

# ***The Black Methodist Church***

## ***Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary***

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Spring Semester 2017 (February 2-May 5, 2017)

**Course Description:** Conducted as a guided independent study, this course examines the history, expansion, and the impact and influence of Black Methodist Churches in the twenty-first century. Attention is given to the history of black Methodist churches, liturgical styles and practices in black Methodism, human justice and social justice issues and impact and influence of a Wesleyan theology, Christian ethics as reflected in doctrinal beliefs and polity. Students will meet five times during the course of this Independent class for a Round Table Discussion. Reading Assignments as indicated will be discussed during the Round Table Discussions. At each Round Table Discussion, a student will lead in a particular aspect of worship, reflecting Wesleyan theology.

### **Intended major Learning Outcomes:**

Upon completion of the course, each student will be able to:

- 1.) Articulate clearly an understanding of their denominational heritage and what they believe to others, as expressed in worship and other aspects of communal life.
- 2.) Outline Black Methodist history and identify and describe key figures in Black Methodism.
- 3.) Articulate an integrated knowledge of the theological and ecclesiological issues of Black Methodist history, ecclesiology, and polity and an understanding of the practical implications in the life of the church.
- 4.) Compare and contrast similarities and differences of the individual Black Methodist traditions with respect to beliefs and doctrines, episcopal leadership, and other relevant factors.
- 5.) Identify instances and examples in their particular traditions in Black Methodism as related to addressing societal issues and systemic injustice prevalent in the twenty-first century.

**Reading Assignments:** The independent study course includes assigned reading from required text books. Recommended text books are listed for further study.

### **Required text books are:**

Dickerson, Dennis. *African Methodism and Its Wesleyan Heritage—Reflections on AME Church History*. Nashville: Dennis C. Dickerson, 2009.

Fuller, Paul. *Black Methodists in America—A Success Story of a Model Minority Group*. USA: America Star Books, 2012.

Heitzenrater, Richard P. *Wesley and the People Called Methodists (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition)*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2013.

Melton, J. Gordon. *A Will to Choose—The Origin of African American Methodism*. Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2007.

Sommerville, Raymond R., Jr. *An Ex-Colored Church—Social Activism in the CME Church, 1870-1970*. Macon: Mercer University Press, 2006.

Thomas, Maxine L. *Woman, Dry Your Weeping Eyes*. Louisville: Teapot Publishing House, 2016.

*The Book of Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church*

*The Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church*

*Discipline of the CME Church*

To help prepare for supervisory discussions of the required readings, students are advised to consider the following questions as they read:

- What do you like/dislike about what you are reading?
- How are your views of what it means to be a Methodist similar/different from those of the author?
- How do you account for the similarities/differences between your views and those of the author?

**Recommended text books are:**

Campbell, Ted A. *Methodist Doctrine: The Essentials, revised edition*. Nashville: Abingdon, 2011.

Collier-Thomas, Bettye. *Daughters of Thunder*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1998.

Hill, Kenneth H. *The Romance of Teaching in the Wesleyan African Methodist Tradition*. Nashville: Kenneth H. Hill, 2016.

Thomas, Linda E. ed., *Living Stones in the Household of God: The Legacy and Future of Black Theology*. Fortress Press, 2004.

Warnock, Raphael G. *The Divided Mind of the Black Church—Theology, Piety, and Public Witness*. New York and London: New York University Press, 2014.

Gregg, Robert. *Sparks from the Anvil of Oppression—Philadelphia's African Methodists and Southern Migrants*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1993.

Pinn, Ann H. and Pinn, Anthony B. *Fortress Introduction to Black Church History*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2002.

Outler, Albert C. and Heitzenrater, Richard P. *John Wesley's Sermons: An Anthology*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1991.

### **Course requirements:**

**Research Paper: 10-12 pages (30%):** Students are to submit a 10-12 page research paper typed, double-spaced pages in length on a topic in Methodist history proposed by the student and approved by the supervisor. The purpose of the research paper is to encourage the student to investigate a topic of particular interest to the student.

*Proposals identifying a topic and research plan are to be submitted to the instructor no later than Friday, February 27, 2017. Research papers are due Friday, May 12, 2017.*

**Two Comparative-Analysis Papers (20% each):** Students will write two 5-page papers comparing and analyzing two African-American Methodist denominations on two of the following five topics:

- a) Beliefs and Doctrines (due Feb. 27);
- b) Episcopal Leadership (due Mar. 13);
- c.) Community activism and social justice (due Mar. 27)

- d.) Worship and Rituals (due April 10); or
- e.) Ordination of women (due April 24)

**Journal (10%)**—Students will keep a journal and record on a weekly basis reflections from reading assignments. The students should name at least three concepts and ideas expressed in each of reading assignments for the week; relevance of these ideas and concepts to their ministry and/or for the Methodist church and/or the Church universal. Journals will be viewed by the professor twice during the course of the semester on dates forthcoming.

**Leading Worship in the Wesleyan Tradition (10%)**: Students will lead in one worship experience at one of the Round Table Discussions that reflects Wesleyan tradition, choosing one of the following:

- a.) Preaching a sermon that reflects Wesleyan theology as it addresses a particular social issue or concern in the African American community in the 21<sup>st</sup> century (10-15 minutes)
- b.) Leading a Prayer meeting that reflects the Methodist tradition and heritage. The student will craft the Prayer meeting as a worship experience (10-15 minutes)
- c.) Teaching a Bible Study on a topic related to human justice based upon Wesleyan theology (10-15 minutes)
- d.) Conducting a Praise Service that includes music used in the Methodist churches (10-15 minutes)

**Attendance and Participation (10%)**—The student is expected to attend each of the five Round Table Discussions. One excused absence is allowed. More than one two absences will be penalized. Students should do reading assignments prior to coming to class and be prepared to discuss.

## **Course Calendar**

### **Week of February 2**—The History of Methodism

History of the Methodist Movement  
Key figures in Methodism  
Methodism's arrival in America

**Reading Assignment:**

Heitzenrater, Richard P. *Wesley and the People Called Methodists*,  
Chapters 1, 2, 3

**Week of February 6**—Round Table Discussion #1—Theme: “If It Had Not Been  
For the Lord On Our Side”—The African American Church

History of the Black Church in America  
Slavery and the Black Church  
John Wesley and African people  
Methodism and Social Values

**Reading Assignment:**

Fuller, Paul. *Black Methodists in America*—Chapters 1, 2  
Melton, J. Gordon. *A Will to Choose*—Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6

**Week of February 13**— The Independent Black Church Movement

Impact of racial segregation and oppression  
The Free African Society  
African American Contributors to Methodism

**Reading Assignment:**

Fuller, Paul. *Black Methodists in America*—Chapters 3, 4  
Dickerson, Dennis. *African Methodism and Its Wesleyan Heritage—  
Reflections on AME Church History*— Pages 13-62

**Week of February 20**—Black Methodist Polity, Doctrines and Beliefs of the  
AME, AMEZ, and CME Church

Standards of Doctrine and Discipline of Methodism  
Beliefs and Doctrines of the AME, AME Zion and CME Churches

**Reading Assignment:**

Campbell, Ted A. *Methodist Doctrine*, Chapter 4  
Heitzenrater, Richard P. *Wesley and the People Called Methodist*,  
Chapters 4, 5

*The Book of Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church*  
*The Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church*  
*Discipline of the CME Church*

**Week of February 27**—Round Table Discussion # 2—Theme: “The Lord Will Make a Way Some How”—Black Methodist Polity, Doctrines, and Beliefs of the AME, AME Zion and CME Churches

**Reading Assignment:**

Campbell, Ted A. *Methodist Doctrine*, Chapter 5, 6  
Heitzenrater, Richard P. *Wesley and the People Called Methodist*, Chapters 6  
*The Book of Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church*  
*The Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church*  
*Discipline of the CME Church*

Paper #1 due—Beliefs and Doctrines

**Week of March 1**—African Methodism in the Antebellum North and the Antebellum South

**Reading Assignment:**

Gregg, Robert. *Sparks from the Anvil of Oppression*  
Sommerville, Raymond R. *An Ex-Colored Church*, Chapter 2  
Melton, J. Gordon. *A Will to Choose*, Chapter 9

**Week of March 6**—Black Women in Methodism

Polity: Denominational Structure and Jurisdiction in African American Methodist Churches; Church membership; The Ministry; Governmental Divisions and Authority

**Reading Assignment:**

Fuller, Paul. *Black Methodists in America*, Chapter 5  
Thomas, Maxine L. *Woman, Dry Your Weeping Eyes*, Chapters 1,2,3  
Melton, J. Gordon. *A Will to Choose*, Chapter 7  
*The Book of Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church*  
*The Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church*  
*Discipline of the CME Church*

**Week of March 13**—Round Table Discussion #3—“Keep So Busy Working for My Jesus”— African Methodism in Mission and Ministry

The work of missions in the field and at home  
Homiletics in African Methodism  
Polity: Denominational Departments and Ministries

**Reading Assignment:**

Thomas, Maxine L. *Woman, Dry Your Weeping Eyes*, Chapter 4  
Melton, J. Gordon. *A Will to Choose*, Chapter 8  
Dickerson, Dennis. *African Methodism and Its Wesleyan Heritage*—  
pages 64-112  
Sommerville, Raymond R. *An Ex-Colored Church*, Chapters 1, 2, 3  
Gregg, Robert. *Sparks From the Anvil of Oppression*, Chap. 4, 5, 6  
*The Book of Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church*  
*The Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church*  
*Discipline of the CME Church*

Paper #2 due--Episcopal leadership

**Week of March 20**—African Methodism and Social Holiness

Polity: Conferences

**Reading Assignment:**

Dickerson, Dennis. *African Methodism and Its Wesleyan Heritage*,  
Pages 128-217  
Sommerville, Raymond R. *An Ex-Colored Church*, Chapters 4, 5, 6  
*The Book of Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church*  
*The Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church*  
*Discipline of the CME Church*

**Week of March 27**—African American Methodists and Ecumenism

Polity: Judicial Administration; Trials and Appeals

**Reading Assignment:**

Dickerson, Dennis. *African Methodism and Its Wesleyan Heritage*,  
Pages 220-234

Sommerville, Raymond R. *An Ex-Colored Church*, Chapters 7, 8  
Melton, J. Gordon. *A Will to Choose* (selected readings)  
*The Book of Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Church*  
*The Discipline of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church*  
*Discipline of the CME Church*

Paper # 3 due—Community activism and social justice

**Week of April 3**—Round Table Discussion # 4—“If I Don’t Praise Him”—  
African American Methodist Worship and Rituals

**Reading Assignment:**

Dickerson, Dennis. *African Methodism and Its Wesleyan Heritage*,  
Pages 14-37  
AME, AMEZ, CME *Hymnals and Disciplines*

**Week of April 10**—African Americans and Black Theology

**Reading Assignments:**

Dickerson, Dennis. *African Methodism and Its Wesleyan Heritage*,  
Pages 40-58  
Warnock, Raphael G. *The Divided Mind of the Black Church*  
Paper # 4 due—Worship and rituals

**Week of April 17**—African American Methodist women clergy

**Reading Assignment:**

Thomas, Maxine L. *Woman, Dry Your Weeping Eyes*, Chapter 5  
Collier-Thomas, Bettye. *Daughters of Thunder*. Pages 1-91  
LaRue, Cleophus J. *This Is My Story*  
Mckenzie, Vashti M. *Not Without a Struggle*

**Week of April 24**— African American women clergy developing ministries for  
women

**Reading Assignment:**

Thomas, Maxine L. *Woman, Dry Your Weeping Eyes*, Chapter 6, 7

Paper #5 due—Ordination of women



**Week of May 1—Round Table Discussion—“Look Where He’s Brought Me From”— Remembering our Past, Celebrating Our Present, Preparing for a Greater Future**

## **Appendix: Course Policies**

### **Use of Inclusive Language**

In accordance with seminary policy, students are to use inclusive language in class discussions and in written and oral communication by using language representative of the whole human community in respect to gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, age, and physical and intellectual capacities. Direct quotations from theological texts and translations of the Bible do not have to be altered to conform to this policy. In your own writing, however, when referring to God, you are encouraged to use a variety of images and metaphors, reflecting the richness of the Bible’s images for God. More discussion about inclusive language can be accessed from the Academic Support Center and from the section of the LPTS web site with information for current students.

### **Academic Honesty**

All work turned in to the instructors is expected to be the work of the student whose name appears on the assignment. Any borrowing of the ideas or the words of others must be acknowledged by quotation marks (where appropriate) and by citation of author and source. Use of another’s language or ideas from online resources is included in this policy, and must be attributed to author and source of the work being cited. Failure to do so constitutes plagiarism, and may result in failure of the course. Two occurrences of plagiarism may result in dismissal from the Seminary. Students unfamiliar with issues related to academic honesty can find help from the staff in the Academic Support Center. For more information, see the Policy for Academic Honesty in the Student Handbook.

### **Special Accommodations**

Students requiring accommodations for a documented physical or learning disability should be in contact with the Director of the Academic Support Center during the first two weeks of a semester (or before the semester begins) and should speak with the instructor as soon as possible to arrange appropriate adjustments. Students with environmental or other sensitivities that may affect their learning are also encouraged to speak with the instructor.

## **Citation Policy**

Citations in your papers should follow Seminary standards, which are based on these guides:

American Psychological Association. *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*. 6th ed. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2010.

Turabian, Kate L., Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams. *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations: Chicago Style for Students and Researchers*. 8th ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013.

*The Chicago Manual of Style*. 16th ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010.

Copies of these guides are available at the library and in the Academic Support Center.

## **Attendance Policy**

According to the Seminary catalog, students are expected to attend class meetings regularly. In case of illness or emergency, students are asked to notify the instructor of their planned absence from class, either prior to the session or within 24 hours of the class session. Six or more absences (1/4 of the course) may result in a low or failing grade in the course.