Turner's Rebellion
Reading: 11 “Religion and Slave Insurrection” in *DW*
Wednesday, Feb 14: Conjure and “Magic”
Reading: “Conjure and Christianity” on blackboard; and 9 “Conjuration and Witchcraft” in *DW*
Friday, Feb 16: Abolition
Reading: 12 “Slaveholding Religion and the Christianity of Christ,” 18 “David Walker's Appeal,” and 22 “Protesting the Negro Pew” in *DW*

Week 6: The African Methodist Episcopal Church
Monday, Feb 19: No Class. Presidents’ Day.
Wednesday, Feb 21: The AME
Reading: “Methodism” on blackboard; and 14 “Life Experience and Gospel Labors” in *DW*
Friday, Feb 23: The AME and Gender
Reading: 16 “A Female Preacher Among the Methodists” in *DW*
Week 7: Black Catholicism
Monday, Feb 26: Black Catholicism in the 19th Century
Reading: “Black Catholics in Nineteenth-Century America” on blackboard

Wednesday, Feb 28: Black Catholicism in the 19th Century
Reading: 32 “The First African American Catholic Congress” in DW

Friday, March 2: Black Catholic Sisters
Reading: “No Cross, No Crown” on blackboard

Week 8: Freedom?
Monday, March 6: Jim Crow and Religion
Reading: 24 “Welcome to the Ransomed” and 29 “The Travail of a Female Colored Evangelist” in DW

Wednesday, March 7: The Long Civil Rights Movement
Reading: “How Far the Promised Land?: Black Religion and Black Protest” on blackboard

Friday, March 9: Afro-Creole Spiritualism
Reading: “Cercle Harmonique” on blackboard

Take-Home Midterm Due by 5pm

March 12-16: Spring Break!!!

Week 9: Inside and Outside the “Black Church”
Monday, March 19: The Great Migration
Reading: 48 “Organized Religion and the Cults,” 49 “Black Judaism in Harlem,” and 51 “Elder Lucy Smith” in DW

Wednesday, March 21: Father Divine
Reading: 50 “The Realness of God, to you-wards …” in DW

Friday, March 23: The Moorish Science Temple
Reading: “MST FBI Files” on blackboard

Week 10: The Era of Civil Rights
Monday, March 26: Religion and Civil Rights
Reading: 56 “The Anatomy of Segregation and Ground of Hope” in DW

Wednesday, March 28: Religion and Civil Rights
Reading: 54 “Letter from Birmingham Jail” and 44 “Singing of Good Tidings and Freedom” in DW

Friday, March 30: No Class. Good Friday.

Week 11: The Era of Civil Rights
Monday, April 2: No Class. Easter Monday

Wednesday, April 4: Nation of Islam
Reading: 52 “Self Government in the New World” in DW

Friday, April 6: Nation of Islam and Malcolm X
Reading: “The Ballot or the Bullet” and “Letters from Abroad” on blackboard

Last Chance for your Primary Source Response Paper
Week 12: The Fire Next Time
Monday, April 9: The Fire Next Time
Reading: “My Dungeon Shook” in The Fire Next Time
Wednesday, April 11: The Fire Next Time
Reading: Be to at least the section with the NOI in TFNT
Friday, April 13: The Fire Next Time
Reading: Finish TFNT

Week 13: Black Power and Black Theology
Monday, April 16: 57 “Black Power Statement’ and ‘Black Theology’”
and 58 “Black Theology and the Black Church” in DW
Wednesday, April 18: Black Theology “after” Civil Rights
Reading: “The Cross and the Lynching Tree” on blackboard
Friday, April 20: Eyes on the Prize: The Time Has Come
The Fire Next Time Paper Due by 5pm

Week 14: Past and Present
Monday, April 23: I am Not Your Negro
Wednesday, April 25: I am Not Your Negro
Friday, April 27: Past and Present Meet in Charleston in 2015
Reading: “Rev Pinckney Eulogy” on blackboard

Week 15: Religion and Hip Hop
Monday, April 30: The Religion of Hip Hop
Reading: “Believe Me, This Pimp Game is Very Religious” on blackboard
Wednesday, May 2: The Religion in Hip Hop
Reading: “Hip Hop Lyrics” on blackboard
Friday, May 4: Review

Final Exam Week
10am Class: Tuesday, May 8th, 1:00-3:00 pm
11am Class: Thursday, May 10th, 8:00-10:00 am